

IMPACT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION ON CHILDREN'S SOCIALIZATION IN AHANTA WEST- NZEMA DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

This paper explored the impact of parental involvement in early childhood education pertaining to socialization of pre-school children in Ahanta West-Nzema District in the Western Region of Ghana. All parents, teachers and children in preschools in Ahanta West-Nzema District were targeted. The methodology employed was that of mixed method, and data was analyzed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The study revealed that the provision of good housing and healthy environment, good health care, and the creation of home conditions that support children's learning leads to improvement in pre-school child's socialization. This paper also contends that pre-school children's socialization is enhanced when parents are involved in provision of needed tools and machinery for the child, assists the preschool child in their homework, groom children to have time for school work, motivate children to work hard, showing, attending school parents' meetings to discuss children's issues and do support school programs. This study also found that communication between parents, teachers and preschool children is important in children's socialization which tends to have adverse positive effect on other school activities.

Key Words: Socialization, Parental Involvement, Preschool Child, Communication, Ahanta-West/ Nzema, Academic Performance,

1.0 Introduction

1.2 Background of the Study

Home and school constitute two proximal environmental contexts for young children's academic and social development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Downer & Myers, 2010). There is widespread consensus that parents' involvement in their children's education both at home and at school is an important factor contributing to children's adaptive development (Hoover-Dempsey, Whitaker, & Ice, 2010; Reynolds & Shlafer, 2010).

Parental involvement denotes the concern parent's shows in their children's schooling by inspiring their children to do well in school, helping children with their schoolwork, talking with the teachers about the child's performance (Senechal, 2016). Involvement do differ from one family to another and can take different forms when it comes to communicating and volunteering with teachers about children's advancement and helping children with homework, to participating in the school making programmes. By getting involved, parents can reduce children's risk of failure and dropping out of school (Nyarko, 2016). Parental involvement leads to the reduction of moral decadence, and increases academic achievement across all areas of educational discipline. Children's behaviour and social adjustment improves when parents' are positively involved with schools and neighborhood that leads to conducive environment which gives birth to effective learning.

SOCIALIZATION TENETS

The tendency for parent's involvement in preschool education may be affected by parental socialization tenets that is the qualities that most parents consider important to instill in children. Ethnicity, cultures, and families vary with regard to socialization issues in preschool child. Parents that tends to give priority to social values, such as politeness, obedience, trustworthiness, and respect for others, tends to socialize their children towards interdependence.

1.2 Problem Statement

A universal problem in our nation is ensuring that all children are provided the resources and environment to develop early learning skills needed to succeed in school. Children living in low-income as well as rural-urban settings are often less prepared for preschool, and tend to struggle from the very beginning (Ijalba, 2015; Koralek, 2014).

Early childhood education and socialization family programs are one way of closing the achievement gap. Research shows that the earlier parents become involved in their child's literacy and socialization practices, the more profound are the results and longer-lasting effects (Mullis, Mullis, Cornille, Ritchson, & Sullender, 2018).

The culture and ethnicity achievement gap tends to produce dramatically lopsided educational outcomes for highly impoverished children and ethnic minority groups that tend to serve as a major setback in the society (Nyarko, 2014).

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is grouped into general and specific objectives.

1.3.1 General Objective

The broad objective of this study is to critically examine the impact of socialization of children in early childhood education in Ahanta-West/Nzema District in the Western Region of Ghana.

1.3.2 Specific Objective

The specific objectives that the study addressed did include:

1. To examine the impact of parenting in early childhood education on pre-school children's socialization.
2. To examine the impact of parental role of communication in early childhood education in pre-school children socialization.
3. To investigate the impact of parents' volunteering in early childhood education on the school activities on pre- school children's socialization.

2.0 Theoretical Review

Social cognitive theory avers that youth absorb messages about appropriate behaviour and socially accepted goals by observing and talking with people in their lives (Bandura, 1977). Bronfenbrenner' (2006) ecological model asserts that children's perceptions of their parents are important influences on their development as are parent's actual behaviour.

James Comer (2000), a leading child psychologist, based his theory on the premise that a child's experiences at home and in school does affect their psycho-social development, which in turn shapes their academic achievement. He therefore created the "Comer Process" with applied principles addressing the barriers that affect the social and cultural needs of parents and preschool child, and their relationship to the school.

Family Systems Theory proposes that families are interconnected units in which each member exerts a reciprocal influence on the other members (Boss *et al.*, 1993). Each member of a family is thus affected by the family system in which they participate (Berger, 2000). Changes occurring in any part of the family system, such as a parent losing a job or a child switching classrooms,

affect and initiate changes within other members of the family. Thus, early care and education programs can expect to see changes in children based on what happens within the family system.

Vygotsky (1978) (as cited in Tekin, 2011) and as affected partially by Piaget's views, in his socio-cultural theory emphasized the relationship between human beings and their environment, both physical and social, in his socio-cultural theory. For Vygotsky, the influence of social and cultural factors on development and learning is abundant. Human beings are surrounded by family members and are impacted by the culture in which they live (Rieber & Robinson, 2004). Children's interaction with their family members in the community is so important for their learning, and development since their first teacher is the family, and their first learning takes place in the home and the community. For this reason, children gain knowledge about the world through this interaction.

2.2 Empirical Theory

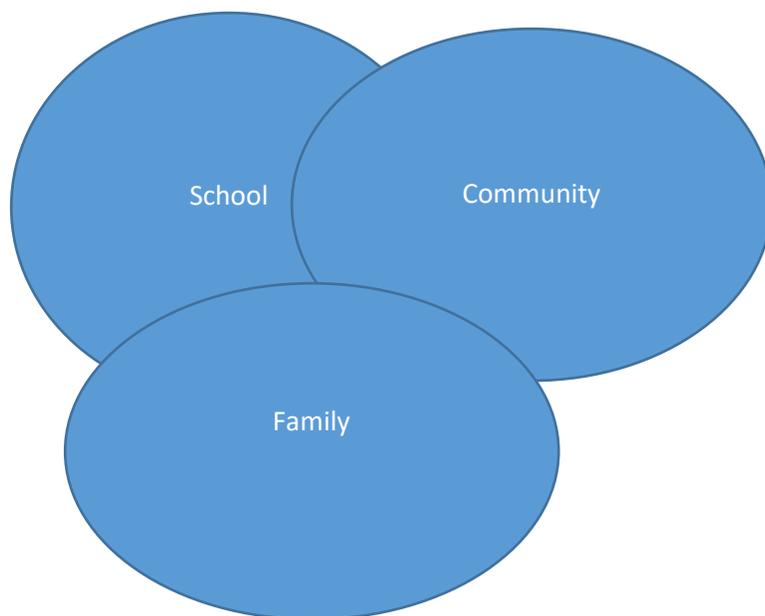
The notion that education serves as an equalizing force and opens the gateway to social mobility may not be the everyday reality for thousands of children throughout the nation-Ghana (Donkor, 2015; Nyarko, 2014; Perna and Titus, 2012). Early childhood care and education is essential for countering the physical, intellectual and emotional deprivation of the child (Fasina, 2017; Traid 2016;). Skarda's (2014) research suggests that children who attend early-learning programs demonstrate higher levels of school achievement and better social adjustment than those who have no formal early education.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

Joyce Epstein (2001) published a compilation of her work on conceptualizing parent involvement and outlined the Theory of Overlapping Spheres. The Theory of Overlapping Spheres asserts that

there are mutual interests and influences between families and schools, which can be promoted by the policies and programs of the school and attitudes and actions of individuals. Epstein (2001) notes three individual spheres; family, school, and community “can be drawn closer together or pushed further apart depending on the institutional policies and individual beliefs and practices within each context” (Sheldon, 2003).

Epstein (2001) also outlined distinct dimensions of parent involvement: Parenting, Communicating, Volunteering, Learning at Home, Decision-Making, and Collaborating with the Community. Parenting entails child-rearing skills, gaining a deeper understanding of children’s development, and creating a home environment supportive of students.



Epstein’s Theory of Overlapping Sphere whereby the family, community and the school all have an impact on the child.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1. Method

The research design used in this study was mixed method as well as descriptive survey design. This type of research depicts the state of affairs as it existed (Kothari, 2004). However, self-administered questionnaires, interviews, and field observation the techniques used was. The format used by this study was cross-sectional. Sampling design was that of 2019/20 school year nursery and kindergarteners. However, the sampling unit was the geographic area of Ahanta-West/Nzema district in the Western Region of Ghana.

3.2 Participants and Procedure

Data was collected as part of a larger project. Schools around Ahanta-West/Nzema were selected to include both public and private schools as well as schools from both urban and rural areas. School heads were contacted in order to inform them about the filling of the questionnaire and to invite them to participate. All the invited heads agreed to participate, and altogether 6 schools (24 classrooms) across Ahanta-West/Nzema locality participated in the study. The teachers were informed by the heads of the schools, thus letters were sent to the parents of all children in these classrooms (94 families). Informed consent was received from 87 families. Altogether 50 mothers and 37 fathers of preschoolers filled out the questionnaires. However, this research includes only 26 families in which both parents filled out the questionnaires. In addition, the study excluded 7 participants who chose more than five tenets in the questionnaire measuring socialization ideals. The mothers ranged in age from 23 to 51 years ($M=34.68$, $SD=5.06$); 17 mothers did not complete their secondary education (i.e., 11 years of education known as basic education), 30 had a secondary education (i.e., 12 years of education), 9 had a university education or were currently studying at the university (i.e., more than 12 years of formal education).

The fathers ranged in age from 22 to 58 years ($M=37.10$, $SD=5.85$). Ten fathers had a basic education, 7 had a secondary education, and 20 had no education (illiterate). Ten fathers did not specify their education level. The researcher delivered the questionnaires to the schools. Teachers sent the questionnaires to parents *via* the children. Questionnaires were placed in envelopes with a letter explaining the aims of the project and describing the procedure. Each envelope included two questionnaire forms—one for mothers and the other for fathers. Participants were instructed to complete the questionnaires alone at home. Upon request the participants could receive more information by telephone. Parents had 3 weeks to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires were returned in sealed envelopes to the teachers, who in turn gave them back to the researcher. A reminder was sent once to those parents who had not returned the questionnaires.

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