

## ***Full Length Research***

# **Parental Role in Preschool Child Education: The Case of Anomabo in the Central Region of Ghana**

**<sup>1</sup>. Sophia Patience Graham and <sup>2</sup>. Theodora Kankpi**

<sup>1</sup>. Accra Institute of Technology, Accra Ghana. Corresponding author's E-mail: greyssof@yahoo.com

<sup>2</sup>. University for Development Studies, Ghana. Email:thankpi@yahoo.com

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The aim of this research is to provide solutions to the role that parents have to play concerning early childhood education in town in Ghana known as Anomabo. The paper will serve as an eye opener to parents of preschool children as well the community in which they find themselves in so as to modify or amend their mode of parental involvement towards achieving a better future for them not withstanding their commitment to their duties of work as well as the negative adverse or inadequacy of resources. The researchers used a survey approach in which questionnaires were self-administered whereby analysis was done with the aid of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to test the hypothesis. The findings of this paper came out with the conclusion that parental emotional care and support tends to have an adverse influence on the preschool child's learning outcome. The paper also observed that the level of education pertaining to the parents of the preschool child has a strong influence on the age in which the preschooler is sent to school. The paper also discovered that the residential setting of the parents do have an impact on the performance of the child. In effect, parental involvement is very essential in early childhood education and this helps in broadening the perfection of the child's mind on issues, leads to enhancement of social relationships as well as the promotion of self-esteem and self-efficacy.

**Key Words:** Preschool Child, Parental Involvement, Anomabo, Central Region, Parental Education, Academic Performance

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## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

Early childhood education represents crucial opportunities for the development of parental involvement in preschool education (Arnold et al., 2008). Parental involvement in preschool child's education has been shown to improve children's academic, behavioral, and social outcomes (Powell et al., 2010). Parental involvement facilitates children's development of pre-literacy skills such as phonological awareness and letter name knowledge (Powell et al., 2010).

Parents are seen as significant caregivers in the life of early childhood education. Children tend to have two main educators in their lives being that of their parents and their teachers. Almost invariably, parents are the prime educators of their children from birth until the child attains a school going age at the preschool level. Parents continue to be the major influence in the preschool child learning through school and beyond. There is no indicator concerning where parents on learning should come to an end, neither that of the teachers input begins. The school and the parents all have crucial role to play and the impact becomes greater if parents and schools work in partnership (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

Parental involvement in early intervention programs has been found to equate with better outcomes for the child. Most of the interventions that are effective involve parents in preschool children's cognitive development (Tekin, 2011). Parent's self-esteem is very important in determine long term outcomes for both themselves and their children.

There has not been any universal agreement pertaining to what parental involvement is but there is however two broad strands pertaining to parental involvement being that of parents involvement in the life of the school, and parents involvement in support of the individual child at home and at the school.

In setting preschool children up for later achievement and success in academic life must be a common goal for parents as well as educators. Teachers must work hard to ensure that the environment of the school must be welcoming and conducive for the preschooler, and bearing in mind that materials presented must be in the best interest of the preschool child, and that the preschool child must see the school as an enjoyable and inspiring place to learn. Parents are mandated to play a large role in the education of their children. Parents involvement both within and out of school do set a precedent for many future learning encounters. Thus parental involvement for the preschool child has long been thought of as a tool for later academic achievement (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

So many definitions have been adduced to parental involvement whereas parental involvement is defined as

parents' commitment of resources to the academic arena of children's live (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007). Sawyer (2015) however define parental involvement as an umbrella term for activities characterized by varying levels of frequency, response effort, and types of settings in which the preschool child's life occur. Hashmi and Akhter (2013) defined it as direct effort provided by parents in order to surge educational outcomes of their children.

Involvement that emanates from parents is often referred to as either school-based or home based (Hashmi and Akhter, 2013; El Nokali, Bachman & Votruba-Drzal, 2010). School- based involvement does include but not limited to attending parent-teacher conferences as well as school events (Lee and Bowen, 2006; Pomerantz et al., 2007), whereas home-based practices does include that of providing help for homework, discussing school work and school events, and engaging preschool child in intellectual activities such as visiting library as well as historical sites example being that of the museum (Lee and Bowen, 2006; Pomerantz et al., 2007).

There has been a lot of research or scholarly work pertaining to parental involvement however, getting parents involved often tends be challenging. Research indicates that there is a decline when it comes to parental participation in recent years (Sawyer, 2015). Several reasons may be adduced to why parents may be unable or do hesitate when it comes to involving themselves in the preschool child's education which may include lack of time (Stone & Chakraborty, 2011), lack of transportation (Lee and Bowen, 2006), lack of encouragement from the school teachers (Duchane et al., 2007), not feeling welcome in the school (Olmstead, 2013), having unpleasant memories from their school days and time ( Sawyer, 2015; Stone and Charkraborty, 2011), and just not knowing how best to help or assist the preschool child (Olmstead, 2013). Parent's level of education does serve as an indicator of parental involvement, since parents with higher level of education tends to deeply involved in their children's educational upbringing (Duchane et al., 2007).

In conclusion, cultural differences and being unable to speak and write in English language which serves as a lingua franca tends to serve as a limitation to the role that parents have to play in the preschool child (Lee & Bowen 2006; Olmstead, 2013).

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

As much as parental involvement literature strongly supports benefits of education, the reality of modern education is that not all children have the benefits of attaining higher educational status that has so much transformative power. A nationwide problem in this part of

our world is to make sure preschoolers are provided with the needed resources and environment needed to succeed later academic achievement. Research shows that the earlier preschool parents play a major and effective role, the more profound are the results and longer lasting effects (Mullis, Mullis, Cornille, Ritchson, & Sullender, 2004). This paper did examine the role parents of preschool child focusing on Anomabo locality in the Central Region of Ghana.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the study did include:

1. To examine the factors and role affecting parental involvement in early childhood education.
2. To recommend measures on how best to increase parent's involvement in preschool education in the study locality being that of Anomabo.
3. To explore if the socio-economic characteristics of the parents do have an impact on the preschool child's education.

## HYPOTHESIS

**HO.1.** Factors significantly have a strong impact on parental role of involvement in early childhood education

**HO.2.** The conducive learning environment of the child does have a positive impact on the preschool child.

**HO.3.** That socio-economic characteristic of parents does have a strong positive impact on the preschool child.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### THEORETICAL REVIEW

The role that parents play and the importance of parents involvement in their children's educational experiences does reflect in Bronfenbrenner's (1986) Ecological Systems Theory which does emphasize the important influence of environmental interactions on a child's development. This model contends that, the relationship between a child's family and the school is multidirectional, being the fact that the family does

influence the school, whilst the school influences the family. This is also perceived to be the basis of what is called Family Support Hypothesis which lay emphasis on parent's direct participation in early childhood intervention practices as being beneficial to preschool child's performance (Jeffries, 2012).

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory does revolve around the idea that children learn through social and cultural experiences, and that interactions with adults and other children tends to be critical to the development process (Cook & Cook, 2005). He further avers that child development is the result of the interactions between children and their social environment (Vygotsky, 1978). He contends that language plays a major role in the cognitive development of the preschool child. This theory did heavily emphasize the role of community and caregivers in a child's development and how these interactions guide a child's learning process and development (Cook & Cook, 2005).

### EMPIRICAL THEORY

Parental involvement during preschool years has been linked with strong pre-literacy skills, acquisition of mathematical skills, well-developed social skills, and positive attitudes towards the school (Arnold, Zelo, Doctoroff, & Ortiff, 2008; Powell, Son, File, & San Juan, 2010). Parents active involvement in their preschool child's learning is a recommended strategy in engaging families in children's educational experiences (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) viewed parents' involvement as dedication of resources to the preschool child. The model developed by them did incorporate both the developmental and educational aspects of parental involvement. The model further differentiates parents overall involvement with their child from their involvement in the child's education. The model did list three types of involvement which encompass parent's involvement behaviours, the issue of personal involvement and that of the intellect that plays a role when it comes to parental involvement. Grolnick and Raftery (2013).

Fantuzzo, Tighe, and Childs (2000) developed the Family Involvement Questionnaire which did emerge from Epstein's (1995) six categories of parental influence. This model was the measure of multidimensional levels of parent involvement behaviours, as hitherto measures had featured a small number of items that did delineate parent's involvement in limited contexts.

**Figure1:** Explain Epstein six types of Involvement and its mechanisms.

<b>Types of Involvement</b>	<b>The Objectives</b>
Parenting	Assist preschool child families to establish conducive home environment to aid in their studies.
Communicating	Families must be able to design home-to-school as well as school-to-home communications about the preschool child educational programs and their progress.
Volunteering	Must be able to recruit and organize preschool child's parents help and support.
Learning at Home	Schools must be able to provide ideas, information and support to preschool child's families on how to help them at home with the aid of early childhood curriculum.
Decision Making	It includes parents becoming part of the leaders of the school, taking part in decision making as well playing the role of representative of the preschool child.
Collaborating with the community.	This is to identify and integrate resources and services from the preschool child's community in order to reinforce school programs, family practices and how best to propel students to learn and develop themselves.

## METHODOLOGY

The paper used simple random technique in selecting the respondent (parents) from no form of formal education to primary educational level, secondary educational level, and tertiary educational level as well as post-secondary educational level in Anomabo locality in the Central Region of Ghana. The questionnaires were administered through the head teacher as well as the preschool child's instructors.

## PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

**RO.1.** To examine the factors and role affecting parental involvement in early childhood education.

**HO.1.** Factors significantly have a strong impact on parental role of involvement in early childhood education.

The higher the level of preschool child parent's involvement in their education, the higher the educational performance of the preschooler

Multiple R-----0.426  
 R Square.....0.182  
 Adjusted R Square.....0.177  
 Standard Error.....1.02049

### ANOVA

<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>f</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Regression</b>	36.552	<b>1</b>	<b>36.552</b>	<b>53.009</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Residual</b>	164.541	<b>158</b>	<b>1.041</b>		
<b>Total</b>	201.094	<b>159</b>			

Predictor: (Constant), Do you examine your preschool child's homework, assignments and class work?

b. Dependent Variable: How do you rate the performance of your preschool child?

P<0.000(0.000<0.05).

H0: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement in preschool education and the educational performance of the child.

H1: There exists a strong relationship between parental involvement and the performance of the preschooler.

**R0.2.** To recommend measures on how best to increase parent's involvement in preschool education in the study locality being that of Anomabo.

**H0.2.** The conducive learning environment of the child does have a positive impact on the preschool child.

Multiple R 0.007  
 R Square 0.000  
 Adjusted R Square -0.006  
 Standard Error 1.12814

**ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig.
Regression	.009	1	.009	.007	.934
Residual	201.085	158	1.273		
Total	209.094	159			

- a. Predictors :( Constant) The residential setting of the respondents.
  - b. Dependent Variable: How do you rate the performance of the preschool child?
- P>0.934(0.934>0.05)

**H0:** There is no significant relationship between the learning environment of the child and the child's educational performance.

**H1:** There is a significant relationship between the learning environments of the preschool child and the child's educational performance.

**CONCLUSION:** Since P value is greater than 0.05,being (0.934>0.05), the paper can therefore accept the Null hypothesis (H0) and reject Alternative hypothesis (H1), thus concluding that there is no significant relationship between the learning environment of the preschool child and the child's educational performance. This gives an indication that, a preschool child that lives and attend school in the rural locality would not have poor educational performance. On the other hand, a preschool child who dwells and attends school in the metropolis does not give any indication that the child would become academically good.

**R0.3.** To explore if the socio-economic characteristics of the parents do have an impact on the preschool child's education

H0.3. That socio-economic characteristic of parents does have a strong positive impact on the preschool child.

Multiple R 0.351  
 R Square 0.123  
 Adjusted R Square 0.177  
 Standard Error 20.05493

**ANOVA**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig
<b>1 Regression</b>	8913.319	<b>1</b>	8913.319	22.161	<b>.000</b>
<b>Residual</b>	63547.656	<b>158</b>	402.200		
<b>Total</b>	72460.975	<b>159</b>	<b>9315.519</b>		

- a. Predictors: (Constant). Respondents Educational Attainment
  - b. Demographic Variable: At what age was the preschool child sent to school/ kindergarten?
- P<0.000(.000<0.05)

H0: The socio-economic status does not have an impact on Early Childhood Education?

H1: The socio-economic status does have an impact on the preschool child's education.

**CONCLUSION:** Since the value of P is less than 0.05%, that is ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ) therefore, the paper can reject the Null hypothesis (H0) and accept Alternative hypothesis (H1), indicating that the socio-economic status do have an adverse impact on the preschool child's education in later academic life. The issue pertaining to parental education exposure tends to be extremely high since parents who possess low level of education do not want their children to experience preschool education.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The paper assessed the role of parents active participation in a parent directed preschool education by looking at the socio-economic status, the home environment and the role that parents play in early literacy intervention. The paper identified that parents active role is needed when it comes to preschool education which ultimately leads to later academic achievement. The paper did conclude that socio-economic status does play a positive role in early childhood education and development center (ECEDC). This research avers that in promoting parents as teachers within the home environment may probably serve as a good strategy to increase the levels of parental involvement.

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