Effects of Parental Involvement on Their Children's Academic Achievement in Primary Level Classes

Sushanta Kumar Roul
Associate Professor in Education,
Post Box No. 79,
Faculty of Educational & Behavioral Science,
Bahir Dar University, Ethiopia, Africa

Abstract: The aim of this research to explore the effects of parental involvement on the academic achievement of their children at primary level classes in Aba’ala district of Afar region in Ethiopia. Specifically, the study has three objectives, like: to study the level of parental involvement on children’s academic activities in primary level classes in schools; to investigate the parental participation in different managerial activities in primary schools; and to investigate the different factors that influence on parental involvement in the academic activities of their children’s education in primary level classes. Descriptive survey method was employed to study the effects of parental involvement on their children’s academic achievement in primary level classes. The researcher selected only 6 primary schools randomly through lottery method from the target area out of which 6 principals and 30 parents of the primary students were selected through comprehensive sampling and random sampling technique through lottery method respectively. Parental involvement on their children’s academic activities questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect data from the principal and semi structured interview was conducted with the parents of the students in primary schools. Percentage was used as the statistical technique for the analysis and interpretation of the quantitative data and data collected through semi structured interview with parents were analyzed, narrated, and organized in a systematical form. The major findings of the study were: Parental involvement has significance effect in better academic performance of the students. This research has proved that parental involvement enhanced the academic achievements of their children. Therefore, it concluded that parental involvement in the academic achievement of their children’s should be complemented with participation at home and school activities if good academic performance is to be realised.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Academic achievement, Effects, Primary level classes

Introduction

There is a great need to determine how parental involvement affects student achievement. Such knowledge could inform parenting practices as well as school-based practices for working with parents. It might also inform the design and development of interventions such as educational programs and products that would power parental influences for the benefit of students’ academic achievement. However, the literature on parental involvement is complex and sometimes contradictory.

Parental involvement in children’s education from an early age has a significant effect on educational achievement, and continues to do so into adolescence and adulthood. Parental involvement is an important area of research in educational sociology because of its positive impacts on children. It is, by itself, a social relation involving teachers, parents, and students. Parental presence has positive impact on children such as improved academic performance (Lee & Bowen, 2006). Besides academic outcomes, parental involvement is also associated with low incidence of behavioral problems among elementary school children (Domina, 2005).

Most of the children have two main educators in their lives – their parents and their teachers. Parents are the prime educators until the child attends an early years setting or starts school and they remain a major influence on their children’s learning throughout the school and beyond. The school and parents both have crucial roles to play. Parents are responsible for academic achievements of their children. They are the one who spent much time with the students during evening, nights, as well as during long vacation. Epstein (1997) once asserted that the more intensively parents are involved in their children’s learning, the more beneficial are the achievement effects, such that higher degree of parental involvement results into higher attendance rate with higher students achievement.

As far students success parental and school care is highly needed (Campbell, 1995). This will help the students develop plans of their future. Parents lay foundation of their children learning. Epstein (1997) discussed how children learn and grow through three overlapping spheres of influence: family, school and community. These three spheres must form partnerships to best meet the need of the child. Epstein again defined six types of
involves children in the decision-making process of their education and collaborative learning. It highlights that not all types of parental involvement are effective. Although it is acknowledged that parental involvement is integral to high student academic achievement (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). However, it is noted that parental involvement has a great impact on pupil’s achievements (Feinstein and Symons, 1999).

Although the positive effects of parental involvement have been investigated extensively, it is crucial to highlight that not all types of involvement lead to positive outcomes. By relating parental involvement to all parents, there is a possibility of parents not being involved in a constructive way. There is a risk of creating illusions that all parental involvement may lead to raising students’ academic achievements. But this is not the whole picture of the phenomenon. For instance, if a parent communicates with the teacher once or twice a year, it should not be expected that his/her child’s performance will be improved. Additionally, many times negative effects of the parental involvement are reported. It seems that sometimes parental involvement creates inequalities due to the fact that parents from higher socio-economic status are more confident in schools settings, whilst other parents may feel themselves excluded.

Learning begins at home through interaction with one’s family. Parental involvement in a child’s education along with environmental and economic factors may affect child development in areas such as cognition, language, and social skills. Parental involvement in school has been linked with academic achievement. This research sought to identify the different levels of parental involvement in academic activities and how parental involvement affects academic achievement of primary school students.

**Types of Parental Involvement**

According to Epstein (1995) and her colleagues from Johns Hopkins University, there are six types of parental involvement on children’s education exist. These are:

- **Parenting:** This category includes the basic responsibilities of families such as providing housing, health care, nutrition, clothing, and safety, and creating home conditions that support children’s learning, for example, purchasing the necessary books and being responsive to their children, communicating with them and supporting their development.

- **Communication:** This type of involvement concerns the basic responsibilities of schools, including establishing two-way communications between the family and the school. These kinds of
involvement assume that schools keep parents informed about school matters by sending those newsletters or progress reports, visiting parents and employing other means to communication.

Volunteering: The term ‘volunteer’ usually refers to persons who devote their spare time to work on a routine basis without monetary compensation, usually under the direction of a school employee, in support of educational activities and school operations. He clarifies however that parental engagement in Parent Teacher Association, Parent Teacher Organization or other types of decision-making body involving parents, teachers and perhaps learners and other community members, is not volunteering.

Learning at home: Parental involvement suggest that parents are involved in curriculum-related activities occurring at home. For example, assisting children’s homework, discussing contents from books with their children, brainstorming ideas for school projects.

Decision making: Parents who are involved at this level, advocate children’s interests. These parents often participate in parent-teacher associations, advisory councils and committees.

Collaborating with the community: Parental involvement relies on the understanding that helping these organizations contributes to schools, students and families.

Significance of the study

The results from the study can help enhance parental engagement in their children’s schooling. The factors and programs were considered, so parents can be better educated about the ways they can help their children even if they do not have a high level of education. Parental involvement could also mean support and being engaged in their child’s education. The schools can find ways to encourage involvement from the parents. Teachers and parents can familiarize themselves with the different approaches of parental involvement that can help the most. It is a way to try to guide parents on what steps they can take to become more involved.

The schools may also determine whether certain programs are appropriate to bridge the learning between school and home. Schools have been under the pressure to encourage parental involvement and the study was show whether these efforts from the school are worth pushing. The parental involvement should consist of better communication between home and school where parents have the opportunity to be more involved in classroom activities. Researchers have found that more active forms of parental involvement produce higher achievement benefits than parents who are more passive. A considerable greater achievement benefits are seen when parent involvement also included parents being active with attending school functions and supporting school activities.

Objective of the study

1. To study the level of parental involvement on children’s academic activities in primary level classes in schools.
2. To investigate the parental participation in different managerial activities in primary schools.
3. To investigate the different factors that influence on parental involvement in the academic activities of their children’s education in primary level classes.

Material and Methods

Descriptive survey method was employed to study the effects of parental involvement on their children’s academic achievement in primary level classes. This method helps to gather various kinds of data in relatively minimum resources, to obtain information about the current status of the phenomena.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In Aba’ala district of Afar region in Ethiopia, there are total 12 public schools, the researcher selected only 6 primary schools randomly through lottery method. From each of the school a total number of 6 respondents were selected. As a total, 6 principals were selected (one from each school) through comprehensive sampling technique and 30 parents of the primary class students (five from each school) were selected randomly through lottery method. So this study consisted of total 36 respondents from the 6 sampled schools.

Data Gathering Instruments

Parental involvement on their children’s academic activities questionnaire was developed by the researcher to collect data from the principal and semi structured interview was conducted with the parents of the primary class students in schools. The questionnaire contained different closed ended items with four point Likert scale from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1) and often, sometimes, rarely and never in some cases. Before administration of questionnaire to the actual subjects, pilot test has been conducted to check the relevance of each item in the questionnaire in order to avoid ambiguities and misunderstandings. The reliability and validity of the said test were found to maximum. Both the face validity and content validity were checked by the pilot test.

Data Analysis Techniques

Depending on the nature of data collected through questionnaire, quantitative approach was used. To analyze the quantitative data, percentage was used as the statistical technique for the analysis and interpretation of the data. The data collected through semi structured interview with parents of
Results and Discussion

1) Level of Parental involvement on children’s academic activities in primary level classes

Table 1: Opinion of Principals on the level of parental involvement on their children’s academic activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Help the child to do their homework</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help their child to study in program</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulfill educational materials at home</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decrease labor load at home</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that 17% principals replied that parents often help their child to do homework at home, 33% principals of the respondents reported that parents were sometimes help their child to do homework, other 33% of principals respondents replied those parents were rarely helping their child to do homework and the rest 17% of principals replied those parents were never helping their child to do homework.

As could be observed from the above table 1, respondents were asked to rate the level of parents in involvement to help their child to study in program, 17% of principals reported that parents were often help their child to study in program and 17% of principals reported those parents were sometimes helping their child to study in program, 33% of the respondents replied those parents were rarely helping their child to study in program. At last 33% principals reported that parents were never helping their child to study in program.

Regarding fulfilling educational materials at home for their child as described in table 1, 33% of the respondents were reported that parents were often fulfill educational materials for their child, 50% of principals replied those parents were sometimes fulfilling educational materials for their child and the rest 17% of principals reported that parents were rarely fulfilling educational materials for their child.

Concerning decreasing labor load at home for their child the respondents were asked to rate as illustrated in table 1, above 18% of principals replied that parents were often decrease labor load at home to their child, most of the respondents (89%) were reported that those parents were rarely decrease the labor load to their child at home.

Table 2: Opinion of Parents about their involvement on their children’s academic activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parental involvement on their children’s academic activities</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 2, majority (63%) of the parents indicated that they are participating in the children’s academic activities. But on the other hand, 27% of the parents said that they are not participating in the children’s academic activities. From the above answers the researcher conclude that, most of the principals and teachers reported that parents do not participate in academic activities of their children and home based activities of their children's education. However, most of the parents responds that they were participate in home and school based activities in their children's education.

2) Parental participation in different managerial activities in primary schools

Table 3: Opinion of Principals about parental participation in managerial activities in primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents attend school meetings whenever called upon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents play managerial roles in the running of their children’s schools.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents cooperate with teachers about their children's schooling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results in Table 3 shows that, the responses of the principals on the question which was asked about the parents participation in the management of the schools. To the statements that parents attend school meetings whenever called upon. 50% of the respondents were rated disagree, 33% of the respondents were decided agree and the rest 17% of the respondents were rated strongly agree.

On the other hand parents play managerial roles in the running of their children's schools, 17% of the respondents were decided strongly agree, 33% of the respondents were decided disagree and the rest 50% of the respondents decided disagree. Therefore most of the respondents disagree on the parents managerial roles in the running of their children's school. Regarding the statement parents cooperate with teachers about their children's schooling, 33% of the respondents were decided agree, 33% of the respondents were decided disagree that parents are not involved in supporting their children’s education and management activities.

The foregoing transcriptions indicate that a dominant view among the principals was that the parents in their schools are generally not involved in as far as the management of the schools is concerned. As such, the result indicates that, parents do not actively participate in the management of the schools.

Table 4: Opinion of Parents about their participation in managerial activities in primary schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents pay fees for their children</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents create home environment suitable for academic work while at home</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents control children’s discipline in cooperation with their schools</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents participate in planning school programs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the foregoing responses, it is clear that at the most of the parents play their role in promoting the education of their children. They do this through the creation of home environments that are conducive for academic work and pay fees for their children's. Nonetheless, they are not directly involved in the participation in planning school programs and management of their children’s schools. As it is clear from the fact that the roles that they reported by the principals to be playing are not in the regard of school management. The information given by the principals indicated that, by and large, parents do not play any managerial roles in the running of their children’s schools.

3) Factors that influence on parental involvement in the academic activities of their children's education

Table 5: Opinion of Principals about factors that influence on parental involvement in the academic activities of their children's education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School distance from the home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of awareness on the value of parental involvement</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio cultural influence</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiteracy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data in the table 5 shows that, concerning school distance from the school the principals were asked to rate accordingly, 17% of principals responded strongly agree and 33% of the respondents responded agree and 50% respondents decided disagree that the school distance is the factor that influence parents in the participation of the school. On the same way the respondents were asked to rate lack of awareness on the value of parental involvement in the influencing factor of parental involvement in the school. As indicated in the table 5 that, 50% of the respondents were rated strongly agree, 33% of the respondents decided agreed, 17% of the respondents were decided agree. No one choose strongly disagree.

According the socio cultural influence of parental involvement in primary schools, 50% of the respondents were rated strongly agree, as same as 50% of the respondents decided agree that socio cultural influence is a major factors that hinders parents not to involve in the school. Again, respondents were asked to rate illiteracy is the influence factors of parental involvement in the school. Consequently, 17% of the respondents agreed strongly influence, 50% of the respondents were rated agree and 33% of the respondents decided disagree.
Data in the table 6 shows that, most of the parents were reported lack of awareness on the value of parental involvement, socio cultural influence and illiteracy was the main factors that influence them in parental involvement in their children's school. Also 50% of the respondents were reported that socio economic status is the factors influencing them in parental involvement in the schools. Therefore all the parents agreed that all the above factors are the factors that influence them in parental involvement. More results for each respondents indicated that school distance was not the main influence of parental involvement in schools. Most of the respondents were agreed that lack of awareness on the value of parental involvement, socio cultural influence and illiteracy are the most influence factors of parental involvement in schools. The cultural background affects the relationship between home and school. As cited by Rudnitski (1992), Litwak and Meyer (1974) that parents from racial, ethnic and cultural minorities, especially those of low socioeconomic status tend to feel less affinity for the school than those in the mainstream middle class.

**Main Findings**

1) The first objective was to what extent dose parental involvement influence the children's academic performance, the majority of the respondents indicated that parental involvement in school based activities, parents are sometimes discussing with their child’s school progress with teachers, and also most of respondents reported that those parents were often participate in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. According to the parents provided learning materials for their child, most of the respondents responded that parents were sometimes help their child by fulfilling educational materials at home.

2) Specifically, critical consideration of the findings of the study indicates that although the parents are involved in supporting their children’s school education in some ways, generally speaking, they are not involved in the management of these schools. At least, some of the data indicated that parents are participated in the school management committees like Parent Teacher Association (PTA) but even though, the school managers prominently emphasized the contribution of the parents those who are appointed in these committees.

3) According to the factors that influence parents to participate in the schools, large proportion of the respondents decided that the school distance from the home was not influencing factors. Most of the respondents were strongly agreed that lack of awareness on the value of parental involvement, socio cultural influence and illiteracy were the main influencing factors of parental involvement in primary schools. Some principals contribute to ineffective parental involvement, where they do not encourage parents to participate in parental involvement.

**Conclusion**

Although parents in Abu'ala district in Afar region of Ethiopia have been involved in supporting their children’s education in some ways, they have not necessarily been involved in school management related activities. The benefits of parental involvement in school management have not been realized in many of the schools, which has been with the effect of interfere on academic performance. The lack of parental involvement in school management has been due to the parents’ incapacity to play active roles in school management. Most of the respondents were reported parents were sometimes fulfilling educational materials for their child, but that parents do not actively participate in their children's schools. Methods should be used to identify ways in which families can assist learners at home with various related activities. Respondents reported that parents were sometimes help their child to do homework and those parents were rarely helping their child to study in program. Parents should also teach their children about positive attitude towards learning at school.

Parental involvement was explored and it became evident that it has been covered in a number of research studies. There are, however a number of factors that hinder parental involvement in the development of their children's literacy. Parents, teachers and learners have not yet fully embraced the concept due to a number of factors. The study suggests that socio cultural, lack of awareness on the parental involvement and literacy development is influenced by parents, availability of resources, home environment and home-school relationship. A more active and open interaction between all stakeholders is essential.
REFERENCES


