Case Report

Effects of parental involvement on academic performance of pupils: A Case Study at Adukrom Methodist Primary School

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ABSTRACT

This present study intended to examine the extent to which the involvement of parents in the academic performance of pupils. This study was conducted at the Basic Six class of Adukrom Methodist Primary School. The research focused on twenty six students comprising eleven boys and fifteen girls out of the entire 50 students in the class. Four main instruments were used to collect data for this research work. These instruments were: Questionnaire, Interview, Teacher Observation, Surveys. At the end of the study, the class average in terms of performance increased from 68.9\% to 79.6\% with 69.23\% showing an increase in their average score after the parents had been involved. Also the study revealed that 26.9\% had their average deceasing despite the involvement of their parents. 69\% of pupils asserted that upon the involvement of their parents in their academic academics they try harder to improve their performance of their academics whiles 19\% claim the involvement of their parent does not affect their performance. 11 parents (79\%) indicated they felt they were involved in their child’s education, with 5 of these 11 parents (43\%) indicating that they felt they were very involved. Only 1 parent (7\%) indicated that he or she was not very involved in his or her child’s education. In conclusion, we document for the first time that the involvement of parents in the academic activities of the pupils of Adukrom Methodist Primary School affects their academic performance.

Keywords: Adukrom Methodist primary school, effect of parental involvement, academic, performance, basic school.

INTRODUCTION

According to Chiuri, 2005, primary education plays important role in human capital development which cannot be underscored. It has been documented that education develop people’s abilities to participate excellently in nation building, improving health care and nutrition as well as decreasing fertility and infant mortality. In 2011, Atieno argued that primary education lays the foundation upon which social and political development of a nation is founded.

During the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World conference at Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 as well as it’s follow-up in Dakar, Senegal in 2000 encouraged African countries to invest in important and quality primary education to enhance economic growth and social equality (World Bank, 2008; UNESCO 2005). Hence many governments
Parents are important in providing environmental, social and economic factors, which have powerful effects on pupils’ academic lives. It’s been documented that parents’ readiness to contact teachers about their children’s improvement is possibly the first step to becoming involved in education Ciriaka (2003). Research has consistently indicated that parental involvement is integral to high student academic achievement. According to Dietel (2004), “A parent’s involvement in their child’s education is the single most important predictor of student academic success”. Henderson and Mapp (2002) concluded that parents have a major influence on their children’s achievement in school and through life. When parents are involved in their child’s education, students of all backgrounds and income levels are found to perform better in academic work and extra curricula activities. Research has also shown that parental involvement tends to drop off during the transition from primary school to junior and senior high schools. That transition also corresponds to the largest drop in student achievement (Tonn, 2005).

Vast majority of parents are finding it more and more difficult to make a living, especially in developing and underdeveloped countries; scarcity of food especially due to its diversion to the production chemicals, drugs and ornaments present enough reason to be distracted from the expected monitoring in various aspects of children’s life. The challenges of single parenthood, poverty, family crises and the ever increasing involvement of women in various areas of community and national development makes one to ask questions as to whether parents are still able to be committed to their wards; or whether they are putting enough efforts towards effective learning of among their children.

In a perfect world filled with parents eager to partner with teachers and filled with parents who are highly involved in their children’s education, all of the students in the researcher’s class will perform better with good grades. In this world, the role of parents in the education of their children cannot be underestimated. Parents help to ensure that their children complete all of their homework assignments and study for tests and quizzes and exams. Parents encourage their children to seek additional help from their teachers. Unfortunately, we do not live in a perfect world, and the reality is that many parents are not as involved in their children’s education as they could be.

In recent times teachers have been criticized for the dwindling performance of pupils in schools forgetting that education is not only a teacher or school affair. It is a collective responsibility of the home of which the parents play a major role, the school of which the teachers and school authorities also play their role and the wider society. The purpose of this present study is therefore to determine the effects of parental involvement in the academic performance and attitude of the pupils at Adukrom Methodist Primary School.

Significance of the study

This research will help parents to know the crucial role their influence has on their child’s academic performance and how necessary it is to be involved in their child’s education and the effect this involvement from the parent will have on the child’s academic achievement and performance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area

The research was carried out at Adukrom Methodist Primary School Basic Six, which has a total population of fifty pupils. The class is made up of twenty-one boys and twenty-nine girls. The basic six classes of fifty pupils are the target population of this project. The population of parents involved in this study was also fifty. The study also included two teachers.

Sampling

Out of the fifty pupils, probability sampling method was used to select twenty-six for the study which comprised of eleven boys and fifteen girls. The parents of these twenty-six pupils were also used in the study. In short the sample size for the parents is twenty-six.

Research Instrument

Four main instruments were used to collect data for this research work. These instruments were: Questionnaire, Interview, Teacher Observation, Surveys

Data collection procedures

Teacher observations

Teacher observation was one of the data collection procedures used by the researcher. The researcher created and utilized a teacher observation form throughout the course of this study. The researcher recorded his observations of the pupils participating in this study on this form throughout the duration of the study. Additionally, the researcher used this form to record all student behavior problems such as classroom disruptions that had to be dealt with throughout the course of this study. Data collected from these
observations allowed the researcher to further analyze how parental involvement had affected pupils' academic achievement and classroom behavior.

**Interview**

Since some parents could not read and write, interview was the appropriate technique used to gather information from the parents. It was done individually to enable the researcher have independent responses. Moreover, in order to have high rate of responses, both English and the local were used to enhance smooth communication between the researcher and the parents. Some of the pupils were also interviewed to find out whether their parents really show concern about their education at all. Among the questions which were used to interview the pupils are;

**Questionnaire**

The questionnaire consisted of direct question. The direct questions were used to seek straightforward answers. The questionnaire was administered to some parents to find out how well they are involved in the education of their children. They were to elicit information on the causes of the decline in parental involvement in the academic performance and how they (parents) could get involved in the education of their children in order to improve on their academic performance.

**Surveys**

Pupils completed a pre-survey at the onset of the study and a post survey at the conclusion of the study. The surveys elicited information regarding pupil’s feelings about parental involvement and its effects on student’s achievement and behavior. These surveys prompted pupils to indicate whether an increase in parental involvement influenced them to try harder and do better in a class, and whether an increase in parental involvement influenced them to behave better in class. The students completed these surveys anonymously.

The researcher also administered a parent pre-survey at the onset of the study and a parent post survey at the conclusion of the study. These surveys prompted parents to indicate how involved they are in their wards education.

Additionally, the surveys asked parents to indicate whether regular communication with their child’s teacher influenced them to talk with their child about trying harder to do better and behave better in a class. Parents completed these surveys anonymously.

**Class reports**

The researcher examined students’ marks via class reports for both the first and second terms both prior to and after initiating an increase in parental involvement to determine the impact increased parental involvement had on pupil’s academic achievement and the completion of homework assignments. These reports included daily assignments, test scores, and overall end of term exams marks. The researcher utilized these class reports to conclude whether or not increasing parental involvement had led to an increase in student academic achievement from first term to second term when parent involvement was increased.

**Data presentation and analysis**

Data were analyzed using Microsoft excel and presented as graphs.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Class term reports**

The change in pupil’s performance during the study is shown in figure 1. Class terminal reports revealed there was a minimal increase in student achievement after increasing parent involvement. The overall class average increased from 68.9% to 79.6%. Eighteen pupil’s (69.23%) showed an increase in their average scores after increasing parent contact. Of these 18 pupils, 10 pupils (55.6%) increased their term’s average by more than 5%. Five students (27.7%) increased their term’s average by more than 7%, with three pupils (16.7%) increasing their term’s average by more than 13.5% from the first term. Conversely, class reports revealed that the term’s averages actually decreased for 7 pupil’s (26.9%) after increasing parent involvement with the remaining 1 pupil (3.8%) maintaining his average term score.

Class reports also indicated a minimal increase in the amount of homework assignments completed by students after increasing parental involvement. During the first term of the study the overall class homework completion rate was 85.8%, meaning that an average of 85.8% of all assignments given were completed during this term, with 14.2% of assignments never being completed. During the second term of the study, with the increase in parent contact, the overall class homework completion rate increased to 88.3%.

**Student surveys**

The researcher gave students a pre survey at the onset
of the study to determine students’ perceptions regarding the effectiveness of parental involvement on student achievement and behavior. All 26 students completed the survey. The majority of students (69%, 18 students) stated they either agreed or strongly agreed that when their teachers communicate with their parents or guardians about their grades in a class they try harder to do better. Conversely, 5 students (19%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they try harder and do better in a class when their teachers communicate with their parents or guardians about their grades. Three students (19%) remained neutral on this topic.

With regard to student behavior and attitude in the classroom, the largest group of students 73% (19 students) agreed that when their teachers communicate with their parents or guardians about their behavior and attitude in a class they try harder to behave and act appropriately. On the other hand, 5 students (19%) disagreed with this statement, saying that when their teachers communicate with their parents or guardians about their behavior and attitude in a class that they are less likely to try harder to behave and act appropriately. 2 students (8%) stated they were neutral on the issue.

Parent Surveys

The researcher also gave parents a pre survey at the onset of the study as a means of determining how involved the parents of the students in this basic six class felt they were in their children’s education. This survey also served as a tool to determine parents’ perceptions regarding the effectiveness of parental involvement on student achievement and behavior. Fourteen parents (54%) completed and returned the survey. Of the 14 parents that participated in the survey, 11 parents (79%) indicated they felt they were involved in their child’s education, with 5 of these 11 parents (43%) indicating that they felt they were very involved. Only 1 parent (7%) indicated that he or she was not very involved in his or her child’s education.

When asked to explain why they felt that they were involved or uninvolved in their child’s education, three common themes emerged among the parents that stated they were involved. Some parents indicated that they felt they were involved because they frequently visited the school to check on their child’s performance and behavior. Other parents also indicated that they felt they were involved because they helped their child with their homework. Another group of parents also stated that they always check their child’s performance through the terminal reports which were given at the end of the term. Amid this group of parents, one parent declared, “I make sure that my child does her homework every night.” Another parent commented, “I help my child with his homework.” Another group of parents indicated they were involved in their child’s schooling because they discussed school daily with their child. Among this group of parents, one stated, “We talk everyday about school, classes, and about how he feels about his classes.” Another parent added, “We always discuss school.” A different parent shared, “I talk with my child a lot about doing well in school.” A final group of parents felt they were involved because they attended events such as parent teacher meetings. Amid these parents, one parent stated, “I go to parent teacher meetings to find out how my child is doing.” A different parent commented, “I go to PTA meetings, sports and athletic festivals and other extra-curricular activities.”

Amongst the small group of parents that indicated that they were not very involved in their child’s education, two themes emerged. One of the reasons these parents felt that they were not involved was because they did not have time. One parent stated, “I could do more, but I am consumed.” Another parent added, “I spend too much time working and not enough time overseeing my
children’s school work." Another reason these parents felt they were not involved was because of a resistance to be involved from their children. One parent stated that she would like to be more involved, but her child “does not like to fill me in with what is going on at school.”

Although the majority of parents who completed the survey indicated that they were involved or very involved in their child’s education, the vast majority of these parents (86%, 12 parents) indicated that only seldom do they communicate with their child’s teachers about their child’s performance in a class. Only 2 parents (14%) indicated that they communicated with their child’s teachers often about their child’s performance.

All of the parents (100%) surveyed indicated that they agreed with the statement that when their child’s teachers communicate with them regarding a concern they have for their child, that they talk to their child about the problem and work with them to try to resolve the issue. Thirteen of the 14 parents surveyed (93%) indicated they strongly agreed with this statement.

The researcher also gave parents a post survey at the conclusion of the study to get parents’ perceptions as to whether or not they felt this study had encouraged their child to perform better academically and to behave better in my class. Eleven parents (52%) completed and returned the survey. Of the 11 parents that completed the survey, all of the parents (100%) indicated they appreciated being contacted on a regular basis regarding their child’s performance, behavior, and attitude in the basic six class. The majority of the parents that completed the survey (64%, 7 parents) indicated they agreed that as a result of this study they had ensured that their child studied for tests and quizzes and completed homework. Four parents (36%) indicated that they were impartial. The largest group of parents (55%, 6 parents) also indicated that they agreed with the statement that they had ensured their child took better advantage of opportunities like coming in for additional help and retaking tests and quizzes. Only 1 parent (9%) indicated that she disagreed with this statement. Five parents (45%) indicated they were neutral. When asked whether or not this study had helped parents to ensure that their child completed his or her daily homework assignments, again the majority of parents (64%, 7 parents) indicated they agreed that it had helped. Only 1 of the parents surveyed (9%) disagreed that it had helped. Five parents (45%) were impartial as to whether or not this study had helped them to encourage their child to complete more of their homework.

### Teacher observation

Figure 2. Based on the interview the conducted with some of the parents and pupils, four themes emerged among the parents that stated how much they were involved in their wards education. Some of the parents were much involved, the second group was involved, and the third group was less involved with the last group being not involved at all. From the table and graph above, 18 parents (69%) were much involved in their child’s education and that accounted in the upward adjustment in their performance. 5 parents (19%) were also involved in the child’s education and that also contributed to the performance of the children. 2 parents (8%) and 1 parent (4%) were less involved and not involved at all respectively.

The researcher began this study with the hope that increasing parent involvement would increase pupils’ academic achievement in the classroom. Based on the analysis of all of the data collected in this study, student academic achievement did improve with increased parental involvement, although the researcher had hoped to see much more of an improvement in student academic achievement than was found in this research. While overall student academic achievement did improve
from the beginning of this study to the end, the data only indicates a minimal improvement. On average, the class term’s average increased by only 23.7% with the initiation of increased parental involvement based on the analysis of pupils reports as compared to the start of the study.

Henderson and Mapp (2002) believed that engaging the family could improve children’s academic achievement, and also had a substantial impact on other key outcomes, such as behavior. The findings in this study are congruent with these beliefs. Analysis of the pupils’ questionnaire shows that involving the family motivates students to try harder to perform better academically and to behave better in the classroom. Further analysis of the research findings suggests that pupils’ are more apt to improve their behavior in a class as a result of parent involvement than they are to improve their academic performance.

Examination of the parent questionnaire also shows that involving parents is beneficial in improving student academic achievement and behavior in the classroom. The results of the parent questionnaire imply that involving parents proves favorable in motivating students to (a) study for tests and exams, (b) complete homework assignments, and (c) to seek additional help from their teachers. The research findings further indicate that involving parents when concerns with pupils arise in the classroom is beneficial in resolving issues.

Norton and Nufeld (2002) concluded that involving parents in their children’s education was related directly to the outcomes of pupils’ academic achievement. The results of this study support this conviction. Analysis of my own observations suggests students are more likely to seek help and take advantage of opportunities such as class exercise and test corrections when their parents are involved.

Marcon (1999); Miedel and Reynolds (1999); Hickman et al. (1995) all noted a positive correlation between parental involvement and student academic achievement. Analysis of all of the data collected in this study supports these previous study findings. The majority of the students in my class proved to be more successful academically when their parents were involved.

While the vast majority of researchers concluded that partnering with parents positively correlates to student academic success, a few researchers such as Catsambis (1998) found that involving parents can sometimes prove to be detrimental in improving student academic achievement. Analysis of the student grade reports further validates these findings as not all the pupils improved. While involving parents appears to be a significant motivator for improving pupils’ academic achievement for the majority of students, parental involvement does prove to be favorable in motivating most pupils’ to be academically successful.

CONCLUSION

The researcher sought to answer some questions by completing this study: How will increased parental involvement affect pupils’ academic achievement? What is the reason for the decrease in parental involvement at the basic school level? What strategies can be implemented to increase parental involvement in their child’s academic performance? The answer to all of these questions is that a partnership with parents appears to be influential in leading to better pupil’s performance in the classroom. In general, the pupils in my classroom (a) completed more of their homework assignments, (b) performed better academically, and (c) the researcher dealt with less behavior problems when the parents of my students were kept informed about how their child was performing in my class.

The results of this study echo the findings of the multitude of researchers that previously examined the impact parent involvement have on improved student academic achievement and classroom behavior. The findings of this study are further validation that involving parents positively correlates to increased student academic achievement and classroom behavior. This could not be more evident than with the student in my class who, with the added involvement of his parents, saw an increase in his term’s mark from 66% in first term to 80% in second term. It was with a stronger partnership with this pupil’s parents that the researcher saw a pupil who was more motivated to do well in the classroom. This student appeared more focused in the classroom and began performing better on assessments with the increased involvement of his parents. This student began coming in for additional help and to retake poor tests and quizzes second term when his parents were kept up to date with what was happening in the classroom, a behavior that the researcher did not see from this pupil first term when his parents were less involved.

While the results of this study might be tentative, the researcher remains optimistic about partnering with parents as a means of increasing pupil’s performance in the classroom. While some of the students did not see an increase in their academic success with the involvement of their parents, the majority of the students did, and several of the students made very large gains in their academic performance from first term to second term. It is with these second set of pupils in mind, that the researcher remain determined to continue partnering with parents to encourage all of the pupils to reach their fullest potentials.

The methods the researcher used to communicate with parents throughout the duration of this study all proved valuable.

The researcher has seen first-hand the benefits of
teachers partnering with parents. The researcher will share the experience gained with the colleagues in hopes that more of them will partner with parents to help their students reach their fullest potentials. When parents and teachers work together, the pupils reap the benefits.

REFERENCES


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