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## PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT TOWARDS ACHIEVING QUALITY AND EQUAL-ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*Quality in education has become an imperative given global efforts at equity and access has not yielded the expected economic growth and national development, especially in developing countries. This research aims at providing solutions to role of parental involvement in achieving quality and equal-access in Nigeria. It will serve as an eye opener to parents and caregivers in helping to adjust their mode of collaboration towards achieving better future for their children no matter their busy schedules. A survey approach was used through self-administered questionnaires, and analysis was done using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses. Based on the findings, it was revealed that parental involvement in early childhood education and pre-primary education had impact on achieving quality and equal-access in Oyo State ( $F_{(4,196)} = 30.323$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). The socio-economic characteristics of parents had significant impact on achieving quality and equal-access in early childhood education and pre-primary education ( $F_{(4,196)} = 0.132$ ;  $p < .05$ ). It could be concluded that parental involvement (emotional care and support) has a very big influence on early childhood education, particularly the academic performance of the child. The level of the parental educational attainment and exposure determines the age at which the child is being enrolled in school. This implies that, residential setting of the parents has nothing to do with the educational performance of the child. Based on the findings, it was recommended that parents should understand why their involvement in achieving quality and equal-access to education is so important to their children's success.*

**Keywords:** Parental involvement, achieving quality, equal-access, early childhood education and equal-access.

## Introduction

Education is one experience that most children worldwide have in common and the most common means by which societies prepare their young for the future. The underlying goal of all education is to create a positive change in the pupils' knowledge, achievement, and behavior. Education is not just about getting children into school, but making sure that all school work in the best interest of the children entrusted to them, schools provide various learning experiences that prepare children for future living.

Recognising the important contribution of education to political, economic and social dynamics of society, Nwogu (2015) states "not only is education the greatest force that can be used to bring about redress, it is also the greatest investment that the nation can make for the quick development of its economic, political, sociological and human resources".

Parents are the most Influential role models children are likely to have, having been their first contact in life. The American foremost neurosurgeon, tried to underscore when he noted in his book, *Gifted Hands*: "All that I am or ever hope to be, I owe my mother", I am not sure I want to say it just like that, but my mother, Sonya Carson, was the earliest, strongest, and most impacting force in my life and it would be impossible to tell about my accomplishments without starting with my mother's influence. For me to tell my story means, beginning with hers" (Ogunmade, Ashiru, & Ilamina, 2019). Parental involvement in school takes many forms including good parenting in the home, provision of a secured and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion good involvement of constructive social and educational values and high aspiration relative to personal fulfilment and good citizenship, contact with school to share information, participation in school events, participation in school work and school governance (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Ogunmade, Ashiru, and Ilamina (2019) observed that parental involvement is influenced by family, social class, maternal level of education, maternal psycho-social health and single parent status. For instance, parental involvement is strongly influenced by the child's level of attainment, the higher the level of attainment, the more parents are involved. Literacy is not a luxury; it is a right and responsibility. If our world is to meet the challenges of twenty-first century, we must harness the energy and creativity of all our citizens; (Bill Clinton, 1994).

The future of a nation's socio-economic and political wellbeing lies with the quality of children's education, because they are the future leaders, (Babajide, 2003; Ogunmade, Ashiru, & Ilamina, 2019). Parents should know that their wards are future leaders and should do all that is within their power, to see to their mental, social, emotional and economic welfare.

It has often been said that parents are their children's first and best teachers. Without question, parents provide children with the basic foundations on which successful learning experiences can be built. The support, patience and understanding of parents have a profound effect on both the academic and social development of children. The involvement of parents in children's academic affairs, achieving quality and equal access significantly. This is equally true for elementary, middle and high school children. Educational background and socio-economic status has a relatively strong impact on parent-school partnership compared to other factors in their involvement of supporting their children to attain learning outcomes. According to Al-Matalaka (2014), parents' involvement has a positive impact on children's achievement at all levels of socio-economic status. Also, educational background and socio-economic level has greater impact on achieving quality and equal-access in early childhood

education with their children education, which is aimed at helping children to have better education.

Gonzalez-Mena (2011) defined parental involvement as a combination of commitment and active participation on the part of the parents to the school and child. Anyikwa and Obidike (2012) described parental involvement as the participation and support of parents at school and in the home, which directly and positively impacts the educational performance of their children. It is also the provision of curricular and co-curricular support by parents to promote effective learning for their children. Parental involvement entails seeing parents as active collaborators in their own children's learning and development and ensuring that they are well informed about their children's school lives and clear about the ways in which they can work with the school (Williams & Ullman, 2002). According to Chan (1995), "parental involvement is not something that is 'done' to parents". It is rather what parents and the school do collectively and collaboratively to ensure adequate and effective policy making and implementation, discipline, funding, facilities and staffing for the success of children.

A large body of evidence demonstrates a strong and positive link between parents' involvement and interest in a child's learning and subsequent adjustment and achievement (Curriculum for Excellence, 2010; Ali, 2012). Anyikwa and Obidike (2012) report that for children to maximize their potentials from schooling, they need the full involvement of their parents. The importance of parental involvement in children's learning positively affects the children's performance at school (Morrison, 2007). Kindiki (2009) observes that when there is adequate parental involvement in their children's education, an increase in the children's academic motivation and achievement can be observed. Schools and parents working in partnership make pupils realize that people who take care of them in both environments are investing and coordinating time and resources to help them succeed. Cheeks (2012) reviewed that parental involvement in education, either in school or at home, creates partnerships among schools, parents, and communities. The result in partnerships among pupils, parents, and teachers develop effective communication from home to school and school to home. Through active and ongoing communication, parents and teachers share information and resources regarding pupils' academic and behavioral conduct. These efforts establish a solid foundation for both families and schools to help children succeed in school and in their future. On the other hand, proponents also suggest that part of the benefit of parental involvement in education in any situation is that doing so can result in positive change in homes, communities and the wider society (UNICEF, 2009; RSA, 2010). In all, parental involvement can be seen as a dynamic avenue that can bring about change not only in schools and education systems, but also in homes and societies.

### **Statement of the Problems**

Pre-schools education is the foundation of education of any child which forms an essential part of his or her education, this may be formal or informal. This level of education is to provide for the physical, motor, health, nutritional, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and social development of the pre-school child. If child education can provide these vital necessities which are fundamental in human life, it is not therefore unlikely to have an important and strong relationship with the pupils' performance at the primary school level and perhaps at the secondary and tertiary levels.

Parental involvement in school development has been a review of interest due to some parents' view of their roles in schools improvement, quality and equal-access to education. Parent-school partnership is the ultimate platform for promoting quality and equal-access to

early childhood education. Therefore, this study investigates achieving quality and equal-access to early childhood education in Oyo State, Nigeria viz- a- viz parental involvement.

## Literature Review

### Research Hypothesis

The following null hypotheses were used for testing in the study:

Ho1: Parental involvement in early childhood education does not have impact in achieving quality and equal-access.

Ho2: The Socio-economic characteristics of parents will not have an impact in achieving quality and equal-access in early childhood education.

### Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey research which attempts to describe parental involvement towards achieving equal-access and qualitative education among pre-school children. The population for the study comprised all parents in all groups whose children are in the pre-school classes in Oyo State. The study used simple random sampling to select the sample of five hundred (500) parents whose children are in pre-school in Early Childhood Centres. The instrument used for data collection was questionnaire titled “Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education Questionnaire (PIECEQ)” containing 18 items. The modified 5 point likert scale was employed for the rating of the responses. The questionnaires were distributed in primary schools, through the head teachers of the selected schools. The face validity and content validity of the questionnaire PIECEQ was established. The descriptive statistics was used to analyse the demographic section of the questionnaire. While chi-square method was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### Result

The analysis featured descriptive tool first before answering to the testing of hypotheses.

**Table 1 reveals the demographic information of the participants.**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	222	44.4
Female	278	55.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
NCE	183	36.6
B.Sc./B.Sc.(Ed)/B.Ed	231	46.2
Master	67	13.4
Ph.D	19	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Parents Occupational Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Has never worked outside home for pay	35	7
Own small business	99	19.8
Farmer	58	11.6
Artisans	122	24.4
Professional	174	34.8

Technicians	12	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Income Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Less than N18,000	51	10.2
N18,000 – N40,000	121	24.2
N40,000 – N80,000	68	13.6
N80,000 – N150,000	74	14.8
N150,000 – N250,000	41	8.2
N250,000 & above	65	13
Don't know	44	8.8
Choose not to answer	36	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey 2020

The above table shows 500 respondents were used while 222 (44.4%) male responded to the questionnaire, while 278 (55.6%) female respondents. The above table shows that 46.2% of the respondents have a B.Sc./B.Sc. (Ed) educational qualifications were 36.6% are NCE holders while 13.4% and 3.8% are Masters and Ph.D. holders respectively, this implies that more than half of the respondents are qualified to be teachers in the upper primary section of the schools. 99 parents (19.8%) own small business whereas 58 (11.6%) respondents shows that they are farmers either on part time or full time bases and 122 (24.4%) of the respondents indicates that they are artisans while 174 (34.8%) of the respondents shows that they are professional and 12 (2.4%) of the respondents are technicians. The table further showed that 51 parents (10.2% of the respondents earn N18,000 or less while 121 (24.2%) earn between N18,000-N40,000. Also 68 (13.6%) earn between N40,000 – N80,000, whereas 74 (14.8%) earn between N80,000 – N150,000 and 41 (8.2%) earn between N150,000 – N250,000 and 65 (13%) earn between N250,000 and above; however 44 (8.8%) respondents cannot tell actual income earn in a month while 36 (7.2%) respondents choose not to responded to the items.

**Research Hypothesis**

Ho1: The higher the level of parental involvement in early childhood education and pre-primary education, the higher the achieving quality and equal-access in Oyo State.

**Table 2: ANOVA: The impact of parental involvement to early childhood education and pre-primary education on achieving quality and equal-access**

Model	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3485.991	4	871.498	30.323	.000*
Within Groups	4167.403	496	28.741		
Total	7653.393	494			

\* denotes Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 2 reveals that the higher the level of parental involvement in early childhood education and pre-primary education, the higher the achieving quality and equal-access in Oyo State ( $F_{(4,196)} = 30.323$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Hence hypothesis 1 was rejected. This implies that level of parental involvement in early childhood education and pre-primary education had impact on achieving quality and equal-access in Oyo State.

Ho2: The socio-economic characteristics of parents do not have an impact on achieving quality and equal-access to early childhood education and pre-primary education in Oyo State

**Table 3: ANOVA: The impact of socio-economic characteristics of parents on achieving quality and equal-access to early childhood education and pre-primary education**

Model	Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8913.319	4	751.528	0.132	.000*
Within Groups	402.200	496	22.161		
Total	9315.519	494			

\* denotes Significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 3 reveals that socio-economic characteristics of parents have significant impact on achieving quality and equal-access to early childhood education and pre-primary education ( $F_{(4,196)} = 0.132$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Hence hypothesis 2 was rejected. This implies that socio-economic characteristics have an impact on early childhood education and pre-primary education in Oyo State.



## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School owners, Executive Secretaries and Ministry of Education should see parent as partners and as such, they should be co-opted into special school programme that will facilitate their sense of belonging.
2. The school head teachers and teachers need to reaching and involving parents in many positive ways, in designing strategies implementable that will result in improved parental involvement.
3. Parents should be sensitized by head teachers and teachers during meetings on the need for their interest in schools' achieving quality and equal-access programmes and sponsoring schools' extracurricular activities.
4. Head teachers should make more efforts to mobilize the parents towards participating in schools' achieving quality and equal-access programmes and making them knows the importance like seminars and meetings of teachers, administrative functionaries and parents.
5. They should help parents understand why their involvement in achieving quality and equal-access programmes implementation is so important to their children's school success. When improved, parental involvement would become a strategy for the enhancement of academic quality and continuous improvement in the learning opportunities and experiences offered by schools.

## Conclusion

It is indeed very necessary for Nigeria to expand in the equality of provision of educational opportunity, also diversity in multi-cultural and multi-ethnic development of the people should be taken into consideration while trying to expand educational opportunity for the interest of the people. To make the equal educational opportunity a reality the government need to design core programmes, teaching methods and also make available teaching resources to facilitate learning and increase pupils' likelihoods of attaining success in achieving quality and equal-access in involving parents as a major stakeholder.

Therefore, it is possible to attain greater achieving quality and equal-access to early childhood education and pre-primary education in Nigeria, if areas of waste are curtailed and resources preserved are used towards expanding the existing facilities to accommodate an increased number of pupils in Nigerian early childhood education.

This study therefore revealed that parental involvement is an important attribute to enhancing or achieving quality and equal-access to early childhood education and pre-primary education. Hence, parents should be given specially training to understand their role in the educational attainment of their children.

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