

## INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PORT HARCOURT METROPOLIS OF RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

This study investigated the influence of parental involvement on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis of Rivers state, Nigeria. The study was guided by two research objectives, two research questions, and two hypotheses. Descriptive survey design was adopted, with a population of 27,082 comprising 25,077 students and 2,005 teachers across 35 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis. A sample size of 727 respondents, 394 students and 333 teachers was selected using Yaro Yamane's formula and a multi-stage sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled Influence of Parental Involvement on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (IPIAPSSSQ), validated by experts in educational research. The reliability of the instrument yielded a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.83. Mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions, while z-test was employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that parental involvement, including monitoring homework, emotional support, and encouragement, significantly enhances students' academic performance. It was recommended that parents set high academic standards and clearly communicate expectations to motivate their children, thereby improving their academic performance.

**Keywords:** Influence, Parental Involvement, Academic Performance

### Introduction

In the quest for improved academic performance among secondary school students, parental involvement has increasingly been recognized as a critical factor in educational success. The active engagement of parents in their children's educational journey provides emotional, intellectual, and motivational support, which significantly contributes to academic achievement. Research has shown that students whose parents are actively involved in school-related activities such as homework supervision, attending school meetings, and communicating regularly with teachers tend to perform better academically (Adepoju & Olaniyan, 2022). In a knowledge-based society where education is the bedrock of national

development, understanding the influence of parental involvement becomes particularly important, especially in urban centers like Port Harcourt metropolis.

Parental involvement refers to the active participation, commitment, and engagement of parents or guardians in the academic, social, and emotional development of their children within the school environment and at home. In the context of secondary schools, it encompasses a wide range of activities such as helping with homework, attending parent-teacher meetings, monitoring academic progress, supporting school events, and fostering a positive attitude toward learning. Research shows that when parents take an active role in their children's education, students demonstrate higher academic performance encouragement, better classroom behavior, increased motivation, and improved school attendance (Epstein, 2018; Uche & Umeh, 2023). This engagement becomes even more critical in urban centers like Port Harcourt, where educational disparities and socio-economic factors can negatively affect student outcomes. Parental involvement serves as a bridge between home and school, creating a supportive network that enhances students' confidence and commitment to their studies (Adepoju & Olaniyan, 2022). Therefore, fostering consistent and meaningful parental engagement is essential for improving academic achievement and long-term success in secondary education. The roles of parental involvement in enhancing students' academic performance in secondary schools includes: Parental involvement monitoring and assisting with homework and providing emotional support and.

Parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework refers to the active role parents play in overseeing, guiding, and supporting their children's completion of academic tasks assigned outside the classroom. This type of involvement goes beyond merely checking if assignments are completed; it includes helping students understand instructions, creating a conducive learning environment at home, setting routines, and providing encouragement to foster academic discipline and confidence. In secondary schools within Port Harcourt Metropolis, where students may face diverse academic and socio-economic challenges, consistent parental support in homework-related activities can significantly boost students' academic performance and motivation (Ekanem & Essien, 2022; Obiakor & Okonkwo, 2023). When parents are actively engaged, students are more likely to view homework as valuable and less likely to experience academic stress or develop negative attitudes toward schoolwork. Research also confirms that such involvement enhances students' time management skills, deepens subject comprehension, and strengthens parent-child communication about education (Fan & Williams, 2018; Akinyemi & Adewale, 2021).

Parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement refers to the active and consistent role parents play in nurturing their children's psychological well-being to enhance their motivation, confidence, and overall academic engagement. This support extends beyond financial assistance or supervision. It includes empathizing with students' challenges, celebrating their academic efforts (not just achievements), reassuring them during setbacks, and promoting resilience through words and actions (Adeola & Igbokwe, 2021). Emotional support creates a stable and secure foundation that helps students develop a growth mindset,

which is crucial for overcoming academic difficulties. In the secondary school context, especially in urban centers like Port Harcourt metropolis in Rivers state, where students may face academic pressure, peer influence, and socio-economic barriers, parental emotional support can significantly buffer stress and promote academic persistence (Fan & Chen, 2020).

Moreover, emotionally supportive parents foster an atmosphere of trust, open communication, and affirmation, all of which contribute to a positive learning attitude in students. When parents offer encouragement and express belief in their children's abilities, students internalize these positive perceptions, which boosts their self-efficacy and willingness to engage in academic tasks (Eneh & Amadi, 2022). Research has consistently shown that adolescents who receive strong emotional backing from their parents are more likely to exhibit improved classroom behavior, increased academic motivation, and better academic outcomes overall (Ogbodo & Nwachukwu, 2023). This dimension of parental involvement is therefore vital for schools aiming to foster a holistic and supportive learning environment.

Parental involvement extends beyond the home environment; it includes fostering conducive learning atmospheres, setting academic expectations, and participating in school governance. In secondary schools, where students face heightened academic and social pressures, the support and guidance of parents often determine how well they adapt and thrive academically (Epstein, 2018). Studies in Nigeria and beyond have indicated that effective home-school partnerships can bridge learning gaps, reduce absenteeism, and build student confidence (Onwuchekwa & Ugochukwu, 2023). However, the degree of involvement varies significantly depending on socio-economic status, parental education levels, and cultural factors, making it imperative to study this phenomenon within specific local contexts such as Port Harcourt.

Students' academic performance in secondary schools refers to the measurable learning outcomes demonstrated by students through various assessments, examinations, assignments, and classroom participation. It reflects the extent to which students have achieved the educational goals outlined in the curriculum (Okoro & Wali, 2021). Academic performance is typically evaluated using standardized tests, continuous assessments, teacher observations, and grade point averages (GPAs). These performance indicators provide a basis for determining a student's level of knowledge acquisition, cognitive skills, and ability to apply learned concepts to real-life situations. In the context of Nigerian secondary schools particularly in urban centers like Port Harcourt Metropolis. Academic performance is often influenced by a complex interplay of factors such as parental involvement, availability of learning resources, teacher effectiveness, and socio-economic background (Yusuf & Oyetoro, 2022).

Moreover, academic performance serves as a critical determinant of students' future educational and career opportunities. High-performing students are more likely to transition successfully to tertiary institutions and compete effectively in an increasingly knowledge-driven economy. Conversely, poor academic performance can limit a student's potential for further education and economic advancement (Nwachukwu & Ekene, 2023). As such, stakeholders, parents, teachers, school administrators, and policymakers pay close attention to

the factors that influence student outcomes in secondary schools. Recent research underscores the importance of emotional support, conducive learning environments, and inclusive teaching strategies in improving student achievement across diverse settings in Nigeria (Adeyemi & Akinwale, 2022).

In Port Harcourt Metropolis, a fast-growing urban center in Rivers state, secondary schools are faced with numerous challenges, including overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, and varying levels of parental commitment. These challenges can either be mitigated or exacerbated by the level of parental support. Unfortunately, some parents believe that the responsibility for academic performance lies solely with the school system. This disconnect between home and school has been identified as a major contributor to underachievement among students in some secondary schools in the area (Wokocha & Ibiam, 2021). It becomes necessary, therefore, to investigate how the various dimensions of parental involvement such as academic, emotional, and participatory can influence students' academic performance in this unique socio-educational landscape.

This study seeks to explore the role parental involvement plays in enhancing academic performance among secondary school students in Port Harcourt metropolis. Such insights will be vital in designing community-specific interventions that foster collaborative relationships between homes and schools, ultimately improving educational standards in Rivers state. As highlighted by Uche and Umeh (2023), localized studies are essential in crafting targeted strategies that reflect the realities of educational challenges in Nigeria's urban centers.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In recent years, there has been growing concern over the academic performance of students in secondary schools across Nigeria, particularly within Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state. Despite various educational reforms and policy interventions aimed at improving learning outcomes, students' academic achievements remain inconsistent and, in some cases, alarmingly low. A key contributing factor often overlooked is the role of parental involvement in students' academic lives. Research has shown that when parents are actively engaged monitoring homework, attending school events, and fostering positive attitudes toward education students tend to perform better academically. However, many parents in urban areas like Port Harcourt may be constrained by socio-economic pressures, work obligations, or lack of awareness, which limits their ability to effectively support their children's education (Adewale, 2022).

The absence of inadequacy of parental engagement can significantly affect a child's motivation, discipline, and academic performance. Many students in secondary schools within Port Harcourt appear to lack the needed academic guidance and emotional support from home. This results in low self-esteem, reduced school attendance, and a general disinterest in academic pursuits. According to Edeh and Anyanwu (2022), students whose parents take an active interest in their school life are more likely to develop resilience and perform better in

assessments. Conversely, students from homes with minimal parental involvement often struggle to keep up academically, especially in environments where schools lack the capacity to fill this gap.

Moreover, with the increasing influence of technology, peer pressure, and social media distractions, the need for parental monitoring and emotional encouragement has never been more critical. It is essential to understand the extent to which parental involvement affects students' academic progress, particularly in the socio-culturally diverse setting of Port Harcourt. Unfortunately, empirical data specific to this context remains limited, hindering targeted interventions. Therefore, the researcher carried out the study to find out the influence of parental involvement on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state and to proffer solutions to the stated problems.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this study was to investigate the influence of parental involvement on academic performance among secondary school students in Port Harcourt metropolis of Rivers state, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the extent to which parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state.
2. Find out the extent to which parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state?
2. To what extent does parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state.

- There is no significant difference between parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state.

### Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a population of 27,082 teachers and students comprising 25,077 students and 2,005 teachers in the 35 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis of Rivers state. The sample size of the study was 727 respondents comprising 394 students and 333 teachers. The sample size was determined using Yaro Yamene's formula. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample size. The instrument for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire titled; "Influence of Parental Involvement on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students Questionnaire (IPIAPSSSQ)". Responses to the questionnaire items were structured on a four- point summated rating scale of: Very High Extent (VHE) – 4points, High Extent (HE) – 3points, Low Extent (LE) – 2points and Very Low Extent (VLE)-1point. The instrument was validated by experts in educational research. The reliability of the instrument gave a Cronbach Alpha total index of 0.83 which was considered reliable. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while z-test statistics was used to test the formulated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### Results

**Research Question 1:** How does parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state?

**Table 1: Mean Ratings of Parental Homework Support on Students' Academic Performance**

S/N.	Questionnaire Items	Students (394)			Teachers (333)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1.	When parents monitor and assist with homework, students develop a routine and structured approach to studying, which promotes discipline and consistent academic engagement.	3.26	1.15	HE	3.18	1.09	HE
2.	Parental guidance does not help clarify difficult concepts or instructions, making it easier for students to grasp and apply what they have learned in school.	2.13	1.10	LE	2.28	1.17	LE

3.	Supportive parental involvement encourages students to believe in their abilities, reducing anxiety	3.20	1.18	HE	3.1	1.06	HE
					1		
4.	When parents oversee homework, students are more likely to complete and submit their assignments on time.	3.47	1.13	HE	3.4	1.09	HE
					3		
5.	Active parental participation helps identify areas where students are struggling, allowing for early intervention.	3.18	1.16	HE	3.2	1.04	HE
					8		
6.	While helping, parents can also model problem-solving strategies, gradually empowering students to develop autonomy and confidence in handling assignments independently.	3.33	1.11	HE	3.2	1.19	HE
					6		
7.	Shared homework time strengthens the educational bond between parents and children, fostering open communication about schoolwork and learning challenges.	3.21	1.15	HE	3.0	1.10	HE
					8		
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>1.14</b>	<b>HE</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>HE</b>
					<b>9</b>		

Table 1 revealed the extent to which parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework, enhance students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state. Majority of the respondents agreed with all the items in the table except item 2. The grand mean scores of 3.11, 3.09 and standard deviation scores of 1.14 and 1.11 for students and teachers respectively, indicate that parental involvement in homework enhances students' academic performance in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state at a high extent rating.

**Research Question 2:** To what extent does parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement enhance students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state?

**Table 2: Mean Ratings of Parental Homework Support on Students' Academic Performance.**

S/N.	Questionnaire Items	Students (394)			Teachers (333)		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
8.	When parents offer emotional support and encouragement, students feel valued and are more likely to believe in their abilities.	3.30	1.08	HE	3.10	1.07	HE
9.	Emotionally supportive parents help students cope with academic pressure and stress, leading to better focus and performance in school.	3.01	1.12	HE	3.05	1.13	HE
10.	Parental encouragement fosters a positive outlook on education, making students more enthusiastic and engaged in their studies.	2.02	1.17	LE	2.10	1.15	LE
11.	Emotionally involved parents are more likely to monitor their children's attendance and punctuality.	3.10	1.10	HE	3.20	1.14	HE
12.	Supportive parents tend to maintain communication with teachers, which helps identify and address students' academic or emotional challenges early.	3.48	1.13	HE	3.41	1.17	HE
13.	Encouragement from parents inspires students to set academic goals and strive for higher achievements.	3.31	1.07	HE	3.19	1.20	HE
14.	Parents who show interest in their children's learning help instill discipline and regular study routines	2.15	1.11	LE	2.04	1.16	LE
	<b>Grand Scores</b>	<b>2.91</b>	<b>1.11</b>	<b>HE</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>1.15</b>	<b>HE</b>

Table 2 revealed the extent to which parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state. Majority of the respondents agreed with all the items in the table except item 10 and 14. The grand mean scores of 2.91, 3.01 and standard deviation scores of 1.11 and 1.15 for students and teachers respectively indicate that parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state at a high extent rating.

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference between parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state.

**Table 3: Z-test Analysis of Difference in the Mean Ratings of Students and Teachers.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	A	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Students	394	3.11	1.14					Ho
				0.05	725	0.24	$\pm 1.96$	
Teachers	333	3.09	1.11					Accepted

From Table 3, the calculated z-value of 0.24 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 725 degree of freedom and 0.05 alpha level. Given the above, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state is rejected. This implies that students and teachers consented that parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference between parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state.

**Table 4: Z-test Analysis of Difference in the Mean Ratings of Students and Teachers**

Respondents	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	A	Df	z-cal	z-crit	Decision
Students	394	2.91	1.11					Ho
				0.05	725	-1.17	$\pm 1.96$	
Teachers	333	3.01	1.15					Accepted

From table 4, the calculated z-value of -1.17 is less than the z-critical value of 1.96 at 725 degree of freedom and 0.05 alpha level. Given the above, the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state is hereby rejected. The implication of this is that students and teachers agreed that parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state.

### Discussion of Findings

The result of the findings of the study for research question one revealed that parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state to a high extent. With grand mean scores of 3.11 and 3.09 which are greater than the criterion means of 2.50. The corresponding hypothesis one also revealed that there is a significant difference between

parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state. This finding is in line with Igbokwe and Nwachukwu (2022) who opined that, parental assistance with homework significantly enhances students' understanding of academic content and overall performance in secondary schools. Findings indicate that when parents actively assist with homework by explaining complex concepts, guiding problem-solving processes, and creating a conducive learning environment at home. Students demonstrate better comprehension, increased engagement in classroom activities and higher performance in both internal and external examinations.

The findings of the study for research question two revealed that parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state at a high extent rating. With grand mean scores of 2.91 and 3.01 which are greater than the criterion means of 2.50. The corresponding hypothesis two also revealed that there is a significant difference between parental involvement in providing emotional support and encouragement and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state. This finding is in line with the view of Williams & Johnson (2023) who maintained that, the absence of emotional safety can lead to stress, anxiety, and withdrawal from social or professional interactions. Individuals in emotionally unsafe environments often struggle with self-esteem, experience decreased motivation, and may face long-term psychological consequences and decline in academic performance.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the findings the study concluded that; parental involvement in monitoring and assisting with homework, providing emotional support and encouragement enhances students' academic performance in secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state. Moreover, schools where parental engagement is high often record better student outcomes, indicating that academic excellence is not solely the responsibility of teachers but requires a collaborative effort with parents.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, following recommendations were made, that:

1. Parents should set high academic standards and communicate clear expectations to motivate their children to strive for excellence, leading to improved academic outcomes. Secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis develop and maintain consistent and effective communication platforms with parents. These may include regular newsletters, SMS updates, online parent portals, and scheduled meetings. Improved communication ensures that parents are well-informed about school programs, academic calendars, student progress, and behavioral issues. This not only fosters trust and collaboration between

schools and families but also enables parents to provide timely support and reinforcement of learning activities at home.

2. Administrators of secondary schools and the Ministry of Education should organize periodic workshops, seminars, and sensitization programs aimed at educating parents on the importance and strategies of being actively involved in their children's academic progress. Such programs should address areas such as home learning support, time management, emotional encouragement, and the creation of conducive learning environments at home. When parents are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary for effective involvement, they become more confident and intentional in supporting their children's academic success.

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