



Influence of Parental Guidance on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated influence of parental guidance on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The research adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 66,164 which comprised of all the secondary school students in Rivers State as at the period of this study. A sample size of 399 was drawn from the population using the Tsaro Yamen formula. The study implied the simple random sampling technique. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled "Parental Guidance and Academic Performance Questionnaire (PGAPQ) with a four point rating scale designed to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was content and face validated by two experts in the fields of Guidance and Counselling and Educational Measurement and Evaluation, while a reliability coefficient value of 0.74 was obtained using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Mean and Standard Deviation was used to answer the research questions, while z-test Analysis was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 significance level. It was found that: there is no significant difference in the opinion of students on the extent to which parental, nurture, parental attention and parental care influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. The study concluded that parental guidance is a key dimension of effective parenting, incorporating constructs such as nurture, attention, care, attachment, acceptance, cohesion and love. The study amongst others recommended that, parents should play a leading role in supporting their children's education since they are the prime educators and the first agents of socialization that expose children to the social and academic world, parents should set high and realistic expectations for their children's educational attainment. These high and realistic expectations will motivate their children to perform well academically and that parents should also ensure home supervision by establishing and enforcing the rules and regulations regarding school and home activities as well as providing opportunities and environment conducive for learning.

Keywords: Parental Guidance, Academic Performance, Secondary School Students, Rivers State.

INTRODUCTION

The family is the primary social institution one is born into. In this context, parents include biological and adoptive parents, guardians and custodial grandparents. A child comes into this world in the form of a tabula rasa (a clear slate) and acquires everything through its life span. Primary knowledge of what is right and what is wrong are learnt through the parent's instructions and advice from a very young age. It is through constant parental guidance that one's life is shaped and it also defines what one is about to become. Guidance could be of any form. The parental guidance could be through constant advice and instructions or by setting themselves as an example for the children (Eilam, 2011). Either way, the child's thoughts and understanding of the world is altered. The degree to which the parents do the same also matters and the characteristics seen in the children as a result of this guidance also varies from one child to another with variation in the degree. To set in the right track, one child may need constant guidance while another may get affected because of constant intervention (Mahaffy, 2014). However, no guidance from the parents would mean, a lost child in the city (not literally a city, but amidst the hustle and bustle of life events). With parenting rights come responsibilities. Responsibly nurturing and caring for the child has a massive impact on the child's growth and development as well as their performance. Instilling the values of the family and sharing the practices of religious beliefs with their children and monitoring the child's activities and

behaviors, while encouraging age-appropriate autonomy are key aspects to this guidance. In the view of Fan (2011), parents have got to be cautious about how they balance their authority and protect the child's rights at the same time in order to improve and enhance the child's academic performance. Along with all of this, the role of the parents is also to impart the fundamental rights onto the children just so that they can face the world boldly.

According to Okpala, Okpala and Smith (2011), scientific findings say that children and adolescents have immature brain development indicating need for strong parental guidance in decision making and ensure effective academic performance. It also says that children are less involved in high risk behaviours when they are well connected with the parents and the parents play a significant role in constantly guiding their children especially in their academics. With this responsibility, it is not just the children benefiting from parental nurture, parental attention and parental care, there are also changes seen in the caregivers. They grow and develop hand in hand. The society that the child belongs to must be aware of the role of parents in the child's upbringing and avoid intervention into this matter, unless the case is severe. Parental rights are fundamental and must be protected lack of which will lead to inability of parents to determine what is best for their children.

From all the points stated above, one can draw that different parenting forms exist and each of them having their own advantages and disadvantages. Different parenting styles are authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved parenting. The degree of direct parental involvement decreases as one moves from authoritarian to uninvolved parenting, in the same order. Therefore, parental guidance is a strong pillar that must be set in every child's upbringing. Parental guidance also encompasses all about the well-being of children, young people and (future) parents. What is fostering this well-being, can of course be very different. One family may experience certain activities as supportive, another family may wish for other forms of educational guidance (Khan & Malik, 2019).

Parental guidance is a key dimension of effective parenting, incorporating constructs such as parental nurture, parental attention, parental care, attachment, acceptance, cohesion and love (Jacob & Leonard, 2014). Parental guidance has been defined as "parental behaviors toward the child, such as praising, encouraging and giving physical affection, which indicate to the child that he or she is accepted and loved" (Barnes, 2010). In general, research has consistently found that greater parental guidance predicts better adolescent functioning and fewer adolescent problem behaviors in a range of domains, including alcohol misuse (Fan, 2011; Barrera & Li, 2016). Longitudinal research on parent-child involvement also indicates that low levels of such involvement are indirectly associated with later adolescent alcohol and other drug use, through poor parental monitoring and involvement in deviant peer friendships (Ary, 2019).

In the past, several scholars are interested with the poor academic performance of students. Their study revealed that various factors are responsible for scholastic failure of students, such as low socio-economic background, student's cognitive abilities, school related factors, environment of the home, or the support given by the parents and other family members (Khan & Malik, 2019; Fan, 2011; Alvarez, Roces & Garcia, 2012). Generally, schools are considered as places which provide appropriate learning environment for a child, but importance of parents and community cannot be ignored. Parents, adult family members, and siblings contribute significantly to various components of personality of the child particularly and in improving his/her academic performance. The pivotal role of parents still continues as it has been recognized by the teachers and parents themselves that they are essential for complete development of the personality and career of their children. Gonzalez (2012) indicated that "without the children's parental support, it is hard for teachers to devise academic experiences to help students learn meaningful content". Parents teach and train children early in their lives, the fundamental skills, attitudes and values necessary for day-to-day living (Fan, 2011). Similarly, Schneider and Lee (2010) asserted that all parents have desired to do something better for their children according to their available resources, but the extent and effectiveness of parental guidance depends on a variety of reasons, such as, ethnicity, family income, and home environment and their awareness about the importance of education. Some poor parents make some arrangements for helping their children in studies and to do their home assignments, while others rely on school for the education of their children, as they do not have enough resources to spend extra money on home tuitions etc. This results in poor performance in academic achievement of their children. Given the above, the study seeks to investigate the influence of parental guidance on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of parental guidance on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the extent to which parental nurture influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. Examine the extent to which parental attention influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. Determine the extent to which parental care influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent does parental nurture influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does parental attention influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does parental care influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 alpha level.

1. There is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental nurture influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental attention influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental care influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The research adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 66,164 which comprised of all the secondary school students in Rivers State as at the period of this study. A sample size of 399 was drawn from the population using the Tsaro Yamen formula. The study implied the simple random sampling technique. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled "Parental Guidance and Academic Performance Questionnaire (PGAPQ) with a four point rating scale designed to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument was content and face validated by two experts in the fields of Guidance and Counselling and Educational Measurement and Evaluation, while a reliability coefficient value of 0.74 was obtained using the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation. Mean and Standard Deviation was used to answer the research questions, while z-test Analysis was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 significance level.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does parental nurture influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?*

Table: 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of the extent to which parental nurture influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	\bar{X}	SD	Rmks
1	Parental nurture brings about consistent communication between the parents and children.	2.75	1.40	High Extent
2	It offers the child the opportunity of becoming responsible in life.	2.89	1.52	High Extent
3	Parental nurture builds thought leadership in a child.	2.74	1.99	High Extent
4	It establishes contact immediately from the home	2.41	1.28	High Extent
5	It improves the relationship among students.	1.94	1.59	Moderate Extent
Grand Score		2.55	1.56	High Extent

From the table above, the mean score of 2.75 and standard deviation score of 1.40 implies that parental nurture brings about consistent communication between the parents and children, the mean score of 2.89 and standard deviation score of 1.52 entails that parental nurture offers the child the opportunity of becoming responsible in life, the mean score of 2.74 and standard deviation score of 1.99, provides that parental nurture builds thought leadership in a child, the mean score of 2.41 and standard deviation score of 1.28 implies that it establishes contact immediately from the home, the mean score of 1.94 and standard deviation score of 1.59 implies that parental nurture It improves the relationship among students, while the grand mean score of 2.55 and standard deviation score of 1.56 provides that parental nurture influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does parental attention influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?*

Table: 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of the extent to which parental attention influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

S/N	Questionnaire Items	\bar{X}	SD	Rmks
6	Parental attention brings about high quality interaction where students feel heard.	2.46	1.51	High Extent
7	Avoids overstimulation and eliminates many distraction.	2.27	1.92	High Extent
8	Low stress environment frees student from the fear of failure	2.21	1.50	High Extent
9	Ability to personalize conversations and assignments.	2.05	1.61	High Extent
10	Gives students the opportunity to step up and not rely on others	2.24	1.48	High Extent
Grand Score		2.25	1.60	High Extent

From the table above, the mean score of 2.46 and standard deviation score of 1.51 implies that parental attention brings about high quality interaction where students feel heard, the mean score of 2.27 and standard deviation score of 1.92 entails that it avoids overstimulation and eliminates many distraction, the mean score of 2.21 and standard deviation score of 1.50, provides that low stress environment frees student from the fear of failure, the mean score of 2.41 and standard deviation score of 1.28 implies that parental attention provides the ability to personalize conversations and assignments, the mean score of 1.94 and standard deviation score of 1.59 implies that parental attention gives students the opportunity to step up and not rely on others, while the grand mean score of 2.25 and standard deviation score of 1.60 provides that parental attention influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: *To what extent does parental care influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?*

Table: 3. Mean and Standard Deviation of the extent to which parental care influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

S/N	Questionnaire Items	\bar{X}	SD	Rmks
11	Paternal presence at home increases offspring academic performance	2.31	1.53	High Extent
12	Parental care ensures children have less aggression.	3.03	1.81	High Extent
13	Parental care potentially increases overall offspring survival by adjusting the relative amount of time.	2.54	1.46	High Extent
14	It represents the sole benefit of parental involvement.	2.31	2.01	High Extent
15	It provides that parents can control offspring developmental rate.	3.05	0.94	Low Extent
Grand Score		2.65	1.55	High Extent

From the table above, the mean score of 2.31 and standard deviation score of 1.53 implies that paternal presence at home increases offspring academic performance, the mean score of 3.03 and standard deviation score of 1.81 entails that parental care ensures children have less aggression, the mean score of 2.54 and standard deviation score of 1.46, provides that parental care potentially increases overall offspring survival by adjusting the relative amount of time, the mean score of 2.31 and standard deviation score of 2.01 implies that parental care represents the sole benefit of parental involvement, the mean score of 3.05 and standard deviation score of 0.94 implies that parental care provides that parents can control offspring developmental rate, while the grand mean score of 2.65 and standard deviation score of 1.55 provides that parental care influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Test of Hypotheses

HO₁:

There is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental nurture influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Z-test of the difference in the opinion of students on the extent to which parental nurture influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

Category of Students	\bar{X}	SD	N	Df	z-cal	z-crit
Males	3.291	2.940	192	397	1.103	1.960
Females	3.873	3.874	207			

Since the calculated z-value of 1.103 is less than the critical value of 1.960, it is imperative therefore to state here that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental nurture influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State is accepted, and the alternate is thus rejected.

HO₂: There is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental attention influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Z-test of the difference in the opinion of students on the extent to which parental attention influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

Category of Students	\bar{X}	SD	N	Df	z-cal	z-crit
Males	3.921	3.610	192	397	0.916	1.960
Females	3.212	3.246	207			

Since the calculated z-value of 0.916 is less than the critical value of 1.960, it is imperative therefore to state here that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental attention influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State is accepted, and the alternate is thus rejected.

HO₃: There is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental care influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Z-test of the difference in the opinion of students on the extent to which parental care influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

Category of Students	\bar{X}	SD	N	Df	z-cal	z-crit
Males	4.420	3.014	192	397	1.201	1.960
Females	3.011	3.670	207			

Since the calculated z-value of 1.201 is less than the critical value of 1.960, it is imperative therefore to state here that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the opinions

of students on the extent to which parental care influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State is accepted, and the alternate is thus rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

One of the major findings of this study was that there is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental nurture influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. This finding is in line with the view of Okpala, Okpala and Smith (2011), scientific findings say that children and adolescents have immature brain development indicating need for strong parental nurture in ensuring effective academic performance. It also says that children are less involved in high risk behaviours when they are well connected with the parents and the parents play a significant role in constantly guiding their children especially in their academics. With this responsibility, it is not just the children benefiting from parental nurture, parental attention and parental care, there are also changes seen in the caregivers. They grow and develop hand in hand. The society that the child belongs to must be aware of the role of parents in the child's upbringing and avoid intervention into this matter, unless the case is severe. Parental rights are fundamental and must be protected; lack of which will lead to inability of parents to determine what is best for their children. It was also found that there is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental attention influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. From the above, one can draw that different parenting forms exist and each of them having their own advantages and disadvantages. Different parenting styles are authoritarian, authoritative, permissive and uninvolved parenting. The degree of direct parental involvement decreases as one moves from authoritarian to uninvolved parenting, in the same order. Therefore, parental guidance is a strong pillar that must be set in every child's upbringing. Parental guidance also encompasses all about the well-being of children, young people and (future) parents. What is fostering this well-being, can of course be very different. One family may experience certain activities as supportive, another family may wish for other forms of educational guidance (Khan & Malik, 2019). Finally it was found that there is no significant difference in the opinions of students on the extent to which parental care influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. The parental guidance could be through constant advice and instructions or by setting themselves as an example for the children (Eilam, 2011). Either way, the child's thoughts and understanding of the world is altered. The degree to which the parents do the same also matters and the characteristics seen in the children as a result of this guidance also varies from one child to another with variation in the degree. To set in the right track, one child may need constant guidance while another may get affected because of constant intervention (Mahaffy, 2014). However, no guidance from the parents would mean, a lost child in the city (not literally a city, but amidst the hustle and bustle of life events). With parenting rights come responsibilities. Responsibly nurturing and caring for the child has a massive impact on the child's growth and development as well as their performance. Instilling the values of the family and sharing the practices of religious beliefs with their children and monitoring the child's activities and behaviors, while encouraging age-appropriate autonomy are key aspects to this guidance. In the view of Fan (2011), parents have got to be cautious about how they balance their authority and protect the child's rights at the same time in order to improve and enhance the child's academic performance. Along with all of this, the role of the parents is also to impart the fundamental rights onto the children just so that they can face the world boldly.

CONCLUSIONS

Parental guidance has been defined as "parental behaviors toward the child, such as praising, encouraging and giving physical affection, which indicate to the child that he or she is accepted and loved. Parental guidance is a key dimension of effective parenting, incorporating constructs such as parental nurture, parental attention, parental care, attachment, acceptance, cohesion and love. In general, research has consistently found that greater parental guidance predicts better adolescent functioning and fewer adolescent problem behaviors in a range of domains, including alcohol misuse. Longitudinal research on parent-child involvement also indicates that low levels of such involvement are indirectly associated with later adolescent alcohol and other drug use, through poor parental monitoring and involvement in deviant peer friendships. Conclusively, there is no significant difference in the opinion of students on the extent to which parental, nurture, parental attention and parental care influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, it is recommended that;

- In a situation, where majority of the parents are illiterates and economically depressed, the responsibilities of the school and the teacher increases more than the normal situation. The teachers should be more caring and consider their students' needs and interests and should help them in defining their personal goals. They should have the missionary zeal in performing their duties by providing the child with sufficient nurture, attention and care.
- Parents should play a leading role in supporting their children's education since they are the prime educators and the first agents of socialization that expose children to the social and academic world.
- Parents should set high and realistic expectations for their children's educational attainment. These high and realistic expectations will motivate their children to perform well academically.
- Parents should also ensure home supervision by establishing and enforcing the rules and regulations regarding school and home activities as well as providing opportunities and environment conducive for learning.
- Again, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) should encourage and educate illiterate parents and help parents with disability nominate a person from the immediate family to guide their wards.

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