**IMPACT OF PARENTAL SUPPORT IN PROMOTING STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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**Abstract**  
The paper among other things highlighted on the areas in which parents have contributed towards making children capable of performing well in their academics in secondary schools. The areas includes physical care of children, safe environment, provision of social development, moral development, emotional development, and intellectual development. The paper also emphasized on the effective communication with children to improve their thinking, encourage or discover some difficulties and provides needed solution. The design adopted for the study is ex-post-facto design. Total sample size of three hundred and thirty (330) students was used from six schools in the three zones. However, only 300 questionnaires were correctly filled and analyzed. Chi-square was used to determine the mean score between the variables. The findings show that there is no significant relationship between parental support and students’ academic performance. The recommendations among others include: (i) parents should improve on close relationship with their children in order to listen and identify the problem of the children for solution. (ii) Parents should also monitor their children, in order to promote academic performance and discourage ill-behaviour.

**Introduction**  
It is widely believed that if children are to maximize their potentials from schooling, then there will be need for greater parental support. The role of parents should not only play in the promotion of their own children’s academic performance but more broadly in school improvement and the demonstration of school governance. Just as the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) in some schools are doing. For many of the PTA chapters in some schools have created an enabling environment for children to learn effectively, as well as effective governance of the school in general. Parents Teachers Association in some schools have provided needed infrastructure, manpower, and guiding rules for efficiency.

Parental support for children’s total development cannot be overemphasized. Good parenting in the home provides a good foundation for skills, values, attitudes, and self concept.
It is important to note that parents provide the links to children’s past and the vision for their future. Although early educators play a prominent role in the lives of children, yet they can not ignore that parents play a much greater and longer term role. Combined with a focus on diversity, this strand makes clear that professionals cannot ignore what parents want for their children. What is at stake is children’s identity formation and connections to their family.

Factors Influencing Academic Performance

Physical Care: good parenting begins with physical care. Children need food, clothing, exercise, rest, medical care, and protection from harm. As parents provide these needs, children become more aware of their parental care (Sasse, 1994). Parents are responsible for seeing that their children have adequate rest. Children are very active and they grow rapidly. Therefore, their body needs plenty of rest to replenish energy supplies. Good sleep habits promote good health and well-being. Without enough sleep and rest, children often do not learn as expected. They are irritated and may be more likely to become ill. Parents have to make sure that their children receive good medical care. Regular physical and dental check ups help children to keep their body and teeth healthy. Parental rules and regulation can keep children safe from common illnesses, minor injuries, and other dangerous situations (Gonzaleze-Mana, 2008).

Safe Environment: according to Stephen (1994). Safety is vital for children who are often described as “accidents waiting to happen”. Parents are the primary protectors for younger children. This means monitoring children and their activities towards keeping the home safe. Monitoring means supervising children and being aware of where they are, and what they are doing. Young children need constant monitoring, for example a toddler who is not carefully watched can get into a dangerous situation in a minute in spite of all effort to keep the home safe. As children get older, they need less monitoring, yet it is still important for parents to know where their children are and what they are doing even after children have reached their teen. Higher level of parental monitoring of teens is related to lower rates of unacceptable behaviours such as drugs, alcohol and, delinquency among children.

Social Development: parents’ child relationship is a child’s earliest social relationship. Children’s social development actually begins at birth. Infants are calmed by a soothing voice and by being picked up and held. Giving attention in the early weeks of life does not spoil the child. Rather such nurturing is essential for good social development.

When children are socialized, they learn to behave in acceptable ways. The behaviour learned depends mainly on the expectations and attitudes of those who provide care, usually the parents. As children mature, they learn that certain behaviours are rewarded with a smile or
praise. Children also learn that some behaviour results in a negative response, such as a frown or scolding. Negative responses towards negative behaviours are among the earliest efforts to shape the child’s behaviour in every way including academics.

**Moral Development:** the seeds of moral development are sown earlier in life. Children learn to base their behaviour on what they believe is right and wrong from the family, most often parents. Moral development is shown in behaviour, that is how a child treats others. As toddlers, children begin to learn the rules that parents and other caregivers set. They may not understand the reasons, but they know what type of behaviour to meet with disapproval. Learning good attitudes in families are often passed from one generation to another. As children grow up, whatever they learn from their parents about other people is likely to become part of their thinking.

**Emotional Development:** emotional well-being is deeply rooted in how well parents provide for the emotional needs of their children. Parents can do so much to build their children’s self concept and encouragement hence it is important for good emotional development. According to Plate & Eubank (1994), parents need to promote esteem. The emotional support they give to children leads to good feelings. When parents make children feel secure and accepted, self esteem can be developed. Children, who develop a high self esteem, grow up to believe that they can be successful. They are always willing and eager to try things.

**Intellectual Development:** children come into the world helpless, without knowledge and skills. Parents take pride in helping children learn, and develop thinking and language skills. Children learn from parents, but they also learn through experiences and play. By providing learning experiences and opportunities for play both in and outside the home, parents give their children the best chance to develop intellectually. It is important for parents to know how children learn, so that they can provide learning experiences. Parents can offer their children a variety of experiences that help them learn, and develop intellectually. According to a Swiss Psychologist, Jean Piaget, intelligence in children develops through a series of stages:

(i) **Sensori-motor Stage:** This stage last from birth through about age two. During this stage, children learn through their senses and actions. Children explore things that are bright coloured and noisy.

(ii) **Preoperational Stage:** This stage last from ages two through age seven. Children at this time learn through their senses and direct experiences. They are also beginning to learn that objects and words can be symbols, that is, they can be used to pretend to be something else. Children begin to develop language and learn to speak. They imitate real life situation and so learn more about the world around them.
Concrete Operational Stage: This stage lasts from ages seven to eleven. Children of this age still learn best through direct experience. They also begin to think logically, and to classify objects into categories.

Formal Operational Stage: This stage begins about age eleven or twelve and continues throughout adulthood. Upon entering this stage, children begin to use abstract thinking. They can now solve problems just by thinking.

The new intellectual abilities children acquire at each stage outlined by Piaget determined the limits of what a child can learn at a later stage. By understanding how children can best learn and what limitations are on the children’s ability to learn, parents can provide learning experiences and activities appropriate to their children’s level of development (Glosson, Meek & Smoke, 1997 and Sasse, 1994).

Based on this, the study is carried out to assess the relationship between parental support and students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

Objective of the Study
The objective of the study is to determine if there is a relationship in the mean score between parental support and students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

Research Question
What is the relationship between parental support and students’ academic performance in secondary schools?

Hypothesis
There is no significant relationship in the mean score between parental support and students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

Methodology
The design adopted for this study is ex-post-facto design. The area of study (Kontagora Metropolis) was divided into three (3) zones: A, B & C.
• Zone A includes New Market and its environment.
• Zone B consists of Tudunwada and its environment and
• Zone C consists of Sabongari and its environment.

Two schools were used from each of the zones.

Population and Sample Size
The population of the study consists of all the secondary schools in Kontagora metropolis. Two schools were chosen from each of the three zones with fifty-five (55) Senior Secondary II (SSII) students randomly selected from each of the schools chosen from the zones in Kontagora metropolis as sample size. Using hat draw method, a total sample size of 330 students was used as respondents.

Instrument for Data Collection
Data was collected in two phases. Phase (1) was the use of questionnaire to collect data on parental support. Twenty
items were designed to collect data on various aspects of parental support. 330 questionnaires were distributed however only 300 were correctly filled and analyzed. The phase two of the data collection was the use of the Senior Secondary II (SSII) 1st and 2nd term results to see if, there is a relationship in the mean score between parental support and students’ performance.

Analysis
Data were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage and chi-square to determine the mean score among the variables.

Table 1: Assessing the Impact of Parental Support and Academic Performance of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>TSE</th>
<th>TGE</th>
<th>TVGE</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To what extent do your parents provide adequate food for you to eat during and after school?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To what extent do your parents care for you when sick?</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To what extent do your parents provide means of transportation for you to go to school?</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To what extent do your parents buy school needed materials such as textbooks and exercise books?</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To what extent do your parents buy school uniform and buy shoes for you when necessary?</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To what extent do your parents allow you to play with other children?</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Impact of Parental Support in Promoting …100
To what extent do your parents help you to read and understand a passage at home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1: TSE – To some extent</th>
<th>2: TGE – To a great extent</th>
<th>3: TVGE – To a very great extent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$X^2$ Cal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Mean: 48.2

Key to the Options on the above Table 1:

- **TSE** – To some extent
- **TGE** – To a great extent
- **TVGE** – To a very great extent

The above table shows students' responses along with their academic performance. A total number of 1372 (68.6%) of students' responses indicate parental level of support to some extent. While the academic performance of this group is 844% with the grand mean of 42.2%. Then the second option which shows parental level of support to a great extent, has a total number of 1682 (984.1%) of students' responses along with their academic performance of 970% with the grand mean of 48.5%. And the third option which indicate parental level of support to a very great extent has a total number of 2948 (147.2%) of students response, along with their academic performance of 982% and the grand mean of 49.1%.

Table 2: Chi-square Analysis of Parental Support Impact on Student Academic Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>$X^2$ Cal</th>
<th>$X^2$ Crit</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>46.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>49.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance at P< 0.05

From the above table, the result indicates that there was no significant relationship between the mean score on parental support, and students’ academic performance since $X^2$-Cal = 9.334<$X^2$-Crit=9.488 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore the hypothesis of no significant relationship formulated in this study is accepted.

Discussion

The above result shows clearly the reality of what is on ground. Normally, it is expected that there should be a relationship between parental support and students’ performance. As recent studies in child development have shown that both mothers and fathers are important to children. Children have needs that are not easily met by one parent alone. Fathers can be just as competent and involved as mothers in rearing children. Each parent brings strengths and weaknesses to the parenting role. Each has different personalities, interests and skills. When both parents are involved with children, each can help make up for what the other lacks. They can both take responsibilities...
for helping children develop effectively (Sasse, 1994).

However, this days most mothers care for their children alone, and so the fathers. It is noted that most parents, these days look for daily bread so much that they forget about their children. The warmth of parental support is not really there. Although as much as parents support their children by giving them materials and love, the children are expected to grow in the right direction, including their intellectual development, but to most children, this affection has been replaced by pleasures derived by children from computer and its networks. Since many parents do not really know how to communicate to their children, or counsel them, many children have chosen their way of life. Parents should therefore know that communication is a key to success and stability, as Stephens (1996) stated that effective communication provide guidance for action in which most of the time is positive. Parents are expected to know how to communicate with their children effectively. Skilled parents are able to relate with children in a warm natural way. The way you speak to a child can make a difference in the child’s behaviour. Yet due to economic hardship, many parents don’t normally find time to stay with their children or even talk kindly to them or identify their problems, and provide solution. This makes the children to find solutions to their problems by interacting with other peers, people or relatives. This act of parents may affect the intellectual ability of the children. Hence, children may do well when parents take interest in their education, by supporting teachers’ effort, in monitoring school work, and attending special events in the school. The spontaneous actions of many parents have been seen as a valuable contribution to children’s educational progress, as seen in this study. In spite of no significant relationship, yet it is worthy to note that the highest value from the grand mean of the academic performance among the options was obtained under: to a very great extent. This shows that parental support is valued in the intellectual development of children. Therefore, an attempt to enhance the involvement of all parents in school programme will be a welcome development to the school and all children.

Conclusion

Education to some extent is key to total development, hence it unlocks the economic potentials of a person, empowers and equips the individuals in society to participate in and benefit from it. It is an essential tool for sustainability. Therefore, it is believed that if children are to maximize their potentials from schooling, then, they will need the full support of their parents. The desire to enhance parental involvement in education occupies government, administrators, educators and parents organizations across the world. Based on this, parents are encouraged to help promote the academic performance of children in secondary schools.
Recommendations
1. Parents should improve on close relationship with their children in order to listen, and identify children problem for solution.
2. Parents should also improve on effective communication to their children.
3. Parents should provide both physical love and material needs of the child as required to make children happy to learn.
4. Parents should also monitor their children in order to promote academics performance and discourage ill-behaviour.

References


