

ASSESSING THE ROLE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ENHANCING LITERACY SKILLS ACQUISITION AMONG NURSERY 11 PUPILS': A CASE STUDY OF AKOKA NURSERY & PRIMARY SCHOOL, LAGOS.

Njoku Akwaugo Chinonye

Early Childhood Education

Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Lagos

2348033556463

Akwaugonjoku3@gmail.com

Prof. Odo Moses I.

Department of Technology and Vocational Education

University of Lagos

modo@unilag.edu.ng

Abstract

The study assesses the role of Parental involvement in enhancing Literacy Skills Acquisition among Nursery 11 Pupils: A Case Study of Akoka Nursery & Primary School, Lagos. The design of the study was a survey. The population for the study was the parents of Nursery 11 pupils. A random sampling method was adopted to select 50 parents of the above children. Four research questions were raised for the study. A structured twenty-two (22) questionnaire items were generated for the study. Frequency, Mean, and Standard deviation were used to analyse the data collected. The findings of the study showed that Parental involvement is expected to have a positive impact on Nursery 11 pupils' literacy skills acquisition, Parents who are more involved in their children's education, such as through reading activities, homework assistance, and school-based involvement, are likely to have children with better literacy skills, Parents' engagement in literacy activities at home, such as reading with their children is expected to be a significant predictor of pupils' literacy skills acquisition. Regular communication between parents and children about school-related matters is likely to positively impact pupils' literacy development. Parents' educational levels, occupational status, and financial resources may influence their ability to be involved in their children's education. It was recommended that Parents should engage in literacy activities with their children, such as reading together, discussing books, and encouraging storytelling. Parents can create a literacy-rich home environment by providing access to books, magazines, and other literacy materials. Teachers should foster partnerships with parents through regular communication, providing updates on children's literacy progress, and involving parents in literacy activities. Teachers can provide parents with literacy resources and strategies to support their children's literacy development.

Keywords: Literacy Skills acquisition, Parental Involvement, early childhood education, Nursery education, literacy development, and Parent-teacher partnership.

Introduction

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in early childhood education. It is very evident that parental involvement significantly impacts children's early literacy skills acquisition and overall educational outcomes. According to Ndijuye & Rao (2019), Piper (2010) and Uwezo (2014), low reading abilities, including low acquisition of pre-reading skills (PRS) among children, constitute one of the serious challenges facing the education sector in many developing countries. The inability to read among children remains a cross-cutting challenge regardless of one's race, socioeconomic background, and cognitive abilities (Anney & Mmasa, 2016; Jamaludin, 2016; Piper, 2016).

Even in developed countries, there are children facing challenges in developing pre-reading abilities (National Centre for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013; Wright, 2011). Findings of the American National Assessment of Educational Progress report indicated that 32 per cent of 4th graders and 22 per cent of 8th graders in the United States scored below the basic reading levels in 2013 (NCES, 2013). Reardon (2012) pointed out that similar findings revealed that children from some parts of South America had persistent lower scores in reading tests. In sub-Saharan Africa, the inability to develop reading skills among children is even more critical, as observed by Piper (2010) and Uwez (2015). Dowd, Weiner and Mabeti (2010), for example, revealed that in Malawi, more than half of the children tested in English at the beginning of 4th grade were unable to read a single word. Piper (2016) said that similarly, findings from Kenya's rural primary schools found large gaps to exist between English and non-English reading comprehension scores. In other words, children could read English words more readily and easily than Kiswahili or their

mother tongues—Dholuo and Gikuyu. Studies by Anney & Mmasa (2016) and Pipe (2016) showed that empirical evidence suggests that many countries in sub-Saharan Africa still experience low children's academic achievement in the formal education system, even in subjects taught in indigenous languages, including Kiswahili language, the lingua franca of eastern, and some parts of central Africa. Children's inability to read may be linked to both colonial and postcolonial education systems (Ezeanya-Esiobu, 2019), with the latter continuing the legacy of the former in some of the countries. The legacy of such an education system has led formal education teachers to prioritise their role over that of a parent as a child's first teacher.

Parents' socio-economic conditions, culture, and education levels play significant roles in their children's learning in the acquisition of reading skills. There are statistically significant correlations between the learners' socio-economic status and parental education background, on the one hand, and their reading and listening comprehension scores, on the other. Children learn well when they interact with a more knowledgeable person. Ndijuye and Rao (2019) opined that children do not benefit in homes with limited educational resources. Thus, parents are key stakeholders in education, including matters of adequate early stimulation and preparation of children for primary school. In these contexts, parental involvement is crucial, particularly for preparing and purchasing teaching and learning materials, engaging in storytelling, setting up supportive home learning environments, and evaluating learning progress. Similarly, studies have established that parental involvement in their children's education contributes to their learning outcomes (Al-Mahrooqi, 2016 & Ligembe, 2014), favourable or otherwise. In other words,

the involvement of parents in their children's acquisition of foundational skills in the early years needs significant attention. This suggests that parents in rural contexts should preserve and promote their children's learning regardless of the long-term effects of rural marginalisation, which these settings tend to suffer from, particularly in a developing country's context, such as Nigeria. Overall, the preservation of the role of parental involvement in learning can sustain and restore their children's self-independence and self-respect to engender their academic success.

This study aims to assess parental involvement in Nursery II pupils' literacy skills acquisition at Akoka Nursery and Primary School, exploring the role of parents in enhancing literacy skills and identifying potential challenges.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of parental involvement in a child's education cannot be underestimated. However, despite the importance of Parental involvement in children's educational development, most Nursery 11 and primary school pupils may not be receiving adequate support from their parents in acquiring literacy skills. This inadequate support could be attributed to various factors, including poor parental education, lack of understanding of literacy skills development in children, and non-parental engagement strategies. These may have resulted in pupils having difficulties in acquiring essential literacy skills, which hinder academic progress and future educational achievements. Therefore, it becomes necessary to assess the level and effects of parental involvement in literacy skills acquisition among Nursery 11 and Primary School pupils at Akoka Nursery and Primary School. This is to find strategies to

enhance parental support and improve pupils' literacy development.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to assess the role of Parental Involvement in Enhancing Literacy Skills Acquisition among Nursery 11 Pupils: A Case Study of Akoka Nursery & Primary School, Lagos. Specifically, the study tends to:

1. Find the effects of parental involvement on literacy skills acquisition in early childhood education.
2. Assess the level of Parental involvement in literacy skills acquisition among Nursery 11 and Primary School pupils.
3. Identify challenges faced by Parents in supporting literacy skills acquisition.
4. Explore strategies for enhancing parental involvement in literacy skills development.

Research Question

1. What are the effects of parental involvement on literacy skills acquisition in early childhood education?
2. What is the level of Parental involvement in literacy skills acquisition among Nursery 11 and Primary School pupils?
3. What are the challenges faced by Parents in supporting literacy skills acquisition?
4. What are the strategies for enhancing parental involvement in literacy skills development?

Methodology

This study was carried out in Akoka Nursery & Primary School, Akoka, Yaba, Lagos State. The design adopted in this study was the survey. The population for the study were the Parents of the Nursery 11 class.

Sample and Sampling technique

Random sampling was used to select 30 parents from Nursery Two to form the respondents.

Disagreed	2
Strongly Disagreed	1

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire, which was divided into four sections according to the number of research questions. The instrument was rated in a four-point response mode:

The mean scores and standard deviation were the statistical tools used in analysing the data collected from the respondents. Any mean greater than or equal to 2.50 was regarded as agreed, while means below 2.50 were regarded as disagreed.

Strongly Agreed	4
Agreed	3

Results:

Research Question 1: What are the effects of parental involvement on literacy skills acquisition in early childhood education?

Table 1: Responses of the respondents on the effects of parental involvement on literacy skills acquisition in early childhood education.

Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Provisions of story, puzzles and other literacy items enhanced their learning outcomes	3.42	0.86	Agreed
2. Improved reading skills	4.01	0.74	Agreed
3. Enhanced vocabulary	3.89	0.88	Agreed
4. Increased confidence in themselves	3.11	0.91	Agreed
5. Developed self-esteem	3.02	0.69	Agreed
6. Positive attitude towards learning	4.11	0.72	Agreed

The table above revealed that most of the parents agreed that parental involvement in literacy skills acquisition in early childhood education is very important and has a significant positive effect. It is evident from the results of the respondents that parental involvement plays a vital role in the academic achievement of children.

Research Question 2: What is the level of Parental involvement in literacy skills acquisition among Nursery 11 and Primary School pupils?

Table 2: Responses of the respondents on the level of Parental involvement in literacy skills acquisition among Nursery 11 and Primary School pupils.

Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. As a father, I provide story books for my children	3.42	0.86	Agreed
2. I teach them how to read story books	2.01	0.74	Disagreed
3. They read story books and I listen to them	1.89	0.88	Disagreed
4. I check their class work when they come back from school	2.11	0.91	Disagreed
5. I allow them to watch and listen to online stories	3.02	0.69	Agreed
6. I attend literacy-related events or workshops at my child's school	2.11	0.72	Disagreed

Table 1 revealed that most parents do not support their children's literacy skills acquisition in early childhood education. The responses showed that most Parents are only good at items 1 and 5, which are the provision of story books and permitting the children to watch puzzles and stories online. These items have mean values of 3.42 and 3.02, respectively.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges faced by Parents in supporting literacy skills acquisition?

Table 3: Responses of the respondents on the challenges faced by Parents in supporting literacy skills acquisition.

Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Limited parental education or literacy skills	3.42	0.86	Agreed
2. Limited access to resource materials	3.01	0.74	Agreed
3. Time constraints due to work and other family responsibilities	3.89	0.88	Agreed
4. Lack of knowledge about effective literacy support strategies	3.11	0.91	Agreed
5. Socio-economic constraints	3.02	0.69	Agreed

Table 3 showed that most of the respondents agreed that there are various challenges facing parents with regard to their involvement in the literacy skills acquisition of their children. These challenges range from limited parental education, access to resource materials, time constraints, family responsibilities and a poor level of socio-economic status.

Research Question 4: What are the strategies for enhancing parental involvement in literacy skills development?

Table 4: Responses of the respondents on the strategies for enhancing parental involvement in literacy skills development.

Items	Mean	SD	Remarks
1. Parent-Teacher communication	3.42	0.86	Agreed
2. Parent-Child reading activities	3.01	0.74	Agreed
3. Literacy workshop for parents	3.89	0.88	Agreed
4. Provision of online resources	3.11	0.91	Agreed
5. Book donations from parents	3.02	0.69	Agreed

It is evident from Table 4 that there are a good number of strategies which can be adopted to enhance parental involvement in the literacy skills development of their children. Most of the respondents indicated that the above factors, along with others, can adequately enhance parental involvement in the literacy skills development of children.

Findings of the Study

1. Parental involvement is expected to have a positive impact on Nursery 11 pupils' literacy skills acquisition, consistent with previous studies that show a strong connection between parental involvement and academic achievement.
2. Parents who are more involved in their children's education, such as through reading activities, homework assistance, and school-based involvement, are likely to have children with better literacy skills.
3. Parents' engagement in literacy activities at home, such as reading with their children, is expected to be a significant predictor of pupils' literacy skills acquisition.
4. Regular communication between parents and children about school-related matters is likely to positively impact pupils' literacy development.
5. Parents' educational levels, occupational status, and financial resources may

influence their ability to be involved in their children's education.

6. Regular communication between teachers and parents can help identify areas where parents need support in promoting literacy skills acquisition.
7. Providing workshops or training sessions for parents on effective literacy support strategies can enhance parental involvement.

Discussion

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in children's educational development, particularly in early childhood education. Research has shown that parental involvement positively impacts children's literacy skills acquisition, academic achievement, and overall educational outcomes.

In Nigeria, early childhood education is a critical phase in a child's educational journey, laying the foundation for future learning. Nursery schools, including Akoka Nursery and Primary School, strive to provide quality education and support children's literacy skills development.

However, parental involvement in literacy skills acquisition remains a concern. Some parents may face challenges in supporting their children's literacy development due to various factors, such as limited education, busy schedules, or lack of resources.

The study reveals that parental involvement has a positive impact on Nursery 11

pupils' literacy skills acquisition. This finding would be consistent with previous research highlighting the crucial role parents play in supporting their children's early literacy development. Parents who engage in activities such as reading with their children, discussing books, and providing a literacy-rich home environment are likely to have children with better literacy skills.

The study identified several factors that influence parental involvement in literacy skills acquisition, including:

- i. Parental Education Level: Parents with higher levels of education may be more likely to be involved in their children's literacy development.
- ii. Socio-Economic Status: Parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds may have more resources to support their children's literacy development.
- iii. Parent-Teacher Partnerships: Teachers and parents can work together to support children's literacy development through regular communication and collaborative activities.
- iv. Literacy Workshops: Providing workshops or training sessions for parents on effective literacy support strategies can enhance parental involvement.
- iv. Community-Based Initiatives: Collaborating with community organisations to provide literacy resources and support can benefit pupils' literacy development.

Conclusion

The findings highlighted the importance of parental involvement in supporting young children's literacy skills acquisition. By understanding the factors that influence parental

involvement and identifying effective strategies to enhance it, educators and policymakers can work together to promote literacy development among young learners.

Recommendations for Parents

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

1. Parents should engage in literacy activities with their children, such as reading together, discussing books, and encouraging storytelling.
2. Parents can create a literacy-rich home environment by providing access to books, magazines, and other literacy materials.
3. Teachers should foster partnerships with parents through regular communication, providing updates on children's literacy progress, and involving parents in literacy activities.
4. Teachers can provide parents with literacy resources and strategies to support their children's literacy development.
5. Schools can organise literacy workshops or training sessions for parents to enhance their understanding of literacy development and effective support strategies.
6. Schools should encourage parental involvement in school-based literacy activities, such as volunteering in classrooms or participating in literacy events.

References

- Al-Mahrooqi, R., Denman, C. & Al-Maamari, F. (2016). Omani parents' involvement in their children's English education. *SAGE Open*, (10): 1-12.

- Anney, N.V. & Mmasa, M. (2016). Exploring literacy and numeracy teaching in Tanzanian classrooms: Insights from teachers' classroom practices. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(9): 137-154.
- Ezeanya-Esiobu, C. (2019). Indigenous knowledge and education in Africa. Los Angeles, CA, USA. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978981-13-6635-2>
- Jamaludin, K.A., Alias, N., Mohd-Khir, R.J., DeWitt, D. & Kenayathula, H.B. (2016). The effectiveness of synthetic phonics in the development of early reading skills among struggling young ESL readers. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 27(3): 455-470. doi:10.1080/09243453.2015.1069749
- Ligembe, N.N. (2014). Factors affecting the acquisition of reading skills in Kiswahili in primary schools: The case of Musoma municipal and Misungwi district councils. PhD thesis, The Open University of Tanzania, Tanzania. Retrieved from <http://repository.out.ac.tz/id/eprint/613>
- National Centre for Education Statistics. (2013). The Nation's Report Card - National Centre for Education Statistics. Retrieved from <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/main2013/pdf/2014466.pdf>
- Ndijuye, L. G., & Rao, N. (2019). Early reading and mathematics attainments of children of recently self-settled naturalised refugees in Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 65, 183-193. DOI: doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2018.08.002
- Piper, B. (2010). Uganda early grade reading assessment-findings report: Literacy acquisition and mother tongue. Research Triangle Institute International.
- Piper, B., Schroeder, L. & Trudell, B. (2016). Oral reading fluency and comprehension in Kenya: Reading acquisition in a multilingual environment. *Journal of Research in Reading* 39 (2): 133-152. doi: 10.1111/1467-9817.12052
- Uwezo (2014). Are our children learning? Literacy and numeracy across East Africa, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.uwezo.net>.
- Uwezo. (2015). Are our children learning? Literacy and numeracy in Tanzania, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.uwezo.net>.
- Wright, C., Conlon, E.G., Wright, M. & Dyck, M.H. (2011). An open, pilot study of the understanding words reading intervention program. *SAGE Open* 1–11. doi: 10.1177/2158244011420452