

**PARENTING AND COMMUNICATION AS DETERMINANTS OF PUPILS' PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOL WORK IN GHANA**

**BY**

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***ABSTRACT***

*The study investigated the influence of parenting and communication on pupils' performance in school work in Ghana. The population of this study consisted of all primary five pupils in all the public primary schools in the country. The study adopted Ex-post facto research design while simple random sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents. Data was obtained using a research questionnaire "Home-School Partnership and Performance Questionnaire (HSPPQ). The result proved that there is significant relationship between parenting and pupils' performance in school work. It was also proved that communication has significant influence on children's' performance in school work. Data obtained from respondents was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) while Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels. It was concluded that primary 5 pupils' performance in school work differs according to parents' assistance in reading in Ghana public primary schools. One of the recommendations was that government and well placed individuals, multinational co-operations should assist these schools to acquire and use communication system which will enhance communication between the homes and the schools.*

**KEY WORDS: Home-School Partnership, Parenting, Communication, Pupils' Performance, Ghana.**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Home-school partnership has been suspected to be the major panacea for the myriads of problems which have been observed in pupils academic lives. The success of any education system largely depends on the foundation. The foundation starts from the home in which parents are the first teachers. Therefore, if the home fails in its responsibility, there is bound to be a total decay in the educational system. To deal effectively with this, the home and the school need to partner effectively for the interest of the child and the nation education system. Researchers have shown that children whose parents partner with school, support their effort and encourage their learning appear to have better long-term academic success than children who lack such support regardless income or social status (Fantan, 2007, Handerson & Mapp 2005). Home school partnership could be enhanced through reading at home, parenting, communicating, volunteering, study habit and open-day.

The role of parental involvement in children's education has become a central issue in educational policy and research. Parental expectations have a greater impact on student's educational outcome. Parental involvement may include activities like helping children in reading, encouraging them to do their homework independently, monitoring their activities inside the house and outside the four walls of their house, and providing coaching services for improving their learning in different subjects (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Christenson and Sheridan (2006) stated that lack of home-school partnership may contribute to the purported falling standards in the educational system. Parents' and teacher' attitudes towards home-school partnership in public primary schools have implications on the performance of the pupils in the primary school and other levels of education. It is therefore worthwhile to unravel the necessity of home-school partnership. Hence, the study dimensions parenting and communication on academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Ghana.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It is observed that the home have distanced itself from the school and the necessary importance and benefits that accrue from such partnership are denied the pupils. Nowadays, pupils are found dropping out of schools, involving in one crime or the other and Juvenile delinquency is on the increase as well. Most pupils lag behind academically because of lack of information and feedback from home to school and vice versa This study recognizes the fact that the performance of pupils in school work has other determining factors, which include: classroom environment, teachers' mastery of the subject, method of teaching, parent educational background, and socio economic status of parent, parent occupation, family size and home-school partnership variables. This study therefore singles out home-school partnership variables to examine how they influence the performance of pupils in social studies. Therefore the fundamental problem for this study is centred on parenting and communication on pupils' performance in school work. In other words, the study is to find out whether there is any significant relationship in pupils' performance in school work based on the home-school partnership variables in Ghana.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study is to determine the influence of parenting and communication on pupils' performance in school work in Ghana. The specific objectives include:

1. To examine the relationship between home-school partnership in parenting and pupils' performance in school work.
2. To examine the relationship between home-school partnership in communication and pupils' performance in school work.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship between parenting and pupils' performance in school work?
2. To what extent does communication relate with pupils' performance in school work?

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between parenting and pupils performance in school work.
2. There is no significant relationship between communication and pupils' performance in school work.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Parenting and Pupils Academic Performance**

Chaukin and Williams (2004) opine that, it is very important for parents to provide manipulative instrument/facilities that encourage the young children to have a variety of sensory experiences and to be able to develop good motor skills. They added that in home environments where manipulative instrument/facilities are provided, the children are better prepared for the language they will hear in classrooms. Leinhart (2004) stated categorically that parental care and expectations influence children's attitudes about achievement. When parents show interest in their children's education, set high expectations and provide support and help needed, children are motivated to learn and achieve higher grades. Hoover–Dempsey and Sandler (2005) supported the above views by positing that when parents take part in a young child's school life in a positive way, it positively affects the child's self esteem because it sends a message to the child that the parents endorse the school and deem it important. They conclude that participation in school's special events, like graduation, open day go a long way in enhancing the achievement of the child in the school.

Wiston (2004) opined that parental care is most appropriate at the elementary school where the child is still at his foundation stage so that he will show such care to his children. But if he is denied this care he may do same to his children .They advice that parents no matter their economic standing should show care to their children. For those who are better economically, they should allow their children education to receive greater attention, and for parents who are not buoyant enough should let their children know about it and show care by being close to them, praising them most times in whatever little effort they are making in school. They believe that closeness and praises will raise their hope for a good future thereby motivating them to compete favorably with children who are well cared for.

Contributing to parental care on pupils' academic performance, Sui-chi and Williams (2004) posited that when parents show care to their children they become emotionally stable, have long study time, higher concentration, easy transition from one level to another, become less aggressive, make more friends and show confidence in ability to succeed. Cander, (2007) listed other forms of parental care that can shoot the child to higher academic achievement to include: shopping his materials together, discussing his health problems and taking steps to addressing it, asking him to know his friends, taking snap shots with him and friends, consulting him for the days' meal, praising him for good effort, ensuring he has enough rest and packing his school bag. Melnick and Flene (2005) advised that parents should care for the child by providing a home environment that will promote the child's performance in school. This should be done by making available, appropriate play and information materials in the home throughout infancy. According to them, it will have positive effect on achievement in early elementary school particularly in reading, writing and mathematics achievement.

#### **Communicating and Pupils Academic Performance**

Communication plays an important role in all forms of relations. It is the process by which ideas, opinions are transmitted or exchanged and depend on the use of words. Creating home-school partnerships is based on a two-way communication enhances the parental involvement critical to children's academic success. Researchers in their quest to find out the influence of home-school partnership on the educational outcome of the pupils have also identified communication as a major contribution to pupil's academic success. Swap (2005) observed that parents like to know what children learn in school. Therefore, a weekly take-home assignment that list a few topics covered at school that week has to be sent to the homes. This should also include examples of parents/child activities that would be related to what is being learned at school. Swap, recommended a notebook which pupils record each days' assignments and a track in it which shows marks earned. The notebook should ask parents view, date and time to discuss with the parents. This according to Swap will keep the child on tracks toward higher academic achievement.

Contributing to home-school communication, Wallace and Walberg (2005) recommended School News letter. In their view, the school should ask parents to writes articles for News Letters, tips parents can give for helping children with homework and family activities parents would like to share with the school. In the same vein, Green (2007) recommended Happy-Grams where teachers can send notes to parents, complementing pupils for specific achievement and behavior. Green, added that because teachers also appreciate notes of kindness, the school can print blank Happy-Grams form in a newsletter where parents can clip the form in the newsletter and send to teachers. Also discussing home-school communication, Johnson (2007) recommended Parents Bulletin Board. According to Johnson, there should be a bulletin board, especially for parent, at the main entry to the school. Parents will conveniently check the board for notes about parents meetings, suggestions for helping children with homework, notices about family activities and calendars of important events.

Salinas (2005) suggested the use of report cards by teachers to inform parents about the child's progress in school. According to Salinas, report card should be a two-way communication by including the parents' report of the child's progress at home with such related topic as: willingness to do homework, reading for pleasure, moderation of televiewing, and attitude toward learning. Levine (2006) described home-school communication as an indispensable factor in pupil's academic performance. According to him, children whose parents communicate frequently with teachers about classroom activities, the progress of their children at home, develop realistic goals and plans of action that are linked to their children performance. Clark (2006) in his view stated that communication is a problem solving channel and medium of opening positive dialogue between parents and school staff. Turnbull and Turnbull (2005) added that parents who received more consistent information about their children's school performance report a higher degree of commitment to helping children improve in the school work Keith(2008) supported this assertion by claiming that deprivation of home stimulation may cause dullness while backwardness in most academic situations are more likely to come from dull children.

## **METHODS**

### **Research Design**

The design of the study is ex-post facto research design. It is an enquiry design in which the researcher has no control over the independent variables because they had already occurred.

**Area of the study**

The area of this study is Ghana.

**Population of the Study**

The population of the study consisted of all primary five pupils in all the public primary schools in Ghana.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

The sample size for the study is 360 pupils. They were obtained using a simple random sampling technique.

**Instrumentation**

Instrument for data collection for this study was “Home-School Partnership and Performance Questionnaire (HSPPQ)”. The Questionnaire was divided into two parts. A and B. Part A elicited information about pupil personal data while part B consisted of information on the dimensions of Home-School partnership

**Validation of the Research Instruments**

The Home-School Partnership Questionnaire (HSPQ) was submitted to experts in Test and Measurement for the initial validation.

**Reliability of the Instrument**

The reliability study was conducted with the use of 30 respondents from primary schools who were not a part of the main work. Cronbach’s Alpha technique was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument. From the reliability coefficient of 0.7, the instrument was considered high enough to justify the reliability of the instrument.

**Method of Data Analysis**

The research questions were answered using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) while Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 alpha levels.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Question One**

To what extent does parenting support pupils’ performance in school work? The researcher used item 1-10 in the research questionnaire to collect data which were analyzed in order to answer research question two. The analysis was done using mean statistics as presented on the table 1.

**Table 1 Showing extent to which Parents/Siblings support and care for children’s school work**

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Σ	$\bar{X}$	RESULT
1	Ensuring that you eat before going to school	n nx	420 1680	300 900	60 120	20 20	800 2720	3.4	+ High extent
2	Ensuring that you dress well to	n	410	200	142	46	800	3.2	+

	school	nx	1640	600	284	46	250		High extent
3	Ensuring that you go to school early	n nx	216 864	318 954	117 234	149 149	800 2201	2.7	+ High extent
4	Ensuring that you have a safe and quick means of going to school	n nx	362 1448	214 642	96 192	128 128	800 2410	3.0	+ High extent
5	Ensuring that you have the required school materials	n nx	58 232	96 288	511 1022	135 135	800 1677	2.1	Low extent
6	Providing study time-table for you at home	n nx	110 440	190 570	280 560	220 220	800 1790	2.2	- Low extent
7	Giving you gifts for good performance at school	n nx	142 568	173 519	300 600	185 185	800 1872	2.3	- Low Extent
8	Praising you for good school work	n nx	166 664	270 510	288 576	76 76	800 1826	2.3	- Low Extent
9	Ensuring that you have food after school	n nx	412 1648	300 900	65 130	23 23	800 2701	3.4	+ High Extent
10	Ensuring that you have enough rest each day	n nx	214 856	293 579	215 430	78 78	800 1943	2.4	- Low Extent

X of 2.5 and above is high

**Grand Mean = 2.76**

X of 2.4 and below is low

Data analysis present on table 1 showed that home-school partnership in pupils academic work was effective in ensuring that the children eat before going to school, ensuring that they dress well for school, and ensuring that the children go early to school. Other areas where effective parenting manifest in pupils academic works includes ensuring that the children have safe and quick means of going to school and ensuring that children have good food after school. These dimensions were rated above the theoretical means of 2.5 and were considered significant. However, some aspects of Parenting was rated low and below the theoretical mean of 2.5 These includes, providing required school material, providing study time table for children at home, giving gifts to children for good performance at school, praising children and making them have enough rest each day.

### **Research Question 2**

To what extent does parental communication with the school influence pupil's performance in school work? The researcher used items 11-18 in the research questionnaire to collect data necessary for the analysis of research question three. The analysis utilized mean statistics and presented as shown on the table that follows.

**Table 2: Showing extent to which Parent Communicate with their Children’s School.**

S/N	ITEM STATEMENT		VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Σ	$\bar{X}$	RESULT
11	Visiting your school to ascertain/ how you are studying	n nx	60 240	113 339	310 620	317 317	800 1516	1.89	- Low extent
12	Visiting your head mistress or teachers either at school or house	n nx	80 320	121 363	350 700	249 249	800 1632	2.0	- Low extent
13	Inviting your teachers to your house for friendly stay together	n nx	46 184	126 378	240 480	388 388	800 1430	1.8	- Low extent
14	Receiving letters from your school about you.	n nx	101 404	140 420	280 560	279 279	800 1663	2.1	- Low extent
15	Writing letters to your school concerning you	n nx	38 152	56 168	314 628	392 392	899 1340	1.7	- Low extent
16	Making telephone calls to your school mistress or teachers	n nx	93 372	140 420	288 576	279 279	800 1602	2.0	- Low extent
17	Receiving telephone calls/messages from your school mgt or teachers	n nx	31 124	53 159	510 1020	206 206	800 1509	1.9	- Low Extent
18	Attaining meeting summoned by your school	n nx	190 760	214 642	200 400	196 196	800 1998	2.5	+ High Extent

X of 2.5 and above is high

**Grand Mean = 1.98**

X of 2.4 and below is low

Data presented on table 2 showed that parent’s communicating with their children’s school was poor. It was rated 1.98 below the theoretical mean 2.5 specifically, parent performed poorly in visiting their children’s school to ascertain how they are studying, visiting the head mistress or teaches either at home or at school inviting teachers to their home for friendly stay together and receiving letters from school about their children. These were rated below the instrument’s mean of 2.5. Other mean rated poorly included writhing letters to children’s school concerning their wards, making telephone calls to their children school management or teachers and receiving telephone calls/messages from their children’s teachers or school management. However in terms of attending meetings summoned by the teachers or management of their children’s school, parents were rated 2.5 and considered significant.

**Hypothesis One**

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between parenting and pupils performances in school work. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:-

1. Parenting as the independent variable

2. Pupils’ performances in school work as the dependent variable

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was then used to analyze the data in order to determine the relationship between the two variables (see table 3)

**TABLE 3:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between parenting and pupils performances in school work.

Variable	$\sum y$	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r
Parenting (x)		24872	781024		
				870153	0.87*
pupils performances in school work.(y)		27194	1028036		

**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df = 798; N =800; critical r – value =0.088**

The above table 3 presents the obtained r-value as (0.87). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.088 ) at 0.05 level with 798 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.87) was greater than the critical r-value (0.088). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between parenting and pupils performances in school work.

**Hypothesis Two**

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between communication and pupils performances in school work. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:-

1. Communication as the independent variable

2. Pupils’ performances in school work as the dependent variable

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was then used to analyze the data in order to determine the relationship between the two variables (see table 4)

**TABLE 4:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between communication and pupils’ performances in school work.

Variable	$\sum y$	$\sum x$	$\sum x^2$	$\sum xy$	r
Communication (x)		20188	515692		
				708047	0.86*
Pupils’ performances					

in school work. (y)                      27194                      1028036

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**\*Significant at 0.05 level; df =798; N =800 critical r – value =0.088**

The above table 4 presents the obtained r-value as (0.86). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical r-value (0.088) at 0.05 level with 798 degree of freedom. The obtained r-value (0.86) was greater than the critical r-value (0.088). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant relationship between communication and pupils performances in school work.

**Discussion of the Findings**

Analysis of data presented on table 3 shows that the result was significant as the calculated r-value (0.87) was greater than the critical r-value (0.088) at 0.05 level of significance with 798 degrees of freedom. The result implies that there is a significant relationship between parenting and pupil's academic achievement. Findings agree with Davies (2008) who stated that children who lack parental care perform below average have irregular attendance, poor retention and incomplete notes, always sick and depressed, and could not achieve a higher grade points.

Analysis of data presented on table 4 shows that the result was significant as the calculated r-value (0.86) was greater than the critical r-value (0.088) at 0.05 level of significance with 798 degrees of freedom. The result implies that there is a significant relationship between parents communicating with school and pupil's academic achievement. Findings agree with Teale (2005) who posited that children academic performance will improve when parents and teachers understand each other's expectation and stay in touch with one another regarding children's learning habits, attitude towards school social interactions and academic progress.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that primary 5 pupils' performance in school work differs according to parents' assistance in reading in Ghana public primary schools. Majority of the parents do not assist the children to read at home which negatively influence their performance in school work. Also, in Ghana public primary schools, pupils' performance in school work differs according to the extent with which their parents communicate with the school. This means that communication with school influence the children's performance in school work.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are deemed necessary:

1. It is pertinent that the pupils should be assisted to draw their time table to watch and listen to educative radio and television programs such as school challenge, kiddies Conner and children' parliament. Giving them this foundation will propel them academically beyond the primary level.
2. Parents should ensure that their children have school materials, give them gift for good performance, provide them food after school and let them rest before engaging them in other activities.

3. Government and well placed individuals, multinational co-operations should assist these schools to acquire and use communication system which will enhance communication between the homes and the schools.

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