

Parental Assistance in Homework/Assignments and Student's Academic Participation in Fako Division, Cameroon

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of parents' assistance in homework on students' academic participation in Buea Sub-Division of the South West Region. A Purposive sampling technique was used to select the six secondary schools that make up the sample of this research. The research hypothesis that guided the study were that parental assistance in homework/assignments affect students' academic participation. The survey research design was used for the study and the research instrument used was the questionnaire. This instrument was administered to 300 Form three students, 149 males and 151 females. The data were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the following results were obtained: The more the parental assistance in homework/assignment, the better the academic participation and performance of secondary school students in Buea sub-division. The regular provision school needs the better the academic participation and performance of secondary school students in Buea sub-division. The researcher recommends that parents should do more in helping their children at home; they should provide their children with their school needs and assist them in order to complement the teacher's effort..

Keywords:

parental assistance:

homework/assignments, academic

participation

INTRODUCTION

This article examined parents' assistance in homework on students' academic participation. It seeks to establish whether the type and extent of parental involvement can predetermine children's successes or failures in school. The research focused on the impact of the main factors of assistance / involvement like working directly with the children on learning activities at home; the most popular of valuables being reading with the children, supporting them on their homework/assignment.

TRACING PARENTAL EDUCATIONAL INVOLVEMENT/ASSISTANCE

Before the coming of the Europeans, education in Africa in general and Cameroon in particular was largely informal (home-based schooling) with the parents at the focus of teaching. The curricula were designed and executed by the parents of specific purposes such as continuity in the family trades/profession.

The partition and colonization of Africa later came with formal education to be received in formal school settings. This, however, did not totally exclude the participation of parents in the education of their children, be it formally or informally. As formal schooling/education develops, the gap between formal and informal education narrowed down, especially as parents became more formally educated; many of whom were even teachers. This development, together with the ancient traditional rules of parents as teachers made parents to be more involved in the formal and informal education of their children. This state of affairs makes parental involvement in children's education more multi-dimensional and worth investigating.

Parents' contribution generally refers to all forms of participation in children's education (Keith, 1991). In this context, parents' contribution in other words known as parents' involvement according to Epstein (1995) is defined as the active engagement of a parent with their children outside of the school in an activity or activities which center on enhancing academic performance. As such, parents contribution in children's education is associated positively with the children's school progress. Parents show the children both the importance they attach to good school progress and their development. Such parents show interest in the school work the children bring home. They attend to their school needs and generally become familiar with the school and its standards and values. It is therefore not a mistake when Cole and Cole (1989) say that parents who encourage exploration, who take care to explain what they are doing and to listen to their children and who tailor the difficulty of the environment to their children's abilities and interest tend to raise children who are more successful academically. Parents' contribution in

children academic performance does not leave out socialization.

Indeed, most of African education is to socialize responsible intelligence through the learner's active participation in acceptable and valued social and economic activities (Nsamenang, 2004). Serpell (1994) regards this type of education as a highly cherished moral quality, which is relatively ignored in the curricula of most schools in Africa. Socialization is organized to gradually integrate children into responsible roles through guided participation in useful cultural and economic activities at different stages of life. It is modulated to match with children's emerging abilities. The desired end state is not cognitive competence, as in Western culture, but responsible social development, that is, responsible intelligence in service to social ends. Unfortunately, school curricula in Africa continue to ignore these forms of responsibility training and cognitive functioning. According to Rogoff (2003), the role of parents in this type of education is three-fold: "to guide children to accept and understand the appropriate adult identify and models towards which they are being primed or prepared for the future; to communicate standards of valued behavior and virtue; and to prime or sensitize children to pro-social attitudes and virtues and to ensure their acquisition" (Nsamenang, 2004).

Although parents' active involvement in children's learning generally is minimal and peripheral, even distant, the parents' role is nonetheless critical in that parental value and expectations filter into pervades the peer culture, exerting a directive, regulatory force on children, even when the parents are not available (Nsamenang, 1992); the education which the family provides before the child enters an educational institution is that which assists him/her in fulfilling his/her needs. The socializing and personalizing process of the parents is the means whereby a child gradually comes to regard him or herself as having relationships with other individuals. Socialization in the family is much more than a mere accepting or rejecting familiar sanctions. It is the beginning of an internalization of the culture of the family's society which will go on throughout the individual's life unless he or she suffers from partial or total alienation from that culture. It is true that a child's home and family may assist him/her in this internalization. It is equally true that many of the constellations of ideas, beliefs and practices of parents may militate or force against such internalization. Many children are unfitted for their society by the very teaching or lack of it provided by their parents. In the process of socialization with the home, a large variety of instruments and techniques are employed, some consciously and others unconsciously.

Parents being their children's first teacher, teach them the basic skills they will require throughout their life, thus, a child's behavior whether good or bad reflects his family's background. According to Rogoff (2003), studies in educational performance reflects that learning

that occurs at home is extremely important and even dominant. There is very little explicit institutionalization of the steps in parental authority over their children. Some youths are completely emancipated from parental authority much earlier than others. Some children look adults at a very early age and resent any appellation which might suggest that they are youths, and they are children who are still under authority. The frequent failure of socialization of individual youths on our societies is not to be attributed to what are popularly characterized "bad home" or "poor home" conditions; much of it is part and parcel of the total social change and the speed with which it is being effected, living a state in which norms themselves are variables and present differential possibilities.

On the other hand, formal education provided by the state and other stakeholders is being used to transmit particular attitudes, values, knowledge, skills, beliefs, mores and norms that are culturally relevant or current to the learner. This is more so in the most recent times when the family which used to perform most of the educative function had become more ineffective in doing so because of many changes in the social environment. Formal education is therefore gradually acquiring more responsibility for preserving and transmitting the cultural heritage of the group.

This is not to say that the family – that is, parents are no longer important agents for socializing the youth into adult society. As the nature of knowledge keeps changing and broadening, the children of the common men depend more and more on the school to acquaint themselves with new knowledge that get into our culture (radio and television, dietetics, health habits). From the school, they also get acquainted with new skills, values, attitudes for example, learning skills, acquisition and storage of information, family size, attitudes towards some social norms etc. The school provides ability, skills, and knowledge needed for various positions in the society and provides opportunities for pupils to identify their own interests and abilities. By reinforcing these interests and developing the abilities and skills in various individuals the school virtually puts them into the various positions in the society. Many people who had become dissatisfied with their position in life had to go back to formal education to acquire further knowledge and skills that would enhance their positions in life for example, most of us here in the University of Buea in Cameroon.

In the light of the above, the learning process can be likened to a manufacturing industry having as finished products persons equipped with skills and values essential to their survival. Parental role in this production process can be compared to the primary or feeder industry, whose role is to feed the manufacturing industry with high quality products. Therefore, the quality of the finished products will depend on the quality of what parents supplied to the manufacturers (Nsamenang, 2004).

Factors Influencing Parental Involvement

Factors that influence parental involvement include, the socio-economic status of parents, educational level of parents, the interest of parents, and the influence of environmental or outer circles. According to Gelfer (1991), parents with good educational attainment, high income level would greatly participate in the children's education by helping the children with their homework, providing school needs, tutoring and providing home teachers. This is because they know the importance of education and are viable.

Also, parents who are interested, who get involved and remain influential in their children's education contribute a lot to their academic progress. According to Davie, Butler, Goldsten (1972), a positive attitude towards school will be encouraged by parents who themselves had a good education. To them, common sense suggests that some parents who are most anxious and even enthusiastic about their children's education will be those who regret having missed a better education themselves and want to ensure that their children take advantage of every opportunity. Parents demonstrate their commitment to education not only by owning books and reading to their children but also by the number of hours of homework they require their children to do. Such children are more likely to take their school work seriously and their academic progress might be distinct at school.

When a child goes to school looking smart in clean uniform, when his school fees are paid on time, when he has the necessary stationary, and when he is well fed and given the needed health care, having been encouraged by parents to do his homework, such a student is likely to be ready to learn more than the one who has no such advantages. Most often, when children receive motivating messages for excellent performance and even when parents alter verbal questions such as "how was school today?", the child might be motivated to take his academic work seriously and is more likely to accomplish academic tasks which he might not have been able to do alone.

Vygotsky (1978) makes it clear that when children have the guidance of an adult, they are often able to carry out tasks they could never complete by themselves. Parental influence on their children's education is often an instrument to hard work on the part of the children, and Brain (1980) affirms that the seriousness with which students pursue their studies is a function of the motivating messages that they get from their parents. Most of these children will obviously work harder to bring honour to their parents, families, schools and the entire community.

When parents show interest and follow-up their children's education, and when children respond by working hard and excelling academically, and in life generally, they have in the words of Shakespeare "achieved greatness" which has been "thrust upon 'em" by their parents.

Parenting Styles and Cultural Influences on Parental Involvement

Parents influence their children's academic performance when they act as disciplinarians. Turner and Helms (1987), say there are several styles of parental discipline, although parents do not always fall into only one category. Rather, parents often mix approaches when dealing with their children. Authoritarian parents attempt to shape and control their children's behavior by enforcing a set standard of conduct. The emphasis is on obedience, and the use of punitive, forceful measures to enforce proper behavior. Authoritative parents also attempt to direct their children's activities but in a more rational fashion. Firm control is exerted, but verbal give-and-take is also stressed, and parents attempt to convey to the child the reason for their discipline. Permissive parents are usually non-punitive and behave in an accepting and affirmative manner towards the child. The child is consulted about policy decisions and given explanations for family rules (Turner and Helms, 1987).

Of the three approaches, the authoritative method of control appears to produce the most favorable home climate. This democratic relationship fosters such childhood behaviors as independency and self-confidence. Children reared in authoritative homes usually are more cooperative and sensitive to the needs of others. Parental involvement in their children's education appears to be enhanced by the open, give-and-take communication used by authoritative parents in such activities as family reading, writing and discussion. After administering discipline, adults should respect the child's emotional reactions, such as shame or guilt. Understanding parents do not attempt to increase the child's guilt after the situation has passed, and they are also open to whatever restitution the child wishes to make. According to Maccoby and Martin (1983), when parent's discipline children and their efforts are successful, their children develop the ability to control their own behavior so that it is appropriate to the prevailing situation. Such children have a sense of direction in their studies. This does not likely lead only to academic progress but also to success in later life.

Maccoby and Martin (1983), tested a theory adopted from one originally formulated by Baumrind (1971) that adolescents' school performance is influenced by the parenting style of their parents. When the three parenting styles were compared using a large sample of high school students, Dornbusch found that authoritative parenting was positively correlated with good grades, while there was a strong negative correlation between both authoritarian and permissive parenting and good grades. Cultures express the value of the family through the manner in which child bearing and child rearing are inserted into family life (Nsamenang, 1999). African mothers are traditionally accessible to children than fathers, because some taboos preclude fathers from close contact with infants and very young children, except in occasional ritual

events or in unusual circumstances when the mother has to perform some chores with only the father available to help out (Nsamenang, 2000). The role of the African father does not sanction involvement in the routine care and upbringing of children. Rare are African fathers who show tenderness and nurturance towards infants. This attitude is extended to adolescence children. Such fathers are regarded as effeminate or otherwise behaving inappropriately. Most fathers do not come into intimate contact and relationship with their children. It is not that African men are uninterested in the welfare of their families, rather it is that they are not traditionally held responsible for the daily activities of the family. For instance, checking of children's books after school and talking to them about book work.

In our societies, bringing up children emphasizes self-control, respect, obedience, deference to serious and fatal piety. As such parents praise children to succeed at school, to work harder than they did in order to escape poverty and the consequences of illiteracy. According to Nsamenang (1992) the severity of upbringing is meant to curb the child's evil nature or destructions and tendencies. The main socialization strategies are negative injunctions and sanctions, rather than the reinforcement of desirable behaviors. Nsamenang (1992:94) citing for example, the parents in Ghana said that "they punish children to be good, insult them when they are bad, but rarely praise nor reward them when they are good". The important aspect of cognitive stimulating is that children tease of proverbs and folktales. Some parents use only Biblical and Koranic verses and cultural taboos to teach morality and acceptable behaviors. A lot is taught to children by gesture, facial expressions and verbal communication. While boys are trained to be assertive and to begin to act as fathers, girls are socialized to be gentle and caring as primary in home craft. Imitation and observation are the techniques by which education takes place, with little or no instructions.

Nsamenang (2004) says the child, the family and cultural contexts constantly interact and therefore influence each other. Facts do not have an independent existence because the human mind is constructed in a specific cultural context. Thus, the knowledge and cognitive repertoire children possess are in part created by the context in which they come to know the world, since child rearing practices are a universal concept that cuts across all cultures.

Educational Level of Parents

According to Hepburn (2002), home schooling appears to improve the academic performance of children from families with low levels of education, according to Hepburn report on home schooling released on October 4, 2007 by Independent Research Organization The Fraser Institute. Poorly educated parents who choose to teach their children at home produce better academic results for their children than public schools do. The

students taught at home by mothers who never finished high school scored a full 55 percentage point higher than public school students from families with comparable education levels.

Hepburn (2002), co-author of Home Schooling, said evidence clearly demonstrates that education may help reduce the negative effects of some background factors that many educators believe effect a child's ability to learn, such as low family income, low parental educational attainment, parents not having formal training as teachers, race or ethnicity of the students, gender of the students, not have a computer in the home, and infrequent usage of public libraries. This research shows that the level of education of a child's parents, gender of the child and income of the family has less to do with a child's academic development. Cole and Griffin (1987:71) argue this fact and say that the fact that some parents are less educated makes it difficult for them to assist their children adequately with regards to their homework.

Parents may want to be involved in their children's education but are inhibited by societal constraints such as limited time, complexes, ignorance and influence of outer cycles as in the ecological theory. Cole and Griffin (1987), complained that there is limited time for communication between parents and children. Parents are busy carrying out one activity or the other. Most parents have joined the labour market while others have gone back to school. This has made it difficult for parents to reinforce learning at home. According to Cole and Griffin (1987), parental involvement is usually inhibited by educational level of their parents. The fact that some parents are less educated makes it difficult for them to assist their children adequately with regards to their homework. Also, most parents are still ignorant of the role they have to play in the education of their children. They may be interested in the education of their children but ignorant on what to do. As such the above mentioned factors cannot easily be effectively carried out by parents.

Environmental influences on parental involvement

Bronfenrenner's (1990) Ecological framework reminds us that we must also take into consideration the circumstances in which the family finds itself in addition to the characteristics of the family members. He says the ecological environment is made up of four systems: the micro, the meso, the eco and the macro systems.

A microsystem is a setting in which an individual spends considerable time. Some of these contexts are the family, peers, school and neighborhood. Within this microsystem, the individual has direct interactions with parents, teachers, peers and others. For Bronfenbrenner, the student is not a passive recipient of experiences in these settings, but is someone who reciprocally interacts with others and helps to construct the setting.

The meso -system involves linkages between micro-system. Examples are the connection between

family experiences and school experiences, and between family and peers. The eco and the macro systems are remote from the child because the developing person is not really participating in his development. When for example, parents have problems, it may affect everything the child do. The macro system reflects lifestyle and beliefs which are in contrast in different societies and which affect the smaller skills system in which the individual lives. The macro system is politically oriented.

As already seen above, the mesosystem comprises the interrelationship about two or more settings, in which the child actively participates. For example, consider one important mesosystem, the connection between schools and families. In one study of a thousand eight-grades, the joint impact of family and classroom experiences on students' attitudes and achievement was examined as the students made the transition from the last year of Middle School to the first year of High school (Epstein, 1983. Students who were given opportunities for communication and decision making whether at home or in classroom, showed more initiative and earned better grades. The family is the closest, most intense, most durable, and influential part of the mesosystem. The influences of the family extend to all aspects of the child's development, language, nutrition, security, health, and beliefs are all developed through the input and behavior related feedback within the family.

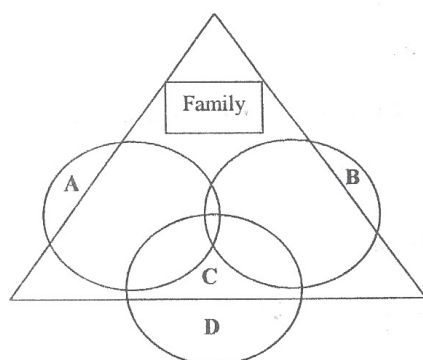
According to Skinner (1964) child development takes through processes of progressively more complex interactions between active child and the person in the environment. Bronfenbrenner (1990) highlights the importance of these bi-directional interactions with caring adults in the child's life. He outlines five propositions that describe how relationship developed at home and at school work together for positive development. These five propositions have implications for practice in schools today. Bronfenbrenner sees the instability and unpredictability of modern family life as the most destructive force to a child's development (Addison, 1992). This destructive force may spill over into the school setting. Some children do not have the constant mutual interaction with important adults that is necessary for development. According to the Ecological Theory, if the relationship in the immediate family breaks down, the child will not have the tools to explore other parts of his mesosystem. Children looking for the affirmations that should be present in the child/parent (or child and other important adults) relationship looks for attention in inappropriate places. These deficiencies show themselves especially in schools as anti-social behavior, lack of self-discipline and inability to provide self-direction (Addison, 1992).

As clearly seen from the above, child development takes place through processes of progressively more complex interactions between an active child and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on fairly regular basis over extended periods

of time (Bronfenbrenner, 1998).

1. The child is at the centre at the centre of this model.
2. The model acknowledges that a child affects as well as is affected by the settings in which he/she spends time.
3. The most important setting for a young child is his

family because that is where he spends the most time and because it has the most emotional influence on him. Other important settings may include his extended family, early care and education programmes, health care settings and other community learning sites such as neighborhoods, libraries and playgrounds.



Key

- A = Health
- B = Other Community Learning
- C = Child
- D = Early Education and Care

Figure 1.1: Bronfenbrenner Ecological theory
Source: Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1998:99)

4. A child's development is determined by what she experiences in these settings she spends time in. Is someone showing the child appropriate ways to behave? Is someone talking and reading with her? Is someone providing materials for her to play with? The experiences, settings are "the primary engines of human development" (Bronfenbrenner, 1998).

The influence of parental assistance/involvement on student academic participation

When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. In fact, the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to: create a home environment that encourages learning; express high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers; and become involved in their children's education at home.

Henderson (2002) reviewed 66 studies involving parental involvement and student achievement and found that, when parents are involved in their children's education at home they do better in school. Using data from a nationally representative sample of 21, 14 students and their parents participating in the Swap, S. M. (1993) study, Keith et al, (1995) concluded that parental involvement has a powerful effect on eighth graders' achievement and that although its effect was slightly stronger in Maths and social studies, it was a powerful influence on students' success in all subject area. Student Achievement Improves when there is effective and regular communication.

Goinick and Slowiczek (1994) conducted a research where some 300 pupils at K12 Charter School

in a large rural area in Southern California we studied on the rate of communication that takes place in their homes. These pupils were served with questionnaires which included items like: Did mom or dad or someone read to you these days? Did mom or dad or someone tell you to work hard or be good in school today? Do your parents or someone at home ask you the problems you had in school the previous day? 280 pupils answered the questionnaire which was read to them. 65% of the school's kindergarten children said they were able to listen to a story by mom, dad or someone providing care. Over half of these students said they were read to last night.

Grolinick and Slowiczek (1994) came back at the end of the term to compare their responses to their terminal averages. 82 percent of those who responded that they always exchange talks with their parents had above 12 average, while some of the children who had below 10 average responded that they scarcely see their parents or talk to their parents, due to their nature of jobs. Grolinick and Slowiczek (1994) finally concluded that parents should always create time to dialogue with their children, since through discussion parents could discover the weak parts of their children and then know how they could organize subsequent help.

Objective of the Study

The study generally sought to find out the impact of parents assistance/involvement on students' academic participation/performance in Fako Division.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The survey design was used for this study, with the aim of identifying and quantifying the effects of parental involvement on the academic participation/performances of secondary school students within the Buea Sub-

Division, with specific reference to form three. Only the following aspects were taken into consideration: Parental assistance in homework /assignment parental provision of school needs, and parental effective and regular communication with their children.

TABLE 1: Distribution of Secondary Schools in Buea Sub-Division

School Type	Number of Schools
Public	12
Denominational	06
Lay Private Schools	11
Total	29

Table 2: Distribution of target population

School Type	Schools	Male	Female	Total
Public	12	7.100	7.300	14.400
Denominational	06	1.084	1.016	2.100
Lay Private Schools	11	1.600	1.700	3.300
Total	29	9.784	10.016	19.800

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample was made up of 300 form three secondary school students who were drawn from six selected schools. The following schools were selected for the study using the simple random sampling technique: Government High School Buea (G.H.S), Government Secondary School (G.S.S) Bokova, Baptist High School (B.H.S) Great Soppo Buea, Presbyterian Comprehensive High School (P.C.H.S) Buea, Inter-Comprehensive High School (I.C.H.S) Great Soppo and Cambridge College of Arts, Science and Technology (C.C.A.S.T) Buea.

A stream each was taken from each of these schools taking into consideration the number of form threes in these schools. This was done using the simple random sampling technique. Form three was purposively selected for the study as it is a transitional class from lower to upper secondary. The survey research design was then carried out on all the 300 students since it was a sizable number that needed no further sampling. 55 were from GHS Buea, 55 from GSS Bokova, 40 each from BHS and PCHS and 55 each from Inter-Comprehensive High School Great Soppo and CCAST Buea respectively. This is represented in the table below just to enhance understanding. Out of the 300 respondent, 151 were females and 149 males.

Table 3: Distribution of the Sample by School

Name Of School	Number Of Students		Total
Government High School Buea	26	29	55
Government Secondary School Bokova	28	27	55
Baptist High School Great Soppo	20	20	40
Presbyterian Comprehensive High School Buea	20	20	40
Inter –Comprehensive College	26	29	55
Cambridge College of Arts & Technology	26	29	55
Total	149	151	300

Instrumentation

Two methods of gathering information needed for this study were implored. These included a structured questionnaire for students (appendix 1). The questionnaire was designed by the researcher, scrutinized and approved by the research supervisor. The main objective of the questionnaire was to estimate the magnitude of parental involvement in their children's education and to determine the effect of the involvement on students' academic performance. Pupils' academic

records were to supplement information gathered through the questionnaire.

Reliability

The data generated from the pilot test were analysed for reliability using the Conbach Coefficient Alpha method. The results showed that the reliability estimates for the sub-scales ranged from 0.73 to 0.90. These values were considered high enough to justify the instrument for use

in research. The reliability measures are shown in table 5 below.

Table 4: Conbach Co-efficient Alpha reliability estimates of the research instrument subscales (N=50)

N ^o	Sub-Scale	N ^o Item	X	S.D	Reliability Estimates
1	Education level of parents	2	5.38	0.89	0.73
2	Parental academic assistance	6	15.18	2.53	0.79
3	Provision of school needs	6	17.48	2.70	0.90
4	Parents –child interaction	6	17.26	2.47	0.87
5	Students' academic performance		12.70	2.35	0.18

FINDINGS

Research Hypothesis

- Ho:** Parental academic assistance in homework/assignment does not significantly influence the academic performance of secondary school students.
- H₁:** Parental academic assistance in homework/assignment significantly influences the academic performance of secondary school students.

The independent variable in this hypothesis was parental assistance in homework assignment while the

dependent variable was the academic performance of secondary school students in Buea Sub-Division the scores of the independent variable were got from the responses recorded from the six questionnaire items that measured parental assistance in homework/assignment. The respondent variable in the study was defined as the score obtained by the respondents on their terminal average during the last term. The statistical analysis technique used to test this hypothesis was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The hypothesis was tested on the dependent variable. The result of the analysis is presented in table 6.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of influence of parental academic assistance on the academic performance of secondary school students in Buea Sub-Division

Variable	ΣX	ΣX ²			
	ΣX	ΣY ²	ΣXY	Γ _{xy}	p-value
Parental assistance in homework assignment (X)	4461	9476			
Students' academic performance (Y)	3714	8237	69942	0.32*	0.001

p* < 0.05; df = 298; critical r = 0.133

The result of the analysis reveals that the calculated Γ_{xy} -value of 0.32 is higher than the critical Γ_{xy} -value of 0.133 at .05 level of significance with 298 degrees of freedom. With the result of the analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis retained. The result therefore means that parental assistance in homework/ assignment significantly influences the academic performance of secondary school students. Since parental assistance in homework/ assignment significantly influences the academic performance of secondary school students a further pattern of the influence was explored. The calculated Γ_{xy} -value of 0.32 is possible. This implies that the more the parental assistance in homework/ assignment the better the academic performance of secondary school students in Buea Sub-Division.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Hypothesis

Parental assistance in homework/assignment and students' academic participation/performance'

The findings of the study revealed that 61.95% of parental assist their children in doing their homework/assignments at home. The more they direct and assist children to do their assignments the better the academic performance. These findings are supported with the empirical data of Herdersn (1980) who reviewed 66 studies involving parental involvement and student achievement. His results proves beyond doubt that when parents are involved or assist children to do their homework/assignment the children do better. Keith et al (1995) also supported this parental involvement to have a powerful effect on eight grader's achievement.

These results support the views of Vygotsky in Papalia and Olds (1978). According to him children seem to perform well when they work with somebody who can lead them. When children come back from school, their parents direct them to do their assignment. Any concept that is above them is explained by the parents there by facilitating the Childs' abilities to learn faster. This is what Vygotsky (1978) term Scaffolding that is the support and guidance adults give a child attempting to solve problems beyond his/her understanding.

These findings also support the works of Vandergrift and Green (1992). According to them parents encouraged their children to work hard by assisting them in doing their homework, asking them what they learned in school and reassuring them on their successes and achievements. All these encourage the children to work hard and to always do their homework and read their books. The more these children are encouraged by their parents to do their homework/assignment.

Implications for Education and Contribution to Psychology

According to Winter, E. 2006 children ought to be active participants in the teaching-learning transaction with the parents only being a knowledgeable guide as he presents problems, pose provocative question, probe and guide. The issue about guidance and or Scaffolding is very important and ought to be incorporated in to today's education. This has its basis from the Russian Psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). Vygotsky's research emphasizes the critical importance of adults in guiding and supporting children's intellectual growth and learning processes, through such social guidance to be able to master step by step procedures in solving problems. Barbara Rogoff (1990) used the term guided participation to describe the mutual involvement between children and their social partners in collective activities.

Guided participation operates in three phases choosing and structuring activities to fit the skills and interest of children, supporting and monitoring children's participation in activities, and adjusting the level of support provided as children begin to perform the activities independently. The goal of guided participation should be to transfer responsibility for the task from the skilled partner to the unskilled.

Closely related to guided participation Vygotsky (1987) concept of scaffolding which referred to the process by which adults provide support to the child who is learning to master a task. When adults Scaffold, they direct those elements of the task that are beyond the child's ability. This suggests that if parents provide such guidance as prescribed, it would certainly be a great step towards reducing difficulties in learning. Also, Woolfson, et al. 2007. stressed the need for achievement. They have found out that adolescents who have a strong need for achievement come from families

where parents, set high performance standards, rewarded achievement and encouraged autonomy and independence. This training for achievement and independence generally takes place in the context of warm parent-child relationship hence, democratic parenting. Angelides, P. 2008. encouraged parents to adopt democratic parenting, so as to be interested in the education of their children.

Children also learn better when they are provided with their basic needs According to Coleman (1966) the economic statue of parent determines their children's academic performances. Children from rich homes perform better in school because they always have their basic school needs and other physiological needs on time. It is difficult for a child to learn effectively without basic school needs like writing material, textbooks and late payment of fees. Therefore parents should always try to provide their children with their basic school needs on time so as to foster their learning and improve their academic performances in school.

According to Erickson as stated in Feldman (1980) children learn better when they are appreciated and encouraged. Therefore parents should always appreciate them in their effort in school and motivate them so as to become grate people in future. Campbell, J., et al, 2003., emphasized on the authoritative parenting style which encourage effective communication between parents and their children. Therefore, in order to help these children perform better in school, effective communication between the two parties should be encouraged. From the findings of the study, it was revealed that African parents specifically Cameroonians parents always involve in the teaching-learning process of their children by providing them with their basic needs, giving them more schooling and interacting with them freely. All this helps to improve on the academic performance of their children. Psychologically, as children communicate freely with their parents, they develop love, affections and trust towards them thus, leading to emotional and social development of these children.

CONCLUSION

The finding of the study shows that, parent's contribution has a significant influence on children's performances. From the study majority of the parents assist their children as far as homework/assignment is concerned. The more they direct these children the better their academic performance. This assistance could not be achieved without effective communication. Most parents always discuss school related issues with their children and in the cause of doing so they become aware of their children's problems and their basic needs.

He study also revealed that children who are provided with their school needs perform better than those without these basic school needs. That notwithstanding they were some few children who

lacked some, of these school needs but they did better in school because of their genital background. Some children are born with a high Intelligent Quotient (IQ). However those who are provided with their school needs on time perform better in school. All these show that parental involvement in the learning process of their children should be encouraged so as to improve on children's academic performance.

In trying to compare the basic rules of parent and teachers in the educational process, we come to a conclusion that they are complimentary. Each depends on the other to be efficient. Parents cannot teach their children all the skills they need to survive without assistance of the school. Likewise, school wouldn't be able to carry out efficient teaching without the assistant of parents. Therefore, in order for schools to be efficient in educating children, parents must work hand-in-gloves with teachers so that what is taught in schools is being reinforced at home, while at the same time supplying the students with materials, financial and human resources.

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