Investigating the Impact of Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Development and Education in Ghana

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Abstract:

Parental involvement plays a critical role in enhancing early childhood education outcomes. This study explores the impact of parental involvement on learner participation in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centers in Ghana, focusing on prompt fee payment, provision of learning materials, participation during open days, and parental facilitation of homework. A quantitative research approach was adopted, utilizing purposive and simple random sampling to select 100 respondents through structured and semi-structured questionnaires. Data were analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. The findings indicate that timely fee payments and the provision of learning materials significantly enhance teacher effectiveness, improve school attendance, and contribute to better academic performance. Additionally, parental involvement in homework through reward systems was found to motivate learners, fostering positive learning behaviors. The study recommends that schools develop effective policies to encourage parental participation and adopt behavioral approaches to engage parents in various school-related activities, including homework assistance and open days. These strategies are essential for promoting holistic early childhood education outcomes in Ghana.

Keywords: Early Childhood Development, Educational Policy, Learner Participation, Parental Involvement, School Attendance,

Introduction

Parental involvement in early childhood education is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing children's academic success and overall development. Parenting plays a crucial role in shaping children's early experiences, which have a lasting impact on their cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Around the world, early childhood education programs emphasize the importance of parental engagement in fostering positive educational outcomes. Research suggests that parental involvement significantly enhances children's learning experiences by providing emotional support, encouragement, and active participation in educational activities (Epstein, 2018; Cobb, 2001). Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Lamb et al. (2002) argue that parental involvement encourages children to engage more in school, ultimately leading to improved academic performance. Traditionally, parental engagement has been perceived as assisting children with homework, attending parent-teacher conferences, and participating in school-related events. These activities strengthen the partnership between parents and educators, which is essential for improving instructional practices and supporting children's learning processes (Boonk et al., 2018; Nevski & Siibak, 2016; Smith & Sheridan, 2019). Recent studies have expanded the definition of

parental involvement to include a wide range of behaviors that occur both at home and within school environments. These behaviors include facilitating homework, providing learning materials, participating in open days, and creating a positive home environment for learning. Researchers have found that when parents engage in these activities, children show improved attendance, better test scores, and enhanced social-emotional development (Daniel et al., 2016; Puccioni, 2018; Hedenbro & Rydelius, 2019). Despite these benefits, several barriers hinder effective parental involvement in early childhood education, particularly in Ghana. Time constraints, lack of interest, and limited interactions with teachers contribute to low parental engagement. In the Ayawaso East Municipality, documentation from the local education office indicates that parents rarely participate in school functions such as workshops, open days, and fee payments. This lack of engagement can negatively impact children's socioemotional and academic development. Addressing these challenges is essential to improve educational standards for young learners.

Literature Review

Theory and concepts of Parental Involvement in Early childhood Development and Education

This chapter explores research on parental involvement in early childhood development and education, emphasizing its role in promoting social and emotional growth, academic performance, and student support. It also highlights the need for parents to engage in conversations and be responsive to their children's developmental needs. This section addresses the theoretical foundations that underpin the study of parental engagement in early childhood development and schooling. The study is influenced by Bronfenbrenner's ((1979) ecological systems theory, which holds that children develop within a complex network of relationships influenced by numerous levels of their environment. Elias emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence as a vital aspect in academic accomplishment and emotional adjustment, pointing out that the sort of parent participation develops loving relationships that promote effective learning. Goleman's (1998) socio-emotional intelligence hypothesis emphasizes five fundamental competencies—self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation—that influence people's ability to navigate social interactions and solve problems (Goleman 2006). Mavroveli and Sánchez-Ruiz's research reveals that emotional intelligence connects with prosocial behavior in children, implying that parental involvement shapes these competences, which are critical for academic and life success. Epstein's parental participation typology identifies a variety of actions that contribute to children's educational success, such as decision-making, volunteering, and at-home learning. This typology is further confirmed by studies that shows a link between these participation activities and academic achievemen

The Role Of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement plays a crucial role in a child's educational success, enhancing academic performance, reducing absenteeism, and fostering positive behaviors (Garcia & Thornton, 2014). Research indicates that children with engaged parents tend to achieve better academically and socially. Parents often plan for their children's educational futures from an early age, considering secondary education while their children are still in primary school (Hedenbro, M., & Rydelius, 2019). Studies have shown that parental involvement sends a strong message about the importance of education, improving classroom learning and fostering positive school environments (Henderson, 1987; Grace & Gerdes, 2019; Daniel et al. 2016; Langevine, 2020). While most research has focused on younger children, parental involvement remains beneficial throughout a child's education, influencing motivation, self-esteem, and attitudes towards school

(Chen, 2008). Hornby and Blackwell (2018) found that parental engagement leads to higher enrollment in post-secondary education and improved academic outcomes. Additionally, Gestwicki (2010) highlighted the advantages of parent-teacher collaboration, which enhances educational effectiveness and supports student success. Overall, active parental participation is essential for creating conducive learning environments and promoting children's educational achievements. Parental involvement is recognized as a crucial factor in children's educational success and overall well-being, prompting a need for strategies to enhance this involvement both at home and in schools (Jaiswal, 2015).

Various barriers, such as time constraints, lack of awareness about the education system, and cultural differences, can hinder parental participation. To address these challenges, researchers suggest several strategies, including informal meetings at the beginning of the school year, regular communication, and encouraging phone calls (Sari, 2020; Mata et al., 2018). Schurr (1993) recommends implementing sixteen specific strategies, such as organizing parent-student exchange days and involving parents in evaluating school policies. Additionally, educators can foster parental engagement by assigning collaborative homework or family projects, which can facilitate constructive interactions at home (Walker et al., 2010; Taylor et al., 2017; Thompson et al., 2017). Henderson and Kerewsky (1989) emphasize the importance of promoting communication between parents and children, creating a welcoming school environment, and providing translation services. Baker (1997) further suggests developing programs to encourage parental involvement, offering guidance on supporting children's education, and providing positive feedback about students (Jaiswal, 2015; Schurr, 1993; Walker et al., 2010; Nurhayati, 2021).

Research indicates that cognitive outcomes in schools are largely influenced by social class and family background, with schools struggling to overcome disadvantages students face at home. Parents and caregivers play a significant role in children's academic success and social and emotional skills development. Grant (1988) emphasizes that children from higher-status families tend to achieve better educational outcomes. Research supports the positive impact of parental involvement on student achievement, particularly in urban settings. Home learning environments, particularly in urban settings, lead to higher cooperation, peer social ability, and cognitive development. Parents can contribute to a child's educational attainment despite socioeconomic status and lower educational attainment.

The Effects of Parental Involvement on Student Academic Performance

Research on parental involvement has identified six categories: parenting, maintaining communication with schools, volunteering, helping children learn at home, participating in school decision-making, and collaborating with the community. Epstein (2006) proposed six categories, while Lareau (2003) found parental involvement manifests in communication, intervening in schools to accommodate children's learning needs, and organizing their children's lives to maximize learning. Research shows that parental involvement significantly improves children's academic achievement, reduces absenteeism, and promotes healthy habits (Tan 2017; Nurhayati, 2021; Tan, 2017). Parents often prepare their children's educational futures from an early age, communicating the value of education and fostering happy school environments. Higher levels of parental participation are associated with better academic achievements, especially when parents discuss school-related difficulties at home. Parental encouragement of college attendance significantly influences students' goals. However, parental support decreases as children progress through school, impacting academic success. Emotional support from parents during academic struggles is crucial, as is parental literacy and financial stability. The study by Hanushek et al.'s (2019) examines the moderating effects of socioeconomic status (SES) on the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. Despite efforts to involve parents in student learning and increased societal

awareness**,** there are ongoing achievement gaps. Hanushek et al.'s (2019) analysis of four datasets showed that students from the top 10% of families achieved approximately 1 standard deviation more than those from the bottom 10%.

Unsurprisingly, a significant amount of research has been conducted to examine the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. This is because parents are expected to be involved in their children's education (Castro et al., 2015; Jeynes, 2007; Tan, 2017; Wilder, 2014). Research has, however, mostly focused on analyzing the patterns and degrees of engagement of various parents, particularly those from varying socioeconomic backgrounds (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Malone, 2017; Wang, Deng & Yang, 2016). Parents from poorer socioeconomic origins are less active than parents from more privileged social milieux, according to studies in this field (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Malone, 2017; Wang et al., 2016). As a result, several scholars suggest that legislators, educators, and school administrators might take further steps to facilitate the extent of involvement of parents from lower-SES backgrounds. Teachers, administrators, and legislators have acknowledged the influence of parental participation on students' academic performance and view it as a crucial component of new educational reforms and initiatives (Tan et al., 2020).

In conclusion, research shows that parental involvement, including communication, support, and active participation in school decisions, significantly influences students' academic outcomes (Epstein, 1995 and Lareau, 2003). It not only improves academic achievement but also fosters life skills and reduces school absenteeism. Effective parental involvement shapes students' educational aspirations. However, there are disparities based on socioeconomic status, with families from higher SES typically engaging more in their children's education (Hanushek et al. (2019). This suggests the need for policies and programs that support parents from lower-income backgrounds. Promoting parental involvement can bridge achievement gaps, and educational reforms that integrate family engagement strategies and address socioeconomic barriers can help equalize educational opportunities and foster student success.

The Relationship Between Parental Education and Child Outcomes

The literature shows a high relationship between parental education levels and children's academic success. (Tan et al., 2020) found that parents' educational backgrounds have a considerable impact on children's learning abilities. According to Fan (2001) and Tan et al. (2017), families with better educational achievement tend to have higher educational aspirations for their children. Daniel et al. (2016) found that differences in cognitive performance among schools are heavily influenced by socioeconomic status and family history, highlighting the importance of parents in developing children's academic achievements. Furthermore, research show that socioeconomic conditions and educational backgrounds have a significant impact on the level of parental involvement in schooling. According to the findings, children from lower socioeconomic class households may have less parental participation, resulting in inferior academic outcomes (Okpala et al., 2001; Weis et al. 2006; Otani, 2019). Furthermore, studies show that children with higher parental expectations do better and go more easily through the educational stages.

The research gave data-based insight into Early Childhood Development and Education regarding the need to support parents' complete dedication to their children's education, particularly during the formative years of the children's development. The study also emphasized the necessity of getting schools and parents to collaborate for the proper and holistic education and training of their children in order to enable the exercise of crucial corrective actions when and when they become necessary. The study seek to answer the following research aims: the Effects of Parental Involvement on Student Academic Performance and

to examine the Relationship Between Parental Education and Child Outcomes homework in Ayawaso East Municipality?

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do prompt fee payments and the provision of learning materials influence students' participation in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centers?

2. In what ways does parental facilitation of homework and participation in school activities impact students' academic performance in ECDE centers??

Methodology

Research Approach

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of parental involvement in early childhood development and education. The quantitative aspect involved the use of structured questionnaires to collect numerical data from participants, while the qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews to explore participants' perceptions and experiences. According to Creswell (2007) and Saunders et al. (2009), mixed methods provide a robust framework for understanding complex phenomena by combining the strengths of both approaches. This approach was chosen to ensure that both measurable outcomes and in-depth insights were captured.

Research Design

The research utilized a case study design, focusing on selected Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centers to assess the impact of parental involvement on children's educational outcomes. A case study design allows for an in-depth exploration of real-life contexts (Yin, 2018). By engaging multiple stakeholders including teachers, school directors, and parents the study captured diverse perspectives on parental involvement. The case study design was ideal for understanding the specific dynamics within early childhood education settings and provided practical insights into improving parental engagement strategies.

Population and Sampling Technique

The study was conducted in early childhood education centers, targeting both public and private institutions. The population included school directors, teachers, and parents involved in the selected ECDE centers. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants with relevant knowledge and experience in early childhood education. This method ensured that the data collected was rich and relevant to the research objectives (Neuman, 2005). The sample comprised 100 respondents from various educational institutions, including 50 public and 50 private ECDE centers.

Techniques for Data Collection

Data collection was conducted through structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaires were divided into three sections:

- **Section A**: Demographic characteristics of the respondents
- **Section B**: Questions on the effects of parental involvement on pupils' academic performance
- **Section C**: Questions on factors influencing parental aspirations for their children's education

The questions were developed based on existing literature and previous studies (Robinson et al., 1995; Ajibade et al., 2020). Both closed-ended and open-ended questions were used to ensure comprehensive

data collection. The interviews provided an opportunity to gather more detailed and nuanced information, allowing participants to share their personal experiences and perspectives.

Validity and Reliability

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research instruments, a pilot study was conducted with 18 respondents. The pilot study helped identify and correct any ambiguities in the questionnaire and interview guide. Reliability was tested using the test-retest method, and correlation analysis was conducted to validate the consistency of responses. The research instruments were further refined to align with the study's objectives, ensuring accurate and relevant data collection.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Graphs, tables, and charts were generated to visually represent the findings. The qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed thematically, identifying key patterns and themes related to parental involvement in early childhood education. This dual approach to data analysis ensured a comprehensive interpretation of the findings.

Findings

Demographic Features

The study on parental engagement in early childhood development and education in Ghana reveals a predominantly educator-focused demographic, with 96% of respondents being teachers or headteachers and only 4% parents. A significant portion (61%) holds tertiary-level qualifications, including some with postgraduate degrees. The sample is skewed towards private schools (74%) compared to public schools (26%), which may limit the applicability of the findings to the public sector. Most participants are in the early to mid-career stages, with 39% having 2-4 years of experience, and many work in schools that are either newly established (5-7 years) or well-established (10+ years). This experience distribution suggests that insights are mainly drawn from institutions with established practices, potentially influencing parental participation. Additionally, 70% of respondents report that their schools are managed at the Metropolitan, Municipal, and District levels, indicating that external administrative structures may shape parental engagement strategies.

Table 1: Status of respondents

No.	Demographic charismatics	Frequency	Percentage
1	**Status of respondents**		
	Parent	4	4.0
	Teacher/Headteacher	96	96.0
2	**Respondents Qualification**		
	WASSCE	9	9.0
	Certificate	26	26.0
	Tertiary	61	61.0
	Postgraduate	4	4.0
4	**Category of school**		
	Public	26	26.0
	Private	74	74.0
5	**Years of work experience of respondents**		

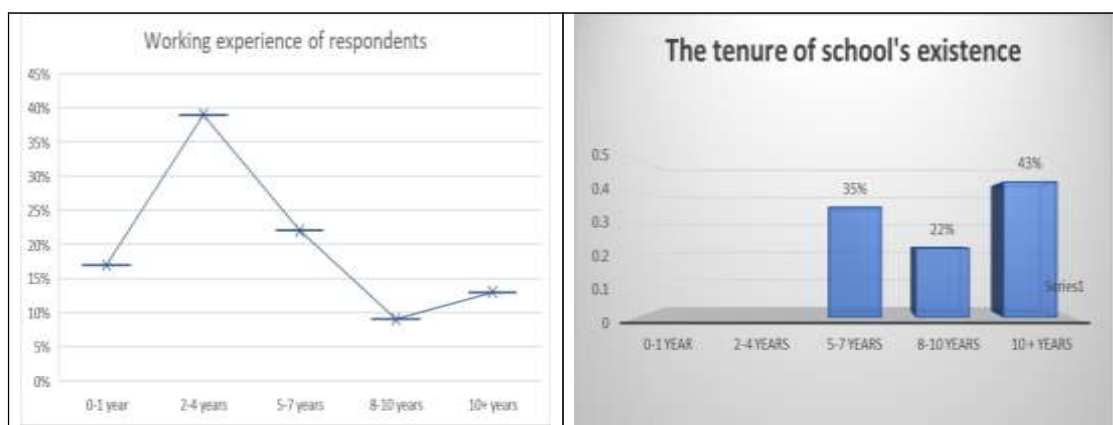| No.	Demographic charismatics	Frequency	Percentage
	0-1 years	17	17.0
	2-4 years	39	39.0
	5-7 years	10	22.0
	8-10 years	9	9.0
	10+ years	13	13.0
6	**Schools in terms of years of existence**		
	5-7 years	35	35.0
	8-10 years	22	22.0
	10+ years	43	43.0
7	**Level of management decision making**		
	At school level	30	30.0
	School level with MMD overview function	70	70.0

Figure 1: Working Experience and tenure of schools existence

The Effects of Parental Involvement on Pupils Academic Performance

The findings from a questionnaire on parental involvement in Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) reveal significant insights. A majority of participants (70%) reported facing challenges with parental involvement, while 87% acknowledged that prompt fee payments and provision of learning materials positively influence pupils' academic performance. Commenting further on the choice of their response, the respondents affirmed that some of the parents do not consider how they can help or support their children in learning. Some of the respondents assert that it is difficult to get parents when the meeting has to do with fee payments. More so, parents become reluctant to avail themselves to discuss issues concerning their wards. According to the respondents, parents have left the responsibility of education on teachers.

Key benefits of parental involvement include enhancing teacher effectiveness (83%), fostering positive feedback (65%), improving attendance and homework completion (61%), and facilitating collaboration between teachers and parents (57%). The most prominent dimensions of parental support identified were parents' expectations regarding their children's achievements (78%), their belief in their children's potential (74%), and their demonstrated interest in academic success (61%). Additionally, parental participation in open days was found to support children's cognitive and social development, instill

confidence, and convey the importance of education for future success (83%). While parental involvement enhances teacher efficiency and community relations to some extent, it appears to have minimal impact on the overall school environment and classroom learning.
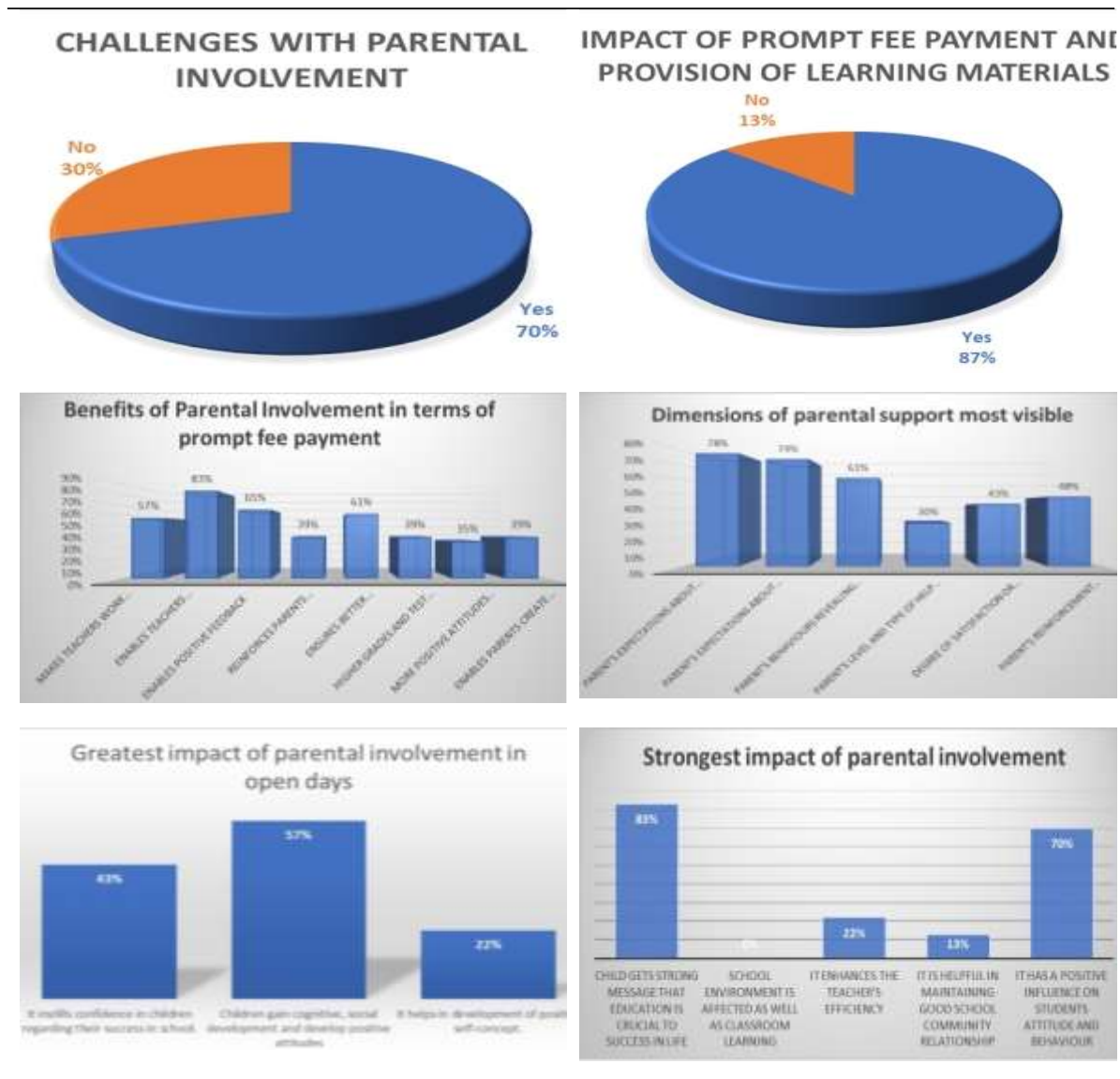

Figure 2: Parental Involvement On Pupils Academic Performance.

Factors that Relate with parental educational ambition in their children.

The found the primary factors influencing parental educational ambition for their children include awareness of education's importance (87%) and parental educational level (26%). While the home environment and family income have some correlation (22%), they are weaker compared to parental education, and ethnicity shows no correlation at all. The most impactful aspect of parental involvement on children's academic performance is monitoring progress (70%), followed by discussions about education (43%), while direct involvement in school activities has minimal impact (17%). Behavioral involvement is deemed most significant (74%), with cognitive (22%) and personal involvement (17%) being less impactful. To support Early Childhood Development Education, parents should implement a reward system (48%), ensure prompt fee payment and provide learning materials (43%), and participate

in school events (35%). Effective strategies for enhancing parental involvement include assessing school policies (61%), developing a parental involvement policy (48%), and encouraging family-centered projects (43%).
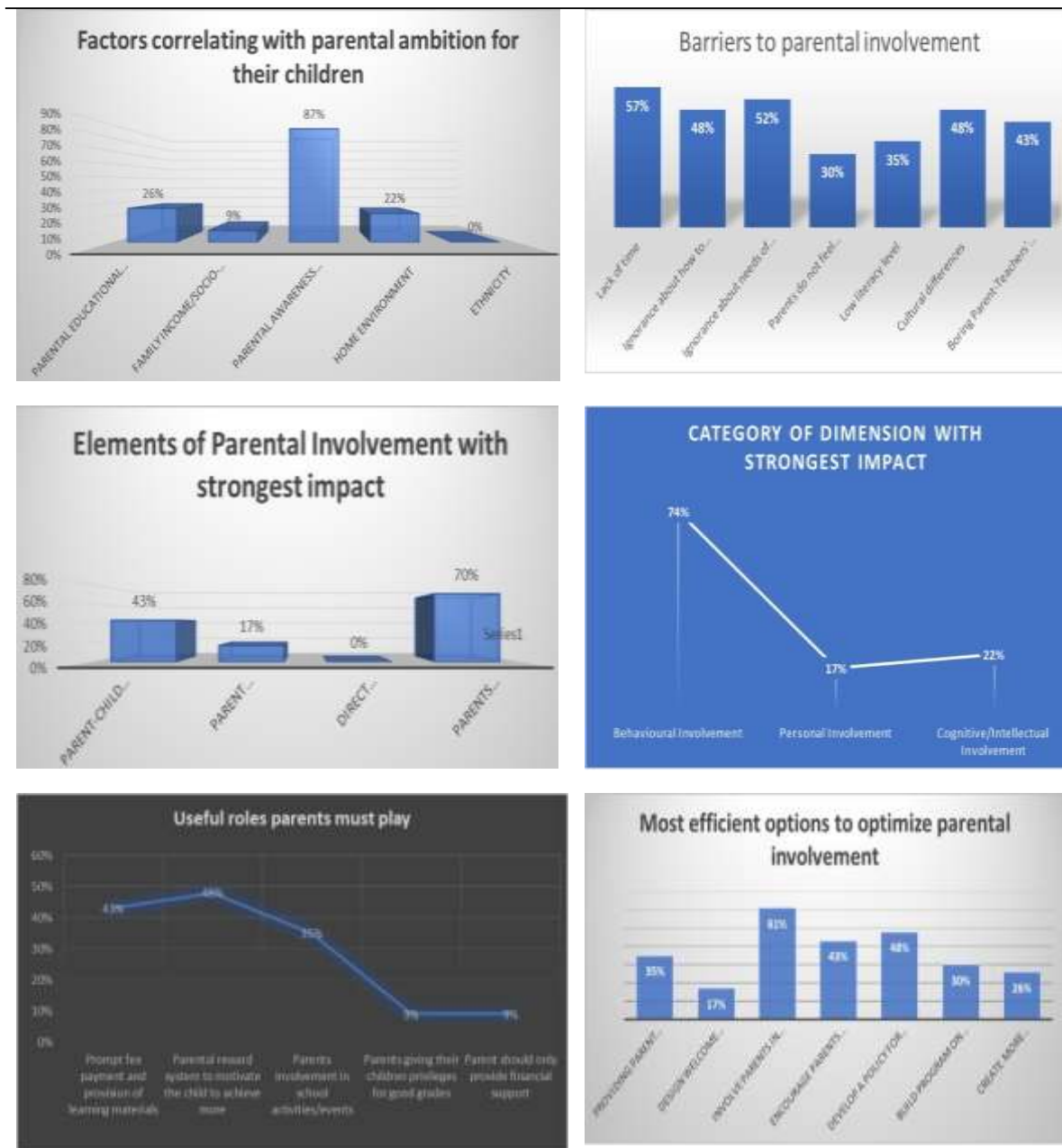

Figure 3: Factors that Relate with parental educational ambition in their children

Discussion

The topic of parental involvement is hotly disputed in early childhood education and care (ECEC) and educational policy in general. It appears that parental participation is moving from "on the margin" to "at the core" in this discussion. Remarkably, this change appears to be characterized by a growing sentiment that parental involvement should support children's academic achievement and outcomes (Froiland et al., 2013; Jeynes, 2012). Finding out how early fee payment and learning materials provision affected

students' attendance at Ayawaso East Municipality Early Childhood Development and Education Centers was the study's primary goal. The findings on parental involvement in Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) reveal significant insights. The most prominent dimensions of parental support identified were parents' expectations regarding their children's achievements, their belief in their children's potential, and their demonstrated interest in academic success. Parental support is very less visible from the area of level and type of help provided when their children do homework. Most of the parental support is not recognized or manifested in the areas of parent's degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their children's level of school achievement and also parent's reinforcement behaviors of their children's achievements. According to the respondents, parents have left the responsibility of education on teachers. These findings is contrary to a study by Nurhayati (2021) who revealed that parenting activities, information sharing between parents and teachers via various communication media, parental volunteering, home learning support, decision-making involvement, and parental participation in field activities are all examples of parental involvement. Besides, there is lack of textbooks and other materials as a result of parents inability to buy exercise for their wards. Parents are not ready to provide their wards with learning materials. On the contrary, according to study by Yulianti et al. (2018) in Indonesian found that parents were more involved in their children's education at home than in school. Higher levels of education among moms lead to increased parental involvement in parenting, communication, volunteering, and home learning. According to Avnet et al. (2019), revealed that children with Autism Spectrum Disorder or other disabilities, as well as those who are typically developing, have decreased parent participation when they are successful in school.

The four most impactful benefits of parental involvement in terms of prompt fee payment and provision of learning materials are; enabling teachers to be more effective with child, enabling positive feedback, ensuring better attendance and homework completion and enabling teachers to work with parents. Enabling parental resources to supplement and reinforce efforts in providing learning, higher grades and test scores, enabling parents to create third link in the triangle with their children and children's teachers in developing necessary settings for the success of their children are seen as less effective or less impactful benefits compared with the others mentioned earlier. Additionally, parental involvement is thought to positively impact the way that students acclimate to school both during and after the kindergarten transition. Family literacy initiatives (Baker, 2014; Correia and Marques-Pinto, 2016) and family-school collaborations (Smythe-Leistico et al., 2012) are thought to help youngsters get ready for school. PI in the classroom is undoubtedly a significant factor in school preparedness, according to Sheridan et al. (2011). The same is true for children who are considered to be disadvantaged.

Additionally, parental involvement in open days was found to support children's cognitive and social development, instill confidence, and convey the importance of education for future success. While parental involvement enhances teacher efficiency and community relations to some extent, it appears to have minimal impact on the overall school environment and classroom learning Ayawaso East Municipality's ECDE centers. According to Weis et al. (2006), parental involvement not only promotes cognitive and social development but also potential development of skills, positive attitude and behaviors, and good personalities among children. Despite being important stakeholders, Devlieghere et al. (2022) discovered that parents are rarely included in attempts to construct parental involvement. Additionally, our research demonstrates that parental involvement is nearly always conceived as a mechanism to support academic achievement. The open days is that it helps kids grow in their social and cognitive abilities as well as their positive attitudes and behaviors, good personalities, and potential skills. Examples of these activities

include helping with homework, inquiring about their child's academic progress, and attending school events like open days. Parental involvement is crucial in conveying to children the importance of education in achieving success in life.The study also found that the open days gives kids confidence about their ability to succeed in school.

Key benefits of parental involvement include enhancing teacher effectiveness, fostering positive feedback, improving attendance and homework completion, and facilitating collaboration between teachers and parents, accordingly. Parental involvement in open days has to do with the fact that it enables children to gain cognitive, social development and develop positive attitudes and behaviors as well as good personality and potential skills. Parental involvement enables teachers do many things to boost the confidence of children from self-evaluation, setting short-term goals and emphasizing improvements (Yuliant et al., 2018). Parental involvement creates good relationship between the learner and the teacher. Close to that is the fact that when parents attend open days it instills confidence in children regarding their success in school according to the survey. The strongest impact of parental involvement on pupil's academic performance according to the study findings are that the child gets strong message that education is important to success in life. This has closely been followed by the fact that it has positive influence on students attitude and behaviour. Parental involvement also enhances teacher's efficiency as well as helpful in maintaining good school community relationship to a very less degree (Devlieghere et al., 2022; Yuliant et al., 2018). However, parental involvement does not impact school environment and classroom learning. There are challenges reported with parental involvement, while others acknowledged that the prompt fee payments and provision of learning materials positively influence pupils' academic performance. According to the study, parents' timely payment of fees and provision of educational resources have a positive effect on their children's academic achievement in early childhood education and development. Commenting further, the this study findings affirmed that some of the parents do not consider how they can help or support their children in learning. It was also revealed that sometimes it is difficult to get parents when the meeting has to do with fee payments. According to Sari (2020) results revealed two main areas of difficulty; a lack of resources for professional training and education, and preparedness for school. More so, parents become reluctant to avail themselves to discuss issues concerning their wards. Parents have left the responsibility of education on teachers. Besides, there is lack of textbooks and other materials as a result of parents inability to buy exercise for their wards. Most of them are not ready to provide their wards with learning materials relying heavily on the central government. The findings revealed that most parents do not visit the school to check on their children's academic performance, it alone providing necessary educational materials and items which their wards need. The policy ensures improved school attendance and homework completion, fostering collaboration between teachers and parents. It also facilitates timely fee payment and educational resource provision, allowing teachers to focus on teaching, thereby enhancing academic performance. It also encourages active student participation in lessons, promoting effective learning.

According to the study findings, factors that drive parental educational ambition for their children are firstly, parental awareness about importance of education and secondly, parental educational level. However, home environment correlates with parental educational ambition for their children but the correlation is not as strong as parental educational level. Family income and socioeconomic status also have some amount of correlation but their correlation is very weak. A study by Hanushek et al.'s (2019) examines the moderating effects of socioeconomic status (SES) on the relationship between parental involvement and student achievement. Despite efforts to involve parents in student learning and increased

societal awareness. Ethnicity has no correlation at all with the factors that drive parental educational ambition for their children. According Barnett et al. (2020) analyses indicated that ECE parent engagement practices were linked to greater parent engagement in home and school settings. Further, ECE parent engagement practices were indirectly associated with kindergarten academic readiness through increases in the quantity of parent engagement in home learning activities.This suggests that programs aimed at increasing parents' understanding of the value of education and supporting their own educational advancement may contribute to higher educational aspirations for their children.The home environment doesn't significantly impact parental ambition, suggesting that creating supportive environments for parents to further their education or increase their awareness of its value may be more effective than solely focusing on the home environment. These implications are supported by the findings of Barnett et al. (2020), which demonstrate the advantages of early childhood education (ECE) parent engagement strategies for raising parental involvement in their kids' education at home and at school. In addition to promoting kindergarten preparation, this participation raises the possibility that early parent involvement may have long-term benefits for children's intellectual aspirations and preparedness for school.

The most impactful aspect of parental involvement on children's academic performance is monitoring progress, followed by discussions about education, while direct involvement in school activities has minimal impact, accordingly. Parents monitoring their children's progress is one of the most key elements which has an impact on pupil's academic. Parent-child discussions on educational issues a home also plays some significant role in influencing pupil's academic performance. The dimension of parental involvement that has the greatest impact on the child's education and development must be behavioural. This means that the parent must participate in school related activities at home and at school such as helping with home work, asking about the child's school activities and attending school functions and open days. The cognitive and personal involvement are also necessary but with little or minimal impact. Whereas parents direct involvement in school activities has little or no impact, their involvement in Parent-Teacher Organizations or meetings make some impact on the child's performance. To support Early Childhood Development Education, parents should implement a reward system, ensure prompt fee payment and provide learning materials, and participate in school events. Effective strategies for enhancing parental involvement include assessing school policies, developing a parental involvement policy, and encouraging family-centered projects.

Conclusion

This study explores the impact of parental involvement in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) on students' academic performance and social-emotional growth. Addressing the first research question, which examines the influence of prompt fee payments and the provision of learning materials, the findings underscore that timely financial contributions and resource provision by parents significantly enhance student engagement and academic success. The study highlights how these actions improve attendance, homework completion rates, and positive teacher-student relationships, ultimately contributing to better academic outcomes.

Regarding the second research question, which focuses on how parental participation in school activities, including homework facilitation, impacts students' academic performance, the study finds that parental involvement is crucial in reinforcing learning at home. However, challenges such as insufficient parental support for homework and a lack of acknowledgment of children's academic progress remain. These challenges highlight the need for strategies to improve parental engagement.

The findings of this study have implications for theory, practice, and policy:

Implications for Theory: The study emphasizes the need to expand educational engagement theories by incorporating the role of parents in shaping students' academic and social development. It supports existing frameworks that advocate for collaborative partnerships between schools and families to improve educational outcomes. The study suggests that future theoretical models should address barriers to parental involvement, particularly time constraints and lack of awareness, to provide a more holistic understanding of engagement practices.

Implications for Practice: Schools should implement strategies to maximize parental involvement by developing policies that encourage parents to participate actively in their children's education. Practitioners must use both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the unique needs of students and families better. Training programs for teachers and school administrators should include modules on effective parent engagement strategies. Schools should also improve communication channels with parents to foster trust and collaboration. Establishing clear timelines and action plans for parental involvement initiatives will enhance accountability and effectiveness. Creating robust monitoring and evaluation systems will ensure continuous feedback and adjustments to engagement practices.

Implications for Policy: Educational policies should mandate the involvement of parents in school improvement planning and academic support activities. Policies must require the use of comprehensive data collection methods that consider both quantitative and qualitative aspects to understand students' and families' needs fully. Furthermore, policy frameworks should support professional development programs focused on parent engagement for educators and school leaders. These policies should promote initiatives that address barriers to parental involvement, ensuring inclusivity and equitable educational opportunities for all students.

Recommendations

To improve parental involvement in Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) centers, schools should implement comprehensive policies that actively engage parents in their children's education. These policies should include clear guidelines on parental roles and responsibilities in supporting learning at home and participating in school-related activities. Encouraging parents to attend school events such as open days, parent-teacher meetings, and workshops will foster stronger relationships between families and educational institutions. Schools should also develop family-centered projects and homework assignments to promote meaningful interactions between parents and children. By engaging parents in these activities, schools can strengthen the support systems necessary for children's academic success.

Parents should be encouraged to establish reward systems at home to motivate their children to complete homework and achieve academic milestones. These reward systems can positively reinforce good academic habits, thereby improving overall performance. Moreover, ensuring that learning materials are provided, and school fees are paid on time is essential for reducing interruptions in students' learning. Schools must work collaboratively with parents to ensure that students have the necessary resources to succeed in their academic journeys.

Future research should explore the long-term impacts of parental involvement on students' academic performance across different educational stages. Investigating how socioeconomic factors influence parental engagement can help identify strategies to support families from diverse backgrounds. Additionally, understanding cultural influences on parental involvement will enable schools to tailor

engagement strategies that are inclusive and culturally sensitive. Finally, the role of technology in facilitating parental engagement should be examined to identify digital tools that can enhance communication between schools and families. Implementing these recommendations can contribute to more inclusive and effective parental involvement practices, ultimately improving educational outcomes for children.

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Limitations

The main limitation of this study is the sample size, which was restricted to 100 respondents due to time and resource constraints. The study primarily involved teachers, school directors, and parents from selected ECDE centers. A larger sample size involving a broader range of stakeholders, such as district education officers, community members, and additional parents, could have provided richer and more comprehensive data to enhance the findings. Despite this limitation, data triangulation from multiple sources, including questionnaires and interviews, strengthened the reliability and validity of the study.

Ethics Statements

Before conducting the study, ethical clearance was obtained from the relevant ethics review committee. The researchers sought and received official permission from the Ghana Education Service and the selected ECDE centers to carry out the research. All participants were informed about the study's purpose and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any point. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process to ensure ethical compliance.

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