



## Parents Involvement in Early Childhood Education as a Correlate of Early Childhood School Adjustment and Achievement in Drawing

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### ABSTRACT

*This research sort to bring to the public knowledge, the relationship parents have with early childhood education as regards school adjustment and achievement in drawing. The study used correlation survey approach. The sample of the study was two hundred and fifty (250) parents whose children attend Hillcrest Nursery/Primary School Nsukka and ten (10) nursery school teachers who teach those children. Questionnaires were used to collect data, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and Chi Square was used to test the hypotheses. From the findings of this study parental involvement (warmth, emotional care and support) did not show a strong relationship on early childhood education, particularly the school adjustment and academic achievement of the children in drawing. One of the educational implications is that children will at their early stage be self-confident. Some recommendations were made from the result of the study.*

**KEYWORDS:** Parents Involvement, Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Adjustment and Achievement in Drawing.

### 1.1 Introduction

The major challenge facing children in their early years has been identified with starting school. The type of foundation on which the child's early school is built determines the child's adjustment and achievement. That one adjusts and achieves in different school subjects such as drawing could depend on parents' involvement in the child's early schooling. Drawing is the art of representing objects or forms on a surface chiefly by means of lines. It is a form of visual art that makes use of any number of drawing instruments such as pencils, pen and ink, inked brushes, wax color pencils, crayons to mark a two-dimensional medium. Drawing could play a major role in the development of children through certain stages because it is more physical than the more traditional school work. This could be seen in their scribbling on any surface they lay hand on. If parents are able to notice this and direct the child, they will not have difficulties in school drawing. Drawing is extremely useful for bringing together the mind, body, social and physical worlds of a person into one activity Crook (1985). This allows for optimal learning as the child's entire dynamic system is involved in the task.

All young children take great pleasure in moving a crayon or pencil across a surface and leaving a mark. This form of mark-making or "scribbling" represents children's first self-initiated encounters with art. Children typically begin scribbling around one and a half years of age. Most observers of children drawings believe that children engage in scribbling not to draw a picture of something; rather they do so for the pure enjoyment of moving their arms and making marks on a surface. However, some researchers such as Lowenfeld (1975) and Winner (1982) have challenged this traditional view by showing that young children do occasionally experiment with representation though their scribbles may not contain any recognizable forms. This new perspective suggests that children's earliest mark-making activities may be more complex than previously thought. Encouragement is vital in art development and each child in their own time will arrive at their own style of drawing depending on the type of motivation received from the parents. For those children who really seem to be behind, a teacher can stimulate the child to form specific images by asking what the person in the picture is doing. This will help them to represent other objects of their choice in their own creative way. However, children will not be able to do this without being well adjusted in school.

Children's development and adjustment as they commence schooling is critical for their future development especially in the area of draw-

ing. Research has suggested that social and emotional difficulties in the early years of schooling can predict risk of educational and social problems in the following years (Margetts, 2002). Early years of Child's development and adjustment is influenced by a variety of personal and family characteristics as well as societal and family trends. Parental involvement is very essential in early childhood education as this helps to broaden the child's horizon, enhance social relationships, and promote a sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Vardin, 2012). Encouraging parents to play an active role in the educational life of their children and establishing effective home-school partnerships is very crucial in early childhood education as this will, to a large extent; benefit the children in their school adjustment and achievement (Mishra, 2012).. Research shows that when children have involved parents, the results are very positive. Children who have involved and engaged parents are more likely to adapt well to the school environment, attend school regularly, demonstrate good social skills and behaviour, earn higher grades and better test scores, pass their classes and be promoted, graduate and enroll in higher level education programs (Vardin, 2012). This invariably brings about scholastic achievement.

Desforges, & Abouchaar, (2003) defined parental involvement as a catch-all term for many different activities including 'at home' good parenting, helping with homework, talking to teachers, attending school functions, through to taking part in school governance. It is relatively easy to describe what parents do in the name of involvement. Parent involvement for this study can be referred to as a broad range of activities which include helping with homework, parental warmth, provision of materials, parent-child relationships, good models of constructive social and educational values, participation in school work and discipline. It is widely recognized that if children are to maximize their potential from schooling, they will need the full support of their parents.

There are different ways in which parents can be involved in their children's early childhood education. This can be seen in the Epstein's conceptual framework for family-school-community involvement thus: Parenting – basic parent skills including discipline, setting expectations and providing a home environment conducive to learning; Communicating – contact, both parent and school initiated, relative to student learning; Volunteering – giving time to be involved in school events; Learning at Home – involvement in learning activities at home including homework and extra-curricular activities; Decision Making – partic-

ipating in school decision making or governance through a parent organization and Collaborating with Community- Coordinating learning with community activities for families (Epstein, 2001). Children who have parents with the above listed qualities are more likely to adjust easily in school than those whose parents pay little or no attention to their school activities especially when it involves drawing exercises. Often children normally like to involve their parents in drawing exercises. They most of the times draw figures and labeled them as 'this is my daddy', 'this is my mummy cooking' this is my daddy's car. In fact parents are always the model and subject for the children to draw. At times if they find some objects difficult for them to draw they involve their parents (Lewis & Greene, 1983).. From the view point of Desforges, and Abouchaar, (2003), parental involvement can be seen in the form of 'at-home good parenting' which according to them, has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation.

Close teacher-parent partnership is also critical in bridging the school and family which, in turn, enables teachers and parents to support children's educational process. To this end, parents are expected to participate actively in parent-teacher progress meetings/parents-teacher association (PTPM/PTA) held in schools to assess children's progress and other school activities. Here, parents should be made to understand that their active participation in their child's education increases the child's self-esteem as well as self-efficacy. This in turn improves the child's adjustment and achievement. Children with adequate resources may be limited from enjoying the full developmental assets associated with adjustment which invariably leads to academic achievement (drawing) (Kenneth, 2007).

The school context is one of the most influential for shaping the course of human development. The child who makes a satisfactory initial adjustment to school is more likely to be successful in their future progress than a child who has difficulty adjusting to the school situation (Belsky & MacKinnon 1994; Keinig, in Margette 2005). The transition from a familiar situation into a new or unfamiliar situation, for example, from home to childcare/preschool, to primary school, or secondary school is characterized by change, tensions and uncertainties (Dockett & Perry, Fabian, in Margette 2005). Children are faced with a new environment of buildings and classrooms, new school and teacher expectations, new academic challenges, and acceptance into a new peer group. They are required to function independently, develop relationships with staff and peers, and to behave in ways that are appropriate for their class and school including conforming to rules (Margetts, 2003).

Adjustment to school is supported by a number of skills including social competence, problem solving skills, self reliance and determination, knowing about 'not knowing' and what to do about it, behavioural control and academic competence (Margetts, 2002). Children's adjustment is supported when they follow directions, take responsibility for their belongings, take turns, regulate their behaviour in response to others, and respond appropriately to frustration. Adjustment to school is influenced by the level of comfort, familiarity and predictability children experience and this affects their academic achievement generally. Children are at risk of not adjusting easily to school when there is a mismatch between the personal and cultural skills, attitudes and knowledge they bring to school, and the expectations of the school itself (Clancy, Simpson & Howard, 2001; Margetts, 2003).

Research evidence revealed that more extensive non-parental care in the years closest to birth increases the risk of children having difficulty adjusting to the first year of schooling in all domains; social, behavioural and academic (Margetts, 2002). Adjustment to school appears to revolve around skills and behaviours associated with self-regulation, self-assurance and adaptability in relation to the classroom.

theoretical base of this study can be seen in the works of Vygotsky on social cultural theory. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory concentrates on the importance of culture on the way a child learns and develops (Vygotsky, 1989). The theory says that many cognitive skills and processes are transferred from adults and older peers to children, which helps in the transfer of cultural ideas, beliefs and practices. This theory also helps to explain the differences between children and their development in different cultures, as such differences are handed down from generation to generation by involved parenting.

Parents' involvement is very important in child's upbringing especially during the early stage. It is likely that children of involved parents adjust easily and achieve high in their academic pursuit which drawing is part of than those whose parent are not involved.. They appear to develop self-efficacy, self-confident, relate easily, have high self-concept and develop good skills needed for school activities like drawing. This study sought to find if there is any relationship between parent involvement in early childhood education and early childhood school adjustment and achievement in drawing.

**1.1.1 Research Questions**

1. How does relationship of parents' involvement relate positively to childhood school adjustment?
2. What is the relationship between parents' involvement and their children's achievement in drawing?

**1.1.2 Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between parents' involvement and children's adjustment?
2. There is no significant relationship between parents' involvement and children's achievement in drawing?

**1.1.3 Method**

The design of this study is correlation survey. The population of this study consist two hundred and fifty (250) parents of the children, ten (10) nursery school teachers who teaches those children and two hundred and fifty nursery school pupils. The whole population was used as sample since the population is small. The instruments for data collection were Parents' Involvement in Early Childhood Education Questionnaire (PIECEQ) and Early Childhood School Adjustment Questionnaire (ECSAQ) developed by the researchers. PIECEQ was completed by the parents while ECSAQ was completed by the teachers. The questionnaires, were made up of 20 items developed on a four point scale of Very Large Extent (VLE) =4 points; Large Extent (LE) =3 points; Little Extent (LE) =2 points; and Very Little Extent (VLE) 1point.

The PIECEQ is in two sections. Section A elicited information on the background information of parents, and section B sought information on the parents' involvement on early childhood education. ECSAQ sort information on the children's adjustment in school. The total mean score of 2.5 and above represents positive involvement of parents in their children's education and school adjustment while below represents negative involvement. The instruments were face validated by three experts in Educational Psychology, Department of Educational Foundations, and Education Fine and Applied Arts, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The instruments were distributed and collected by the researchers personally. The Drawing Achievement (DAT) was also administered to the children and their drawings were collected and scored by the researchers. Analysis was done based on the collected data.

**1.1.4 Result**

Research Question 1: How does parents' involvement relate positively to early childhood school adjustment?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard deviation rating on how Parents' involvement relates to childhood school adjustment (N = 250)**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Deci
1	I discuss school activities with my children	1.00	.56	N
2	I help my children with homework	2.00	.41	N
3	I discuss school activities or events of particular interest with my children.	1.00	.58	N
4	I monitor my children's homework.	1.50	.72	N
5	I limit my children's going out to meet friends so they can read their books.	1.00	.63	N
6	I act as a volunteer at my children's school.	2.00	.62	N
7	I am always at home when my children return home from school to see to their needs before I leave for some other things.	1.00	.54	N
8	I receive information about my children's academic activities and behaviour in school	1.50	.67	N

9	I limit the number of times my children watch television programmes to enable them have enough time to read their books.	1.78	.48	N
10	I attend PTA meetings and take part in the activities.	2.40	.59	N
11	I discuss my children's school progress with their teachers,	1.05	.61	N
12	I attend school functions	2.50	.66	P
13	I take part in school governance	1.00	.81	N

**KEY**

P = Positive

N = Negative

Data on Table 1 indicated that items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 13 had mean ratings of 1.00, 2.00, 1.00, 1.50, 1.00, 2.00, 1.00, 1.50, 1.78, 2.40, 1.05 and 1.00 respectively while item 12 had 2.50. Parents involvement therefore, do not relate positively to childhood school adjustment. This is evidenced on the negative response of most of the items by the respondents.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between parents' involvement and their children's achievement in drawing?

**Table2: Mean (x) and Standard deviation (SD) rating on how parent's involvement relates to children's achievement in drawing (N = 250)**

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Deci
14.	I encourage my child when he/she is drawing	1.00	.45	N
15.	I buy drawing materials for my child	1.05	.51	N
16.	I scold my child any time he/she is drawing	1.56	.63	N
17.	I see drawing as someone destroying papers	2.50	.74	P
18.	Drawing is a waste of time	2.00	.56	N
19.	Children do not produce good drawings	1.89	.47	N
20.	Children's drawing does not have meaning	1.10	.68	N
21.	I hate seeing my children drawing	1.00	.83	N
22.	Cost of drawing materials are very expensive I cannot afford to buy them for my children.	2.64	.62	P

**KEY**

P = Positive

N = Negative

Data on Table 3 indicated that items 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, and 21 had mean ratings of 1.00, 1.05, 1.56, 2.00, 1.89, 1.10 and 1.00 respectively while items 17 and 22 had mean ratings of 2.50 and 2.64. This showed that parents involvement do not relate to children's achievement in drawing. This was evidenced on negative response by respondents on the majority of the items in the table.

**Hypotheses**

Ho<sub>1</sub> There is no significant relationship between parents' involvement and children's school adjustment

**Table 3: Chi Square on parents' involvement and children's adjustment and parents' involvement and children's achievement in drawing**

	ParentsInvolvement	ChildrensAchievement
Chi-Square(a,b)	6.923	.778
df	6	7
Asymp. Sig.	.328	.998

A Chi-Square goodness-of-fit test indicates there was no significant difference in the parents' involvement and children's adjustment,  $\chi^2 (6, n = 260) = 6.92, p < .328$ . The null hypothesis was accepted.

Ho<sub>2</sub> There is no significant relationship between parents' involvement and children's achievement in drawing?

A Chi-Square goodness-of-fit test indicates there was no significant difference in the parents' involvement and children's achievement in drawing,  $\chi^2 (7, n = 260) = .79, p < .998$ . The null hypothesis was therefore, not rejected.

**1.1.5 Discussion**

The study indicated that parents' involvement therefore, does not relate positively to childhood school and children's achievement in drawing. This may be because parents are so occupied with business and office work and do not have time to be exclusively involved in their children's schooling. Most of the parents are illiterate that they may not know where to be involved. They can just provide the fund and may not know whether their ward is doing well in school or not. Some may not even understand the progress report of their children. Most of the parents do not attend to Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. This agrees with Margetts (2002) which reveals that more extensive non-parental care in the years closest to birth increases the risk of children having difficulty adjusting to the first year of schooling in all domains; social, behavioural and academic. In the area of drawing, most of the parents do not like their children draw. They often think that they are wasting their papers without knowing that drawing is a cognitive process. They take most of the children drawings as child play without knowing that it is a very important developmental stage of children cognitive process. This goes with Berk (1999) which states that encouragement is vital in art development and each child in their own time will arrive at their own style of drawing depending on the type of motivation received from the parents.

**1.1.6 Implications/Recommendations:**

The relationship between parents' involvement in early childhood education with children's adjustment to school cannot be ignored. The implication of this study is that children achieve in school when they have the maximum support of their parents. Therefore, parents should be encouraged to give adequate time to their children's early schooling.

Children's adjustment to school is fostered when they develop good attitudes, skills and knowledge. This helps to increase their confidence in their own abilities, makes them responsible for their own actions and behaviours and enhances socially valued academic skills.

Parents' involvement in early childhood schooling boosts child's self-concept, esteem and efficacy. Therefore, establishing effective home-school partnerships is very crucial in early childhood education as this will, to a large extent; benefit the children in their school adjustment and achievement.

The kinds of experiences that children encounter as they make sense of relatively new surroundings, routines and procedures and learn what behaviour is considered appropriate may have far reaching effects on their social and academic success.

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