

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN ARABIC LANGUAGE IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ASA, KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This position paper aims to examine the influence of parental involvement on students' academic performance in the Arabic language in Senior Secondary Schools in Kwara State. The paper adopted a conceptual and literature-based approach, drawing on relevant empirical studies, theoretical perspectives, and educational policy documents. The reviewed literature showed that active Parental involvement is a significant determinant of the children's academic success and socio-emotional development. It also indicated that a household can play a role in a child's intellectual growth and aspirations. Based on these insights, the paper recommended that school administrators implement structured programs to engage parents in their children's Arabic language learning through regular meetings, literacy workshops and parent-teacher collaborations. Teachers were encouraged to adopt inclusive strategies that consider students' diverse socio-economic backgrounds, while students were advised to take initiative through self-directed learning. Parents were urged to participate actively in their children's Arabic language development by engaging in discussions, reading Arabic materials together, and encouraging daily practice. Finally, the paper recommended further studies on the role of government and community organisations in supporting Arabic language education in low-income areas.

Key Words: Academic Performance, Arabic Language, Curriculum, Parental Involvement, Senior Secondary School.

Introduction

Education is considered a right of every child that they should not be denied. It is a powerful weapon to combat illiteracy and to lift a nation out of poverty (National Policy on Education, 4th edition, 2004). A nation cannot develop beyond the literacy ability of its citizens. Recognising the importance of education, both developed and developing countries allocate significant resources to ensure their citizens receive a quality education. However, the recent alarming rise in the number of out-of-school children, which has reached 7.6 million thereby makes it essential for the Nigerian government to take decisive action to combat this issue (Ibrahim, 2025).

The quality of education in Nigeria, particularly at the secondary school level, continues to face several challenges. These include low student achievement, insufficient instructional resources, poor teacher motivation, and limited parental engagement. Among these factors, parental involvement has drawn increasing attention as a key contributor to students' academic success.

One area where these challenges are particularly evident is language education. Proficiency in both indigenous and foreign languages requires sustained support both within and

outside the classroom. When parents are disengaged or unable to reinforce learning at home, students often struggle to develop essential language skills (Nwaoboli, 2022). This situation is especially pronounced in Arabic language education, where cultural, religious, and academic expectations intersect. In Asa Local Government Area of Kwara State, Arabic holds significant relevance, yet students' academic performance in the subject remains below expectations. Understanding how parental involvement impacts learners' achievement in Arabic can offer valuable insights into addressing this gap and improving outcomes.

Arabic Language Curriculum in Senior Secondary School

Generally, language curricula were designed to develop language skills in students. These skills are four in number; at the receptive level, we have both listening and reading skills. While at the productive (expressive) level, there are speaking and writing skills (Owoyale-AbdulGaniy, Yusuf & Jimoh, 2022). According to Abdullahi (2021), in a multicultural and multilingual setting such as Nigeria, language serves as an effective tool for communication. Through the use of language, the whole world has become a global village where diplomatic relationships, transactions of different forms, and the sharing of technological and scientific benefits among the nations of the world have become relatively easy.

Adam and Adebisi (2012) opined that the essence of learning a foreign language has transcended mere obtaining of an academic qualification in the language. They further submitted that foreign languages are learned today because of their importance as a facilitator of globalisation and an effective tool to foster world peace and intellectual understanding in a world of extreme diversity. As the fourth most powerful language in the world, with speakers amounting to 11.51% of the world's population (Samira, 2022). The event of the September 11 attacks renewed the interest in the understanding of Arabic culture and managing the information that is coming from the Arab world (Adam and Adebisi, 2012).

Additionally, one of the goals of studying the Arabic language at tertiary institutions is to attain competence in using it for different communicative purposes to interact freely locally and globally with the speakers of the language. However, a learner cannot achieve this precious goal except when he has successfully acquired written and spoken competence in the language at the secondary school level and score at least a credit pass in the examination (Abdullahi & Oladosu, 2021).

The Arabic language curriculum was specifically designed to acquaint learners with the ability to master the grammatical rules, which will enable them to become proficient users of the language. The mastery of the language can be established through the learner's ability to effectively communicate their feelings using the language and to interact effortlessly with other speakers of the language within or outside their societies. The most significant milestone in the learning of a foreign language lies in learners' ability to use the appropriate choice of words and sentences in the appropriate context.

The interest of a foreign language learner is assumed to be satisfied when the curriculum designed for the teaching of the language covers all its aspects including the socio-cultural element of it which will help them to realize the need to know what, when, and how to use language for particular purposes that conform with the social and cultural norms of the

native speakers. However, the learner feels disappointed when the curriculum falls short of his/her expectations (Sami, 2015).

The curriculum is a tool of familiarisation that helps learners understand the aims and objectives of learning a particular subject (Owoyale-AbdulGaniy et al., 2022). Owoyale-AbdulGaniy et al.(2022) in their assessment of the curriculum of the Arabic language in secondary schools observed that the curriculum is adjudged to be relevant because it concerns itself with the intellectual, social, moral, spiritual, and physical growth of the learner by taking cognisance of interest, age level and classes of the Students. Research findings concerning students' academic performance in the Arabic language, specifically in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE), have shown encouraging results. Notable studies (Saadu, 2017; Salisu & Abdullahi, 2017; Yahaya, 2018; Abdullahi & Oladosu, 2021) indicate a commendable level of performance among students in this subject area.

Concept of Parental Involvement

Home, as one of the informal agencies of education, exercises a great deal of influence on the academic success of children. Parents have some effects on the attitude of their children towards learning (Akinwumi & Falemu, 2024). The home environment is a combination of many components. These components, for example, may include: parents' friendly home environment, home facilities, parents' attention or care, motivational behaviour of parents, parents' financial status, etc.

Lisa et al. (2018) categorised parental involvement in the academic achievement of their children into two. These are home-based strategies and school-based strategies. The first category refers to those activities that parents do at home to aid the academic performance of their children. For example, providing structure and support for learning and education at home. The second category, that is, school-based strategies, are the activities that parents do in connection with the school to enhance the academic performance of their children. This may involve frequent communication between the parents and the school, and attending school events such as PTA meetings, where feedback is given on the performance of the students.

Parental involvement is one of the most important factors in determining students' success in learning Arabic in Nigeria, surpassing even socio-economic status and school resources. This is because, without active and proper parental engagement, children may fail to make effective use of the learning resources available to them at home and school. Nwaoboli (2022) emphasises that establishing learning environments that encourage communication between families and schools is vital for influencing students' educational outcomes.

Parents' active involvement in their children's academic success and ability to adapt to life may, to some extent, be influenced by their socioeconomic status. In recent years, the poor academic performance of students in Nigeria, particularly in Kwara State, can be attributed to multiple factors, including shifting family dynamics and economic difficulties (Akinwumi & Falemu, 2024). Many families struggle to fulfil their responsibilities in ensuring their children's health and literacy due to financial constraints. Akinwumi & Falemu (2024) argued that the size of a household also plays a role in a child's intellectual growth and aspirations. In larger families, children may not receive adequate academic support, as parents and guardians must divide their attention among multiple children.

This can make it difficult to assist with homework, pay school fees, attend parent-teacher meetings, and meet other educational obligations. Conversely, children from smaller families tend to receive more individualized attention, which can contribute to better academic outcomes (Akinwumi & Falemu, 2024).

Financial limitation is another major barrier to students' academic achievement and personal development. A child's educational success is often linked to various social and economic factors within their family and support network. According to UNESCO (2014), children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to excel in school. The financial and social status of students significantly influences their motivation and ambition to succeed academically.

When a family has sufficient financial resources, there are usually more learning opportunities both at home and in school (Akinwumi and Falemu, 2024). This is often tied to the parents' level of education and employment. In the opinion of Akinwumi and Falemu (2024), parents with higher education levels are better equipped to be involved in their children's academic progress by engaging in daily learning activities and taking an active role in their schooling. However, the majority of families in Nigeria face economic hardships, making it difficult to provide proper nutrition, let alone cover educational expenses (Akinwumi and Falemu, 2024). This has severe consequences for students from low-income backgrounds, leading to class absenteeism, struggles with completing assignments, and, in extreme cases, school expulsion due to an inability to pay fees or meet other basic needs.

Akinwumi and Falemu (2024) in their study further submitted that another crucial factor influencing students' academic performance as a result of their parents' involvement is the learning environment in their schools. Some parents are financially capable of sending their children to schools that provide conducive settings for education, with access to well-equipped classrooms, qualified teachers, laboratories, libraries, and adequate furniture. However, other schools lack these essential resources, which can negatively affect students' academic success, particularly in subjects like Arabic in Kwara State.

Some studies have highlighted the impact of factors like students' interactions with their schools, communities, and other social influences on their academic performance and success (Nwaoboli, 2022). However, without active parental involvement, students' ability to master Arabic is significantly diminished, regardless of the quality of school instruction. To improve students' performance in Arabic, parents must encourage, appreciate, and motivate them. They should provide support, foster readiness, raise awareness about their role, and be actively engaged in the entire learning process. Most importantly, parents should encourage their children to share any educational challenges they face and offer immediate solutions to provide intellectual relief. At home, parents should act as motivators, recognising and supporting all of the students' educational activities. Motivation is key to enhancing learning and fostering a positive attitude and mindset toward education.

Although it can be argued that some students achieve success without parental involvement. The key factors for academic success are often attributed to government policies and school resources. However, it is important to recognise that, while these factors are significant, they cannot substitute for the daily guidance and support provided by

parents to facilitate their children's academic success. Instances of students succeeding without parental involvement are exceptions, and extensive research indicates that most students face difficulties without the support of their parents. Both studies conducted by Akinwumi and Falemu (2024) and Nwaoboli (2022) employed robust sample sizes and effective sampling techniques. Akinwumi and Falemu surveyed 300 students from a diverse population of over 12000 using a stratified random sampling method. In contrast, Nwaoboli utilised Taro Yamane's formula along with random sampling to extract a sample of 400 students from a total of 13068. These methodological approaches ensure sufficient representation for their respective studies. However, it is noteworthy that the focus of Akinwumi and Falemu's (2024) research on SSS II students may limit the generalizability of their findings. Consequently, the results may be specific to this academic level and may not universally apply to other grades without careful consideration. Additionally, Nwaoboli's study, which is confined to just four schools in Orebo LGA, may also restrict the broader applicability of its findings without further contextual validation.

Conclusion

This position paper explored the impact of parental involvement on students' academic performance in the Arabic language in the Asa Local Government of Kwara State. The findings from the reviewed literature highlighted that parental involvement is a significant determinant of children's academic achievement and their ability to navigate life's challenges. Furthermore, the size of the household is also recognised as an important factor influencing a child's intellectual development and future aspirations. Parents with higher education levels are better positioned to support their children's academic development through active participation in daily learning activities and engagement in their schooling. However, many families in Nigeria, especially in the Asa Local Government of Kwara State, face significant economic hardships that contribute to negative outcomes for students from low-income backgrounds, including frequent absenteeism, difficulty completing assignments, and, in some cases, expulsion due to an inability to pay school fees or meet other essential needs.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this paper, it is recommended that parents, school administrators, government and other stakeholders in the education industry should work together to establish inclusive programs such as regular parent-teacher meetings, workshops, and literacy programs, that will actively engage all and enhance improved academic performance of the senior secondary school students of Arabic Language in Asa Local Government of Kwara State, Nigeria. Teachers should develop teaching strategies that consider students' diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Students are also encouraged to take personal initiative in learning Arabic by utilising available resources such as online courses, library materials, and peer study groups. Additionally, parents are advised to actively participate in their children's Arabic language learning by encouraging daily practice. Finally, future researchers are also advised to conduct further studies on the role of government and community organisations in supporting Arabic language education in low-income areas.

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