
Parents' Effective Partnership with School and Academic Performance of Pupils in Social Studies in Public Primary Schools in New York City

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the parents' effective partnership with school and the academic performance of the pupils in Social Studies in public primary schools in New York City. The population of this study consisted of all primary five pupils in all the public primary schools in the country. The study adopted Ex-post facto research design while simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. Data was obtained using a research questionnaire tagged "Parents' Partnership with School Questionnaire (PPSQ)". Data obtained from the respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) while Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. It was concluded that there is significant relationship between reading at home and pupils' performance in school work. Also, volunteering has significant influence on children's' performance in school work. It was therefore recommended that schools should create occasions where parents are invited to give talks on things that bother the child, at home and in schools.

KEY WORDS: Parents' Partnership with School, pupils' reading at home, pupils' performance, volunteering, New York City

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 may be 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 of income or social activity (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 gets strained, it results in disruptive behaviour like truancy, dropout, lateness, absenteeism, lying and maladjustment which negatively impact on the academic performance of pupils. The negative impact resulting from the dichotomy may be responsible for the poor performance of pupils in their school works which manifests negatively in their learning outcome at higher levels of their educational pursuit. The role of parental involvement in children's education has become a central issue in educational policy and research. Parental expectations have a greater impact on student's

educational outcomes. Parental involvement may include activities like helping children in reading, encouraging them to do their homework independently, monitoring their activities inside the house and outside the four walls of their house, and providing coaching services for improving their learning in different subjects (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

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 & Linisday, 2006). Parents' partnership has been suspected to be the major panacea for the myriads of problems which have been observed in pupil's 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 delay in the educational system. To deal effectively with this, the home and the school need to partner effectively for the interest of the child and the nation education system. This study is therefore centred on "Parents' Partnership with School variables and how they influence the performance of pupils in social studies.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to determine the relationship between Parents' partnership with school and the academic performance of the pupils in Social Studies in public primary schools in New York City. The specific objectives include:

1. To examine the relationship between parents' partnership with school in pupils' reading at home and pupils' performance in school work.
2. To examine the relationship between parents' partnership with school in volunteering and pupils' performance in school work.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between reading at home and pupils' performance in school work?
2. What is the relationship between volunteering and pupils' performance in school work?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between reading at home and pupils' performances in school work.
2. There is no significant relationship between volunteering on pupils' performances in school work.

Literature Review

Reading at Home and Pupil's Academic Performance

Azikiwe (2005) 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. 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 the poor performance in their academic work. 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 (1999) noted that cultivating good reading techniques from home prepares a child for future scholarship. Partrikako (2006) added that when students are better readers, they become better students, they learn fast, understand better, acquire new knowledge and skills more rapidly and are better equipped for their chosen careers.

Contributing, Douber and Epstein (2006) posited that reading is the most important determinant of a child's 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 of 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 the child is properly attended to, learning difficulty is reduced by over a half. To aid the child read, Patrikako, suggested that parents should always ask the child the days of 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 can 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 puts the child academically above his mate who does not.

Volunteering and Pupil's academic Performance

Mulligan (2008) opined that as eager as parents are in seeing their children excel in academics, they should be willing to give their time and talents to support schools and teachers to maximize the children's academic activities if their expectation must be met. Research findings show that parent volunteering can have significant impact on students' achievement. Volunteering in school according to Purnel (2008) include: decision making teams, fieldtrip helper, classroom assistance, tutor, coach, fundraisers and playground monitor and workshops presenters. Helling (2006) also identified other forms of volunteering as, maintaining discipline, dramatizing to the children and storytelling. According to Clark, (2006) volunteering involves attendance at schools activities, assisting children to cross roads, inspecting and watching play ground while the kids play, securing the children and their property, counseling services and administering first aid treatment.

Ronald (2007) writing on volunteering added other forms of volunteering such as recording books on tape, participating in special school beautification projects such as gardening, drawing, and painting, donating school books, preparing bulletin board, arts and science materials. Kling (2006) viewed volunteering as the provision of basic needs that are either forgotten or misplaced by the children at home or lost in transit, such as, pen, pencil, exercise books, snacks and drinking water.

Research findings show that parents' volunteers can have significant impact on pupils' achievement. John (2006) reported that when volunteers went into school to teach, conduct demonstration, coach pupils for competitions, lead science and math clubs, academic achievement improved and the pupils were reported to show interest to study social studies and science related careers as a result of the volunteer's interest and encouragement. Mulligan (2008) also reported that teachers in Maryland school have testified that having a trained volunteer in the classroom was one of the most valuable aspects of teaching the child. Mulligan further stated that the presence of volunteers was identified as the critical ingredient in implementing cooperative learning.

Methods

Research Design

The design of the study is ex-post facto research design. It is an enquiry design in which the researcher has no control over the independent variables because they had already occurred.

Area of the study

The area of this study is New York City.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all primary five pupils in all the public primary schools in New York City.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study is 360 pupils. They were obtained using a simple random sampling technique.

Instrumentation

Instrument for data collection for this study was "Partnership with School Questionnaire (PPSQ)". The Questionnaire was divided into two parts. A and B. Part A elicited information about pupil personal data while part B consisted of information on the dimensions of parents' partnership with school

Validation of the Research Instruments

The "Parents' Partnership with School Questionnaire (PPQ) was submitted to one experts in Test and Measurement for the initial validation.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability study was conducted with the use of 30 respondents from primary schools who were not a part of the main work. Cronbach's Alpha technique was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument. From the reliability coefficient of 0.7, the instrument was considered high enough to justify the reliability of the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) while Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One

The research question sought to find out the relationship between reading at home and pupils’ performance in school work. In order to answer the research question, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was performed on the data collected as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the extent of reading at home and pupils’ performance in school work

Variable	N	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	r	Remarks
Reading at home		14.85	12.5		
	358			0.92*	*Strong to perfect Relationship
Pupils’ performance in school work		63.01	50		

Source: Field Survey

Table 1 presents the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between reading at home and pupils’ performance in school work. The two variables were observed to have very high relationship at 92%. The arithmetic mean for reading at home (14.85) was observed to be greater than the expected mean score of 12.5. In addition to that, the arithmetic mean as regards pupils’ performance in school work (63.01) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 50. The result therefore means that there is remarkable relationship between reading at home and pupils’ performance in school work.

Research Question Two

The research question sought to find out the relationship between volunteering and pupils’ performance in school work. In order to answer the research question, Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was performed on the data collected as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the extent of volunteering and pupils’ performance in school work.

Variable	N	Arithmetic mean	Expected mean	r	Remarks
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Volunteering	13.44	12.5		
	358		0.59*	*moderately strong Relationship
Pupils' performance in school work	63.01	50		

Source: Field Survey

Table 2 presents the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between volunteering and pupils' performance in school work. The two variables were observed to have moderate strong relationship at 59%. The arithmetic mean for volunteering (13.44) was observed to be greater than the expected mean score of 12.5. In addition to that, the arithmetic mean as regards pupils' performance in school work (63.01) was observed to be higher than the expected mean score of 50. The result therefore means that there is remarkable relationship between volunteering and pupils' performance in school work.

Testing the Research Hypothesis

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)	5347	80479		
Pupils performances in school work. (y)	22685	1466767	342720	0.92*

***Significant at 0.05 level; df =358; N =360; Critical r-value = 0.113**

The above Table 3 presents the obtained r-value as (0.92). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.113) at 0.05 level with 358 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.92) was greater than the critical r-value (0.113). Hence, the result was

significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between reading at home and pupils’ performances in school work.

Hypothesis Two

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

1. Volunteering 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 Volunteering and Pupils’ performances in school work

Variable	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r
	$\sum y$	$\sum y^2$		
Volunteering (x)	4837	65937	308319	0.59*
Pupils’ performances in school work. (y)	22685	1466767		

***Significant at 0.05 level; df =358; N =360; Critical r-value = 0.113**

Table 4 presents the obtained r-value as (0.59). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.113) at 0.05 level with 358 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.59) was greater than the critical r-value (0.113). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between Volunteering and Pupils’ performances in school work.

Discussion of Findings

Analysis of data presented on Table 3 shows that the result was significant as the obtained r-value (0.92) was greater than the critical r-value (0.113) at 0.05 level of significance with 358 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. It is in line with Usen (2008) who stated that reading ability among Nigerian children is frustrated by absence of information materials at home and unwillingness by parents to assist them at home. The significance of the result caused the null hypothesis to be rejected while the alternative one was retained. 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 obtained r-value (0.59) was greater than the critical r-value (0.113) at 0.05 level of significance with 358 degrees of freedom. The result implies that there is a significant relationship between parents' volunteering and pupil's academic achievement. The findings agree with John (2006), who stated that when volunteers went to school to teach, conduct demonstration, coach and lead in science and mathematics clubs, the children academic performance improves. It also agrees with Magedanz (2007) findings, that volunteers improve teachers' effectiveness, increase pupils achievement in reading, grammar, science and mathematics. 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 is concluded that majority of the parents do not assist the children to read at home which negatively influence their performance in school work. It is concluded that there is significant relationship between reading at home and pupils' performance in school work. Also, volunteering has influence on children's' performance in school work.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are deemed necessary:

1. To key into academic benefits of volunteering, schools should emphasize this during PTA meeting and Open-days. They should identify, contact relevant persons/ agencies and present their needs for assistance.
2. Schools should create occasions where parents are invited to give talks on things that bother the child, at home and in schools.
3. The school organization should adopt a democratic approach to issues relating pupils/school welfare. This will enable the parents cooperatively solve common problems

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