

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP AND THE
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS
AKWA IBOM STATE**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study assessed the relationship between home-school partnership and the academic performance of the pupils in public primary schools Akwa Ibom State. The population of this study consisted of all the 8000 primary five pupils in public primary schools in the 3 senatorial zones that make up the state namely Eket, Ikot Ekpene and Uyo Senatorial zones. The study adopted an Ex-post facto research design while simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. The instrument for data collection which was tagged “Home-School Partnership Questionnaire (DHSPQ)” was administered to the respondents and used for the study. The instrument was vetted by the researcher’s supervisor who is an expert in the field before the reliability test was conducted which produced the reliability coefficient of 0.74 proving the instrument to be reliable for the study. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. From the results of the data analysis, it was observed that Primary 5 pupils’ performance in school work differs according to parents’ assistance in reading in Akwa Ibom State public primary schools. Also, parents communication with school influence the children’s performance in school work. It was therefore recommended that Government and well placed individuals; companies; multinational co-operations should assist these schools to acquire communication facilities to enhance communication between the homes and the schools. Parents and Teachers should as well encourage home-school communication through phone calls and letter writings and regular visits to schools and homes.

KEY WORDS: Home-school partnership, reading, communication, academic performance

INTRODUCTION

The school alone may not be able to effectively educate the child to achieve the desired result without the home partnering with it. If the home and school partner with each other, attendance rate may improve, drop-out rate may decrease, indiscipline could be checked, infrastructure may improve, the child education may be motivated and higher academic performance sustained. Researchers have shown that children whose parents partner with school, support their effort and encourage their learning appear to have better long-term academic success than children who lack such support regardless income or social status (Fantan 2007; Handerson & Mapp 2005).

In Nigeria, public primary schools seem to be an “Island”, that is; separated from the home they serve. Christenson and Sheridan (2006) stated that when the home and school relationship got strained, it results in disruptive behavior like truancy, dropout, lateness, absenteeism, lying and maladjustment which negatively impacts on the academic performance of pupils. Failure rate in external examinations is a general problem in the country at large. Performances in West African School Certificate Examinations for instance, have been on the decline as the years pass by. Results showed that out of the 365,981 and

412,236 candidates who wrote the examinations in Lagos State in 2009 and 2010 results obtained showed 26% and 21% credit passes in English Language and Mathematics (Musa, 2008). The situation is alarming and has attracted the concerns of stakeholders in education who attribute this problem to poor foundation laid in primary schools (Keffi, 2008).

It is observed that the home has distanced itself from the school and the necessary importance and benefits that accrue from such partnership are denied the pupils. Nowadays, pupils are found dropping out of schools, involving in one crime or the other and Juvenile delinquency is on the increase as well. Most pupils lag behind academically because of lack of information and feedback from home to school and vice versa (Coopers and Linisday 2006). Home-school partnership has been suspected to be the major panacea for the myriads of problems which have been observed in pupils' academic lives. The success of any education system largely depends on the foundation. The foundation starts from the home in which parents are the first teachers. Therefore, if the home fails in its responsibility, there is bound to be a total decay in the educational system.

Statement of the Problem

The poor performance of students in examinations does not commensurate with the State government efforts at the primary level of education, in terms of improvement in infrastructural facilities, employment of more teachers, regular payment of teachers' salaries, and setting up of monitoring groups to check teachers' regularities in the schools. If government is making these efforts to score a pass mark in academics, yet instead of improvement in that direction the reverse is the case as evidence in the poor performance of the pupils; then something is wrong and something must be done to avert the impending embarrassment.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the influence of the home-school partnership on the academic performance of the pupils in public primary schools Akwa Ibom State. The specific objectives include:

1. To examine the relationship between home-school partnership in reading at home and pupils' academic performance
2. To examine the relationship between home-school partnership in communicating and
3. pupils' academic performance

Research Questions

1. How does reading at home relate with pupils' performance in school work?
2. To what extent does communicating relate with pupils' performance in school work?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between reading at home and pupils' academic performance.
2. There is no significant relationship between communicating and pupils' academic performance.

Literature Review

Reading at Home and Pupil's Academic Performance

Reading may be described as the meaningful interpretation of symbols into ideas and concepts where the ideas are the writer's opinions and concepts are the general opinion underlying such ideas. The reader recognizes certain words (symbols) and associates them with particular meanings. He will group these words and interpret them. Azikiwe (2005) also defined reading as the process of acquiring the basic skills necessary for learning and the

ability to acquire meaning from print. Cander, (2007) considered reading as an important aspect of learning adding that a major cause of our children not performing in school is because they do not like to read. This will cause extended problems beyond reading to writing, understanding and answering of examination questions. Commenting on reading among children, Musa (2006) observed that it is a common knowledge that most Nigerian children do not read beyond what is essential for classroom work, this account for an increase in number of children who could not go beyond primary school.

Parents and teachers therefore have the task of inculcating into the learner the reading techniques required for learning activities. For effective learning of all school subjects, Williams (2006) noted that cultivating good reading techniques from home prepares a child for future scholarship. Patrikako (2006) added that when students are better readers, they become better students, they learn fast, understand better, acquire new knowledge and skill more rapidly and are better equipped for their chosen careers. Contributing, Douber and Epstein (2006) posited that reading is the most important determinant to a child success in education and the key to a great deal of human knowledge.

They concluded that unless the home aid children to read they will not overcome vocabulary and sentences difficulties which will manifest in poor speaking, writing and lack background knowledge to link contents of subjects learned. Good reading techniques is thus, an indispensable tool that helps students to be adequately prepared for the manifold reading tasks which they require for excellent academic performance. Epstein (2006) indicated that when families encourage their children to read at home, such children tend to succeed not just in school but throughout life. Patrikako (2005) observed that the child at his elementary stage depend almost totally on parents and teachers to acquire technicalities in overcoming his learning difficulties. At this, if he is properly attended to, his learning difficulties are reduced by over a half. To aid the child read, Patrikako, suggested that parents should always ask the child the day's learning activities at school, check his books, seek to discover areas he encountered difficulties, and where it is beyond the parents' scope should seek for assistance from the teacher or experts immediately.

In the same vein, Williams (2006) suggested that reading could be enhanced through routine family devotion. In that case, the child on target is placed on regular Bible reading during such devotion. To further help the child in his reasoning and retention abilities, he should be given opportunity to conduct the devotion. Williams viewed that school should further enhance it by allowing children to conduct devotions as well.

Waltman (2007) stated that reading at home is an advantage to writing, dictation and speaking that put the child academically above his mate who does not. Waltman opined that reading could be encouraged among children by allowing them to listen to radio and television programs and reading beyond what is essential for classroom work in order to broaden his vocabulary, increase listening and reasoning capacity. Added to this, Maduere (2005) opined that reading could be encouraged by dropping information materials at sitting rooms, kitchen, gardens and other areas the child frequent. According to Okonkwo (2008), children should be encouraged to read mails, streets signs, traffic directions, advertisement on billboards, package labels, the wordings in television, almanacs, calendars, cars, buses, (body, windscreen and plate numbers) clothes, bed sheets, cap, hats among others.

Communicating and Pupils Academic Performance

Communication plays an important role in all forms of relations. It is the process by which ideas, opinions are transmitted or exchanged and depend on the use of words. Creating home-school partnerships based on two-way communication enhances the parental involvement critical to children's academic success. Researchers in their quest to find out the influence of home-school partnership on the educational outcome of the pupils have also

identified communication as a major contribution to pupil's academic success. Swap (2005) observed that parents like to know what children learn in school. Therefore, a weekly take-home assignment that list a few topics covered at school for the week be sent to the homes. This should also include examples of parents'/child activities that would be related to what is being learned at school. Swap (2005) recommended a notebook which pupils record each days' assignments and tracks in it, which show marks earned. The notebook should ask parents view, date and time to discuss with the parents. This according to Swap will keep the child on tracks toward higher academic achievement.

Contributing to home-school communication, Wallace and Walberg (2005) recommended School Newsletter. In their view, the school should ask parents to write articles for News Letters, tips parents can give for helping children with homework and family activities parents would like to share with the school. In the same vein, Green (2007) recommended Happy-Grams where teachers can send notes to parents, complementing pupils for specific achievement and behavior. Green, added that because teachers also appreciate notes of kindness, the school can print blank Happy-Grams form in a newsletter where parents can clip the form in the newsletter and send to teachers. Also discussing home – school communication, Johnson (2007) recommended Parents Bulletin Board. According to Johnson, there should be a bulletin board, especially for parent, at the main entry to the school. Parents will conveniently check the board for notes about parents' meetings, suggestions for helping children with homework, notices about family activities and calendars of important events.

Salinas (2005) suggested the use of report cards by teachers to inform parents about the child's progress in school. According to Salinas, report card should be a two-way communication by including the parents' report of the child's progress at home with such related topic as: willingness to do homework, reading for pleasure, moderation of televiewing, and attitude toward learning. Levine, (2006) described home-school communication as indispensable factor if children must achieve high grades. Levine stressed that children whose parents communicate frequently with teachers about classroom activities, the progress of their children at home, develop realistic goals and plans of actions that are linked to their children performance.

Clark (2006) in his view stated that communication is a problem solving channel and medium of opening positive dialogue between parents and school staff. Turnbull and Turnbull (2005) added that parents who received more consistent information about their children's school performance report a higher degree of commitment to helping children improve in the school work. Keith (2008) supported this assertion by claiming that deprivation of home stimulation may cause dullness while backwardness in most academic situations are more likely to come from dull children.

Kin (2006) observed that homes where parents lack communication facilities such as phones, computer (internet) access, etc. and how to use them may miss constant direction on how to guide the children in their academic work. Ability to acquire and use those gadgets enables parents get access to information that would equipped him to help the child during homework and preparation for test and examination. Contributing, Ross (2007) pointed out that parents who communicate regularly with the child's teacher have added benefit of monitoring the child's performance and that such child is more disciplined, completes his or her homework and is equally responsive to academic stimuli compared to children whose parents do not. Ross also added that a child's performance to a great extent depends on a regular communication between the home and the school. Johnson (2007) advised parents and teachers to learn and master the use of Webpages as an effective medium of communicating with each other. He described the step by step procedure of gaining access to and obtaining information from the 'parent's webpage' as follows:

- * Boot the computer
- * Connect your personal computer (PC) to the internet using a modem
- * Click on the browser software to launch you into the internet e.g. Mozilla fire-fox, opera mini, or internet explorer.
- * Type the address of the school e.g. www.Peter elementary school.com
- * Click search, go, or enter
- * The school home page opens with a list of other options
- * Select the information needed from the list of categorized information e.g. homework, open-day, midterm break, resumption date, list of textbooks etc.

Methods

Area of the study

The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State.

Design of the Study

The design used for the study was Ex-post facto.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the 8000 primary five pupils in public primary schools in the 3 senatorial zones that make up the state namely; Eket, Ikot Ekpene and Uyo Senatorial zones.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A proportional to size random sampling technique was used in selecting 114 schools from the urban and rural setting in the 3 senatorial zones, representing 10% of the 1146 public primary schools in the state. 28 (10%) out of 282 schools in Eket, 48 (10%) out of 484 schools in Ikot Ekpene and 38 (10%) out of 380 schools in Uyo senatorial zones. Using the same technique, a total of 800 pupils was selected and used as the sample, representing 10% of 8000 pupils in the 114 schools selected from the 3 zones.

Instrument for the Data Collection

Instrument for data collection for this study was dimensions of Home-School Partnership Questionnaire (DHSPQ) and the average scores of the previous two classes (primary 3 and 4) of the present primary 5 pupils as well as their present class academic scores. The Questionnaire was divided into two parts. A and B.

Validation of the Instrument

The Dimensions of Home- School Partnership Questionnaire (DHSPQ) was submitted to my Supervisor in the department of Early Childhood/Special Education and two experts in measurement and evaluation. Their comments were affected in the instruments before administered on the respondents.

Reliability of the Instrument

A test- retest reliability procedure was adopted. According to Ovemi (2009) the test-retest method is used to estimate the reliability of instrument and to find out the internal consistency of the items of the instrument. Reliability of the instrument was established using test re-test reliability techniques. The result showed a reliability coefficient rang of 0.7. The obtained value is substantially high enough to justify the research instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

Data gathered in this study through the use of the research questionnaire and academic performance records, were analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The descriptive statistics included mean score of the group while the inferential statistics included Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. These were used in establishing relationships between sub-variables of home-school partnership and pupils’ academic performance in school work.

Data Analysis and Results

Research Question 1

To what extent does reading at home influence pupils’ performance in school work? The researcher used items 1-10 in the research questionnaire to collect data which were analyzed in order to answer research question one. The analysis employed mean statistics and is presented in the table that follows. X of 2.5 and above is high and X of 2.4 and below is low (see table 1)

Table 1: Showing extent of parents’/siblings’ assistance to pupils at home in reading school work

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Σ	\bar{X}	RESULT
1	Asking you to read what you wrote in class	N Nx	244 977	422 1265	622 1243	488 488	1776 3974	2.24	- Low extent
2	Teaching you how to read at home	N Nx	2661099	366 1099	693 1385	451 451	1776 4000	2.25	- Low extent
3	Helping you to write short stories	N Nx	178 710	355 1066	924 1847	320 320	1776 3943	2.22	- Low extent
4	Directing you to where you could get information	N Nx	211 844	311 932	486 972	768 768	1776 3516	1.98	- Low extent
5	Allowing you time to study and to do your assignment	n nx	444 1776	710 2131	355 710	266 266	1776 4884	2.75	+ High Extent
6	Hiring a home teacher for you in some school subjects	n nx	200 799	222 666	932 1865	422 422	1776 3752	2.11	- Low extent
7	Discussing with you about your school work	n nx	533 2131	666 1998	444 888	133 133	1776 5150	2.90	+ High Extent
8	Providing newspapers and magazines for you to read	n nx	178 710	213 639	915 1829	471 471	1776 3650	2.06	- Low extent
9	Allowing you to listen to radio and watch T.V	n nx	422 1687	488 1465	311 622	555 555	1776 432	1.7	- Low extent
10	Having a family reading routine such as Bible reading	n nx	178	213	702	684	1776	1.9	- Low extent

X of 2.5 and above is high

Grand mean= 2.29

X of 2.4 and below is low

Data analysis presented on table 1 showed that the home provided support to pupils’ reading at home in terms of allowing other children time to study and to do their assignments. They also discuss their children’s school work with them. These dimensions of home school partnership were rated above the theoretical mean (x) of 2.5 and were considered significant. However, in other areas such as asking children to read what they write in the class; teaching them how to read at home, helping them to write short stories and directing them to where they will get information for their assignments, the ratings were below the theoretical mean (x) of 2.5 and were considered low extent. Other areas that were rated poorly included hiring

home teacher to teach children in some school subjects, providing newspapers and magazines for children at home, allowing children to listen to radio and watch television and having a family routine of reading.

Research Question 2

To what extent does parental communication with the school influence pupil’s performance in school work?

The researcher used items 11-18 in the research questionnaire to collect data necessary for the analysis of research question three. The analysis utilized mean statistics and presented as shown on the table that follows.

Table 2: Showing extents to which Parent Communicate with their Children’s School.

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Σ	\bar{X}	RESULT
11	Visiting your school to ascertain/ how you are studying	n nx	60 240	113 339	310 620	317 317	800 1516	1.89	- Low extent
12	Visiting your head mistress or teachers either at school or house	n nx	80 320	121 363	350 700	249 249	800 1632	2.0	- Low extent
13	Inviting your teachers to your house for friendly stay together	n nx	46 184	126 378	240 480	388 388	800 1430	1.8	- Low extent
14	Receiving letters from your school about you.	n nx	101 404	140 420	280 560	279 279	800 1663	2.1	- Low extent
15	Writing letters to your school concerning you	n nx	38 152	56 168	314 628	392 392	899 1340	1.7	- Low extent
16	Making telephone calls to your school mistress or teachers	n nx	93 372	140 420	288 576	279 279	800 1602	2.0	- Low extent
17	Receiving telephone calls/messages from your school mgt or teachers	n nx	31 124	53 159	510 1020	206 206	800 1509	1.9	- Low Extent
18	Attaining meeting summoned by your school	n nx	190 760	214 642	200 400	196 196	800 1998	2.5	+ High Extent

X of 2.5 and above is high
X of 2.4 and below is low

Grand Mean = 1.99

Data presented on table 2 showed that parent’s communicating with their children’s school was poor. It was rated 1.98 below the theoretical mean 2.5 specifically, parent performed poorly in visiting their children’s school to ascertain how they are studying, visiting the head mistress or teaches either at home or at school inviting teachers to their home for friendly stay together and receiving letters from school about their children. These were rated below the instrument’s mean of 2.5. Other mean rated poorly included writing letters to children’s school concerning their wards, making telephone calls to their children school management or teachers and receiving telephone calls/messages from their children’s teachers or school management. However in terms of attending meetings summoned by the

teachers or management of their children’s school, parents were rated 2.5 and considered significant.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between reading at home and pupils performances in school work. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows: -

1. Reading at home as the independent variable
2. Pupils’ performances in school work as the dependent variable

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was then used to analyze the data in order to determine the relationship between the two variables (see table 3)

TABLE 3

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Reading at Home and Pupils Performances in School Work

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r
	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$		
Reading at home (x)	40159	919485	1404073	0.80*
pupils’ performances in school work. (y)	60284	2274194		

***Significant at 0.05 level; df =1774; N =1776; critical r – value = 0.086**

The above table 3 presents the obtained r-value as (0.80). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.086) at 0.05 level with 1774 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.80) was greater than the critical r-value (0.088). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between reading at home and pupil’s performances in school work.

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between communication and pupils’ performances in school work. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows: -

1. Communication as the independent variable
2. Pupils’ performances in school work as the dependent variable

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was then used to analyze the data in order to determine the relationship between the two variables (see table 4)

TABLE 4

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between communication and pupils’ performances in school work

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r
	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$		
Communication (x)	44808	1144316	1569143	0.86*
Pupils’ performances in school work. (y)	60284	2274194		

***Significant at 0.05 level; df =1774; N =1776; critical r – value = 0.086**

The above table 4 presents the obtained r-value as (0.86). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.086) at 0.05 level with 1774 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.86) was greater than the critical r-value (0.086). Hence,

the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between communication and pupils performances in school work.

Discussion of Findings

Analysis of data presented on table 3 shows that the result was significant as the calculated r-value (0.80) was greater than the critical r-value (0.086) at 0.05 level of significance with 1774 degrees of freedom. The result implies that there is a significant relationship between reading at home and pupil's academic achievement. Findings agree with Anderson (2007) assertion that children from homes who are encouraged practically and materially to read do not exhibit learning difficulties in school. It also agrees with Azikiwe (2005) who opined that if the child environment does not provide the child opportunity to use materials related with his learning need, it will negatively impact on his learning performance. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was retained.

Analysis of data presented on table 4 shows that the result was significant as the calculated r-value (0.86) was greater than the critical r-value (0.086) at 0.05 level of significance with 1774 degrees of freedom. The result implies that there is a significant relationship between parents communicating with school and pupil's academic achievement. Findings agree with Teale (2005) who posited that children academic performance will improve when parents and teachers understand each other's expectation and stay in touch with one another regarding children's learning habits, attitude towards school social interactions and academic progress. It agrees with Kin (2006) who stated that homes and schools who lack communication facilities such as phones, internet and how to use them miss a major channel on how to guide the children in his academic work. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was retained.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that Primary 5 pupils' performance in school work differs according to parents' assistance in reading in Akwa Ibom State public primary schools. Majority of the parents do not assist the children to read at home which negatively influence their performance in school work. Also, in Akwa Ibom State public primary schools, the pupils' performance in school work differs according to the extent their parents communicate with the school. This means that communication with school influence the children's performance in school work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are deemed necessary:

1. In order to enhance children's reading for improved academic performance, teachers and parents should create enough time each day of the week for the children to read story books, newspapers, magazines and other text books by providing these materials at home.
2. Students should be taught how to use educative website such as www.brainpop.com, www.kidsnowit.com, among others.
3. Government and well placed individuals; companies; multinational co-operations should assist these schools to acquire communication facilities to enhance communication between the homes and the schools. Parents and Teachers should as well encourage home-school communication through phone calls and letter writings and regular visits to schools and homes.

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