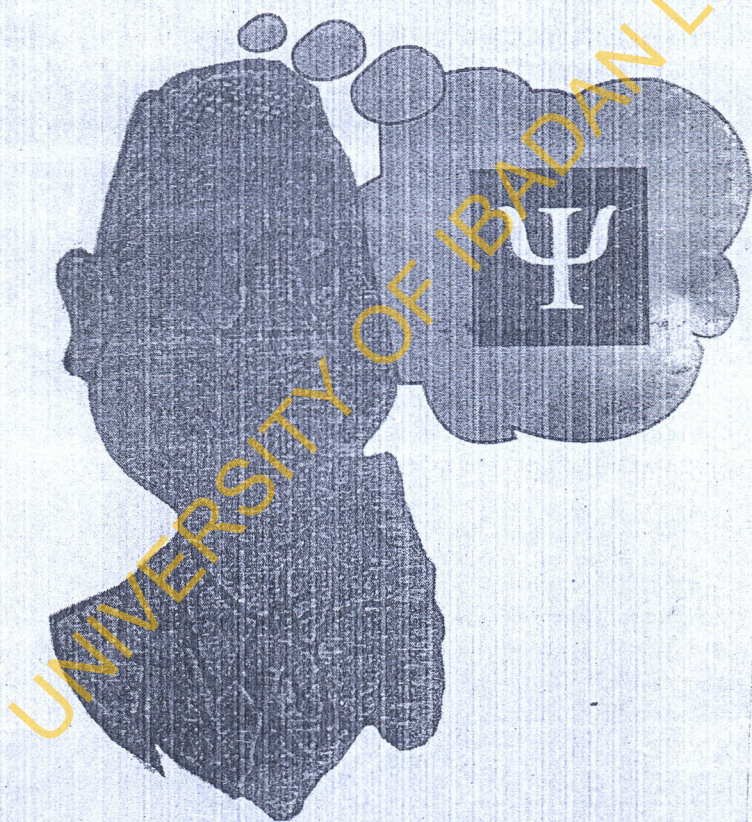


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Perception and Pattern of Parental Involvement in Basic Education Provision in Ogun State, Nigeria

E. A. Okwilagwe Ph.D
*Institute of Education,
University of Ibadan, Ibadan*
Email: geniaokwilagwe2004@yahoo.com

and

O. M. Aderibigbe
*International Centre for Educational Evaluation
University of Ibadan, Ibadan*
Email: aderibigbe3d@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study examined the perception and pattern of parental involvement in basic education provision at the junior secondary school level in Ogun State, Nigeria. Parents of one thousand three hundred and seventy-three (1,373) students randomly selected through multistage sampling procedure from thirty secondary schools participated in the study. A valid and reliable instrument, Parents' Perception and Pattern of Involvement Questionnaire that was premised on Epstein (1995) framework was used to obtain responses from the parents. Data were descriptively analysed using frequency counts, percentages and pie chart. The findings indicated that the parents have good perception of their involvement in the provision of basic education for their wards but the pattern revealed that in practice, parents see provision of education as the sole responsibility of the government. It was recommended that parents should not only have a positive perception but, rather, be actively and positively involved in the provision of education in the State. In addition, parent involvement in basic education can be enhanced through advocacy and education programmes.

Keywords: Parental involvements, patterns, perception, Epstein framework, basic education.

Introduction

Provision of basic education to school age children is a fundamental right of a child besides food, shelter and security. Parents' role in the education of their children and wards is therefore very central to their doing well in school. However, for parents to be involved, their perception on the purpose of basic education must be right. The importance of parents' involvement, according to Drake (2000) has reached a level of acceptance globally, as a key factor that can help improve the quality of schools. However, Drake contends that acceptance does not always translate into implementation, commitment or creativity, and as such much remains to be done. School and parents must cooperate and work collaboratively to improve the learning experience of all children (Carter, 2002). The rationale behind parents' involvement in education follows the reasoning that learning is most effective when there is congruence among school, home, and community. Functional parent involvement is considered to be an important aspect of school effectiveness. The aim of involvement mechanism is to provide productive environments of learning which complement one another. The parents help the schools and the schools also help the parents in return. Students in schools are confronted with critical academic, social, emotional and environmental challenges which can be solved by neither educators alone nor parents of the learners. More collaboration between the school and home will need to be focused on when dealing with these challenges.

Generally, there are many ways parents may feel constrained for being involved in education provision. According to Ojedele (1992) some parents do not appreciate the value of education for their children; some feel powerless to influence the school, while others still believe that the running of schools should be left to experts. Also, some parents believe they do not have the knowledge or social skills for volunteering in the classroom or serving on a parent advisory committee. Still other parents may feel it is not their responsibility to be involved in their children's education once the child has started school and he/she is now at the secondary school level. Perhaps, the various conception of basic education, apart from hampering children's learning are most likely to have negative implications on the development of other sectors of a nation. This is because, the quality of the product of education are major inputs into these sectors. Once the quality of personnel inputs is poor or inadequate, it is most likely to spell doom for these other sectors. The concept and nature of parents' involvement however emphasises that most parents are primarily interested in activities that involved their children; want to be helpful, or are more interested in the school programme and practices (Comer and Haynes, 1991). According to Frempong and Ma (2006), all the identified critical factors of parent involvement can be

summarised as discussion, home supervision, home-school communication, volunteering work for school and parents' expectation.

However, Epstein (1995) developed a framework for defining six different types of parental involvement. These parental involvement types which will guide the present study are: 'parenting' used to refer to basic parenting obligations for the child's health, safety, and preparedness for school and for providing positive home conditions that support educational progress; and 'communicating' which refers to the basic obligations of schools to communicate with families and with school regarding school programmes and student's progress. This creates a two-way communication channel between the home and school. Next is, 'volunteering' which refers to parents' participation in volunteering at school (such as assisting teachers, administrators, or students in classrooms) and in participating in school activities and events (such as student performances in plays, sports, and other events). 'Learning at home' refers to parental involvement in student's learning at home especially after school, to parent-child-initiated requests for help, and to teachers' ideas about parents' involvement in home learning activities. The next type is 'decision making' which refers to parental involvement in decision-making activities at school (such as participation in Advisory Councils, parent-teacher organisations, parent advocacy groups, and other school, district, or state level educational committees). Lastly is 'collaborating with community' which refers to school and parents collaborations with their respective communities and relevant community agencies that can enhance the learning opportunities of children (such as programmes for after-school care or health care, cultural events, and community services).

A close observation of the review of empirical studies on parental involvement, show quite a number of studies that have been conducted (Epstein, 2001; Lopez, 2001a & 2001b; VanVoorhis, 2001; Faires, Nicholis & Rickelman, 2000; Sanders & Epstein, 2000; Scribner, Young & Pedroza, 1999; Epstein, Herrick & Coates, 1996; Keith & Litchman, 1994). These studies cited were carried out at the international level; the difference in the characteristics of these countries in terms of the cultural and technological development could place a limit on the generalisability of their results to situations in Nigeria. Previous works on parental involvement in Nigeria, such as Inyang (2000) and FGN/UNICEF (1997) tend to indicate that parents are more involved in fund-raising activities than being involved in school-related activities. In some African countries like Tanzania which have similar education plans like Nigeria, Galabawa and Agu (2001) have observed that parents' involvement in basic education provision in these countries is hampered by Ministry bureaucratic rules and regulations.

The dearth of studies in parent involvement in Nigeria is serious both at the primary and secondary school levels. It is noted that the degree of parents' involvement usually declines drastically as children reach the teenage years (Catsambis & Garland, 1997; Epstein, 1995). In addition, the poor performance of students in various school subjects at school examinations and at externally conducted examinations is of great concern to stakeholders. The cause of this has been traced to many factors some of which are inadequate funding, poor instructional quality, teacher, school and student factors among others. The provision of free education by government in the old western states of Nigeria (Ogun State inclusive) for many decades and later in some other states of the country, has led to the erroneous belief that the onus lie on the government to provide and finance education to all its populace at all levels. As enunciated in the Nigerian National Policy of Education (2004, revised), government has said it cannot fund education alone, that it needs collaboration from other sectors- individuals, communities and others- to deliver quality education to its citizenry.

The foregoing and reasons serve as rationale in this study to investigate parents' perception and pattern of their involvement in the provision of basic education at the junior secondary level with a view to providing empirical evidence of the nature of such involvement among parents in Ogun State, Nigeria. The outcome of this has the potentials for engineering, formulating and changing educational policies regarding the level at which parents can be involved in the administration and management of education in the State and perhaps the whole country.

Research Questions

The researchers sought to provide answers to the following research questions.

1. What is the perception of parents on their involvement in providing basic education for their children and wards at the junior secondary level in Ogun State, Nigeria?
2. What is the pattern of parent involvement in the provision of basic education for their children and wards at the junior secondary level of education in Ogun State, Nigeria?

Materials and Methods

Research Type

A non-experimental research was adopted in this study in view of the fact that the researchers had no direct control of the independent variables in the study since parents perception are already held and their patterns of

involvement already exist. The objective was to identify these perception and patterns and possibly explain reasons for their existence.

Population, Sampling Technique and Sample

The target population for this study comprised all the junior secondary school two students and their parents in Ogun State. Multistage sampling procedure was used in selecting the sample for the study. The state has twenty local government areas which were clustered into three in consonance with the three senatorial zones (Ogun Central, Ogun East and Ogun West). Two local governments were randomly selected from each senatorial zone and five (5) schools were randomly selected per local government to give 30 schools. JSS II students in one intact class in each selected school and their parents participated in the study. This gave a total of 1,373 sampled students and parents respectively who participated in the study.

Instrumentation

The Parents' Perception and Pattern of Involvement Questionnaire (PPP1Q) was used to collect data. The perception section of the questionnaire was developed by the researchers. It had seventeen items which sought information on parent's perception of provision of basic education for their wards at the junior secondary class two level. It yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.68 using Cronbach Alpha method. The involvement section of the instrument sought information on involvement of parents in the provision of basic education for their children. This was premised on Epstein (1995) framework which consisted of: 'parenting', 'communicating', 'parent volunteering', 'decision making', 'parents help children with schoolwork at home' and 'educational activities outside of school'. Thus this section had six sub-sections which sought information about parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision making and collaborating with the community. The items were however, adapted from the work of Deutscher (2004) which used parent involvement data that were collected from the Family Survey 2002 and the Parent Volunteer Logs during the 2002-2003 school year at the Lewis Center for Educational Research (LCER). The number of items and their psychometric properties using Cronbach coefficient Alpha are: 'parenting' 8 (0.85), 'communication' 8 items (0.91), 'volunteering' 8 items (0.92), 'learning at home' 15 items (0.94), 'decision making' 8 items (0.84) and 'collaborating with the community' 10 items (0.91).

Data Collection Procedure

The instrument was given to parents to fill through their wards that were selected at the junior secondary school class two. After the collection of

copies of the questionnaire, a follow-up on (10%) of the parents sample were traced to ascertain that they actually completed the questionnaire themselves. The authenticated slip results returned showed a positive response.

Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics (tables, chart and frequency counts) to determine the perception and pattern of parents' involvement in basic education provision.

Results

The result of analysis with respect to the perception of parents on their involvement in providing basic education to their children and wards at the junior secondary level in Ogun State is presented in Table 1. The result shows that the parents have a fairly good perception of being involved in the provision of basic education for their wards. For instance between 72 -85% of the parents agreed that the importance any parent places on education should make him/her participate in providing education (item 6), that concerned parents should not wait for government to provide basic needs for their children to go to school (item 5), that students' performance depends on parents' support (item 4). The parents also agreed that there is the need to take education of children seriously (item 3), check children's school works at home (item 1) and that personal problems should not hinder involvement in the provision of basic education for one's child (item 2).

On the issue of funding of schools and school facilities between 50 - 68% of the parents agreed that they should assist in providing fund for running the schools for the benefit of their wards (item 9), even though they accept that fund raising for school's development should be parents' responsibility (item 8) but that fund provided by the government should be sufficient to run each school (item 12). Also, the parent agreed that the supply of furniture should be left to the government alone (item 10), that provision of basic education should be governments' sole responsibilities (item, 11), though they do not accept that teachers alone should influence children's performance (item 7). On the child's gender, (87.84%) agreed that a female child should be giving equal opportunity in education as a male child (item 14) and (64.17%) said that a male child should not be educated at the expense of the female child (item 15), but some parents (68.15%) agreed that the gender of the child is important to parent involvement (item 13).

The result of analysis of the pattern of parents' involvement in the provision of basic education for their children and wards at the junior

Table 1: Perception of Parents on their Involvement in Providing Basic Education

S/N	Statement	Agreed		Disagreed	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1.	There is no need to check children's school work at home.	201	17.05	978	82.95
2.	There is much personal problem to be solved than providing basic education for ones child.	324	27.88	838	72.12
3.	There is the need to take education of children seriously.	1005	83.98	161	16.02
4.	Students' performance depends on the level of parents support.	1009	84.24	159	15.76
5.	Concerned parents should not wait for government to provide basic needs for their children to go to school.	984	84.32	183	15.68
6.	The importance any parent place on education should make him/her participate in providing adequate education.	975	85.08	171	14.92
7.	Teachers alone are well capable to influence children's academic performance.	367	31.75	789	68.25
8.	Fund raising for school's development should be parents' responsibility.	560	47.66	615	52.34
9.	Parents should provide fund for school running for the benefit of their wards.	719	61.4	452	38.6
10.	Supply of furniture should be left to the government alone.	600	51.59	563	48.41
11.	Provision of basic education should be government's sole responsibility.	729	62.84	431	37.16
12.	Fund provided by the government should be sufficient to run each school.	799	68.88	361	31.12
13.	The gender of the child is important to parent involvement	779	68.15	364	31.85
14.	Female child should be giving equal opportunity in education	1019	87.84	141	12.16
15.	Male child should be educated at the expense of the female child	412	35.83	738	64.17

secondary level of education in Ogun State is presented in Table 2 and the accompanying Figure 1. Result shows that the involvement of parents in basic education provision is basically parenting that include activities such as obligation for the child's health, safety and preparedness for school and provision of positive home conditions that support educational progress, has the highest percentage (26%).

Table 2: Parents' Pattern of Involvement in the Provision of Basic Education

Component	Frequency	Percentage
Parenting	357	26
Communication	302	22
Volunteering	151	11
Learning at home	220	16
Decision-making	179	13
Collaborating with the community	164	12
Total	1,373	100%

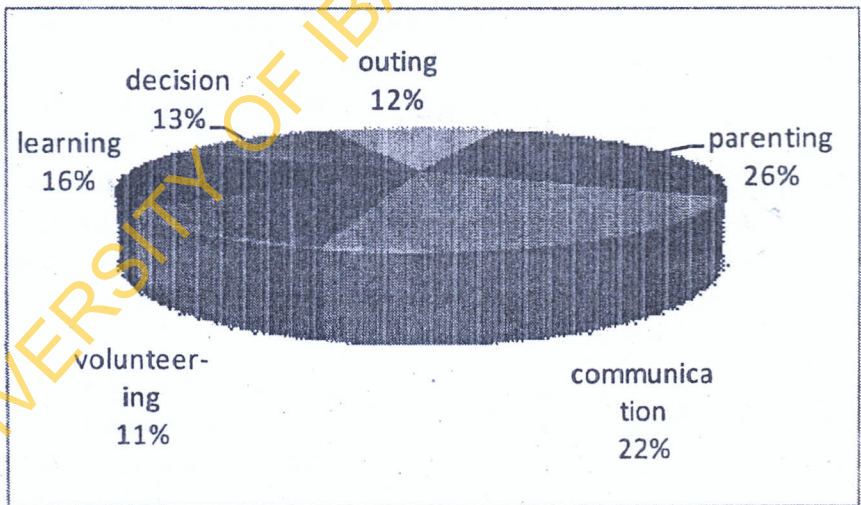


Figure 1: Pattern of Parents' Involvement in the Provision of Basic Education

The parents' level of involvement on the issue of communicating with the school and the teachers regarding school programmes and students' progress was (22%). Assisting with learning at home was (16%). On the issue of volunteering, which involves parents volunteering to assist teachers or students in the classrooms and in participating in school activities and

events, the result shows that parents' involvement was 11%. Parents' involvement on the aspect of decision-making was (13%) and collaboration with community (outing) was (12%).

Discussion

Findings of the study are discussed under two headings as follows:

The Perception of Parents on their Involvement in Providing Basic Education for their Children and Wards

The study indicated that the parents have good perception of their involvement in the provision of basic education for their wards. On the issue of parents' views on the importance of education, provision of basic needs and support, about 72-84% of these parents felt strongly that these are their responsibilities. On the issue of funding the school, and the provision of school facilities, the parents felt they could collaborate with government but that government should fully fund education and provide necessary facilities like furniture for the learners. However, on the issue of gender and provision of education between (64-87.8%) agreed that there should not be gender discrimination in opportunity to education. This is in contrast to the views of about 68% who agreed that the gender of the child is important to parent involvement. Findings indicate that parents generally have a positive perception of provision of education for their children and wards even though some still believe that government should solely provide for the education of their children and wards including everything that will make the system work. These findings find support in the work of Omotoso (2010) who reported that school teachers perceive many parents involvement in their wards education to be poor.

Findings agree with those of Okwilagwe (2005) who found that except in occasional cases of disciplinary problems, 'Open Day' and 'Sport Day' (p. 138), parents were not actively involved in the academic activities that are related to the success of their wards in public schools in Ibadan metropolis even though they have free access to visit and make inquiries about their wards. The study also reported that parents' involvements in private schools where they pay high schools fees were not different.

The Pattern of Parents Involvement in the Provision of Basic Education for their Children and Wards at the Junior Secondary School Level

The findings of the study, in relation to the pattern of parental involvement in the provision of basic education for their children and wards at the junior secondary level in Ogun State, indicated that parenting representing 26%, top the list. This was followed by communication 22%, assisting with learning

at home 16%, decision making at PTA meeting 13%, outing 12%, volunteering 11%. The findings generally indicated a low level of involvement of parents in the provision of basic education as parenting took the lion share whereas they are less involved in activities related to school like decision-making and volunteering activity. This finding was in support of earlier studies by Inyang (2000) and FGN/UNICEF (1993) which found that there was a generally low involvement of parents and communities in the provision of basic education in Nigeria. It also indicated that parents do not have time to be involved in out of home or community learning like taking their children out to learn from the various activities the society provides. Besides, the study findings that parents are more involved in parenting, followed by communication, then assisting with learning at home, contradicts the findings of Inyang (2000) who observed that parents are more involved in fund-raising, general maintenance and the provision of infrastructure.

The finding of this study in respect of assisting with learning at home corroborates the work of Epstein, Simon, and Salinas (1997) who observed that parents could be more involved in learning activities at home. Their study of the Teachers Involve Parents in School work (TIPS) Language Arts programme designed by teachers and conducted by students documented that with interactive homework, most families in inner-city middle schools who would not otherwise have become involved became involved in their children's education on a regular schedule when informed about it.

This research found out that communication was next in the hierarchy of parents' involvement when compared with other components of parents' involvement. This can be attributed to the use of the cell phone, which has made communication more effective and frequent. Findings with respect to communication are contrary to the findings of Sui-Chu and Willms, (1996) who reported that the association between school-home communication and students' achievement was relatively small. Parents Teacher Association (PTA) has an important role to play in the education of children especially on matters concerning decision making about the school and the children. According to Inyang (2000) when parents jointly take an important decision about the school and the children's welfare, it goes a long way in ensuring that the school is properly run. Also, it could lead to curbing of truancy, foster increased class attendance, attitude to school and more importantly improved academic achievement (Omotoso, 2010).

The over-dependency syndrome of the public on the government generally and especially in the area of education -a privilege they have enjoyed freely for so long- may be the reason for the poor parental involvement observed in this study. The findings reveal that parent perceive education to be the sole and exclusive government responsibility. There is a

serious need for a new change of attitude and way of thinking of parents in Ogun State in particular and in Nigeria in general for the benefit of the provision of quality basic education so as to fast track the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in line with other countries of the world.

Conclusion

In this study, the perception of parents on their involvement in providing basic education for their wards seems to be more positive than negative. The importance parents place on education should lead to enhance involvement in provision of education. However, the pattern revealed in the study do not seem to match these parents' practice. Provision of education is seen as the sole responsibilities of the government.

Recommendations

Parents should not only have a positive perception but, rather be actively and be positively involved in providing basic education. This requires a concerted effort of all stakeholders in the education sector in Nigeria such as curriculum planners, text book writers, teachers and the government. Also, parent involvement should be given special attention at all levels of Nigerian educational system in view of the potential implications of such measure in all the academic development of the child. Finally, the parents should be specially educated on their role of being involved in all forms of school activities to enhance the academic performance of their children and wards.

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Biography

Dr E.A. Okwilagwe is a Senior Research Fellow in the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Evaluation of the same University. Her area of research interest is in the evaluation of educational programmes and application of evaluation in the teaching and learning of Social Science subjects at the basic and secondary education levels.