

The Relationship Between Parental Education and Children's Academic Performance: The Case of Genda Tesfa Primary School, Dire Dawa

Abeya Degefe Terfassa

College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of Psychology, Dire Dawa University, PO box 1362, Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

Abstract

This research revealed the relationships between parental education and academic performance of primary school students in Genda Tesfa Elementary School. It aimed at identifying whether there is a relationship between parental education and children's academic performance. The objective of the study was achieved by using Pearson correlation coefficient, T-test and one way ANOVA. The stratified random sampling was used in order to collect data and as a sequence, 118 male and 84 female students were taken as sample. The Questionnaires were distributed among 202 students and Focused Group Discussions were made among 17 teachers in Genda Tesfa primary school. The result demonstrated that there was a positive relationship between parental education and children's academic performance ($r=0.73$). The results suggested that parental education is an important variable for predicting academic achievement.

Keywords: Parental Education, Children's Academic Performance

I. Introduction

1.1 Background and Statement of the Problem

Children's earliest learning experiences occur within the family. These include, among other things, the learning of attitudes, values, and ways of behaving toward others. Along with these learning experiences, how parents react to the behaviors of a child is of great importance in determining what the child becomes. Alternatively, how a child behaves in childhood as well as later in life is greatly affected by the child parental education and experiences in the family Simmons, J., & Alexander, L. (1978).

Several studies have demonstrated the positive effect of parental education in their children's schooling across a wide range of populations and ages. For example, Graham-Clay, S. (2005) indicated that students would get high grades, if parents encouraged them, monitored their daily activities and school progress and gave them general academic guidance and support. However the student researcher believes that many of Ethiopian parents do not provide support and direct the schooling of their children due to lack of experience, knowledge and resources. The schools are not actively employing different means to have parents and teachers come together to work on the problems of children's learning. Therefore, even though there are many variables that may affect the student academic performance, the main concern of this study was to investigate the relationship that may exist between parental education and children academic performance in elementary school specifically in second cycle grade students. These have negative impact on children schooling. Some of these impacts are high drop outs and absenteeism, low motivation, negative attitude towards learning and low academic self-efficacy (Epstein, 1986).

Operationally defined, *academic performance*, refers to actual class room academic scores of the children obtained from school records which are indicated by overall two semester's average. In this study, terms "academic achievement," "academic performance," and "school performance" are used interchangeably. Moreover, *parental education* refers to the highest educational level attained by mother and father or female and male guardian of the respondents.

Based on the above premises, the researcher had formulated the following questions.

1. Is there a relationship between parental education and academic performances of students?
2. Do academic performance increases as the educational level of their parent's increases?
3. Is there a statistically significant difference between academic performance of children from educated and uneducated parents?
4. How do educated parents influence their children's schooling?

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between parental education and children's academic performance. The specific objectives of the research include

- To examine the extent to which educated parents are involved in children's schooling.
- To find out how educated parent support their children's schooling and contribute to improve academic performance.
- To find out the difference on academic performance of student coming from educated and uneducated

parents.

- To come up with practical recommendation for parent to support their children's schooling.

II. Parental Education and their Support and Involvement in Children Learning

The family is the basic unity of society. Children's in born potentialities are strengthened and shaped by the family and the surrounding Homes are first school for children and parents are teacher (Engelhard, 2002). The mother is the most important individual in the life of the children. Mother becomes literally the child's first teacher to controller and programmer of his learning experiences. In doing so, she occupies two vital roles: (1) she serves as controller of stimulus events: that is, she is the one with the most influence over the home environment and the one who determines which events in the home impinge up on the children. (2) She is the controller of the reward system: that is, she is the chief one to respond to the behavior of the child either positively, negatively or neutrally. (Sirin, S.R., 2005). Among out of school variables which influence academic achievement of children, much attention seems to be given to parental education. Related to this number of studies indicate that there is direct relationship between parental education and academic achievement. For instances, Baker and Steveuson's study (1986) found that well educated mothers have higher knowledge of their children's schooling, more contact and communication with the school aware of their children's achievement, monitor their children's progress and lead them to pursue higher education.

Barnard (2004) studied the effect of parental involvement both in school and at home on the success indicators of children's in school-based longitudinal data. Controlling for other, factors, Barnard found that greater reported educated parental involvement in elementary school was significantly associated with increased on time high school completion, and the higher grade-completed by a student. To summarize pupils with educated parent are supported and seem to be better in their academic performance, while pupils lacking educated parent lack support and tend to less in achieving what desired in achieving what desired in education.

One of prominent factors that affect academic performance of student is in ability of the learner to study well. For good concentration during study time, making decision where to study and how study is a prerequisite. Effective study is highly influenced by their parental involvement and general condition where to study, and effective environment or home they study in. In relation to this, Brooks - Gunn, & Duncan (2000) stated that, the more a student is exposed to learning environment in the home, the better his/her academic achievement. Educated parents help their children to study hard. They help their children in arranging time for studies and adjust place for study, answering questions that are not clear for children during study. Supportive home environment, including the supervision and structure that parents give children outside of school to support their education, such as limiting television viewing time and providing structured time for home work and learning Home work help include such support of literacy development, parents reading with children or providing books and writing materials (Shumox, & Lomax (2001).

Parental involvement in supporting their children can be recognized as what parent could do to help or assist their children's comprehension (Astone & McLanahan (1991). Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, (2000) pointed out the importance of assisting children to read and argued that it can result in the following benefits.

- Concept development, vocabulary development, and linguistic competence.
- Knowledge of the content, structure and conversion of writing language
- Academic readiness for coming class.
- Word recognition skills
- Later achievement in reading as well, memorizing what they read easily.

III. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Cross sectional research design was employed to see the parental education level and children's academic performance as well as the correlation of the two variables.

3.2 Study Site

The study site was Genda Tesfa primary school in Dire Dawa Town. The students attending their education in this school come from different linguistic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the city.

3.3 Participants and Sampling Method

The target population of this study was the students of Genda Tesfa Elementary School. The total number of students attending their education at this school was 1640 (868 Male students and 772 female students) for academic year of 2016/2017. The school was randomly selected among others. According to statistical information obtained from this school, students from both educated parents and uneducated parent were selected by using purposive sampling technique. The final sample participants of the study were selected by stratified random sampling method. Hence, 118 male and 84 female students were taken as sample. The Questionnaires

were distributed among 202 students and Focused Group Discussions were made among 17 teachers in the Genda Tesfa primary school.

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

The researcher used two types of instruments for the purpose of study. Pilot tested Structured Questionnaires was developed for quantitative data and administered to students, with Chronbach Alpha of ($r=0.791$) Validity checked instrument of Focused Group Discussions were held for 17 teachers randomly selected from the school.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The FGDs were analyzed qualitatively whereas the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively (statistically). All statistics were computed using SPSS version 16. After coding all the items in the questionnaire, all the questionnaires were filled into SPSS coding sheet and data were then analyzed using descriptive method, Correlation, T-test, ANOVA as well as Frequency Percentage.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Background Information of Respondents

Table 1: Information of Respondents

No	Classification	Respondents			
		Student		Teacher	
	Sex	No	%	No	%
1	a) Male	118	58.4	9	53
	b) Female	84	41.6	8	47
	Total	202	100	17	100
	Age	No	%	No	%
2	a) 10-14	86	42.6	-	-
	b) 15-19	116	57.4	2	12
	c) 20 and above	-	-	15	88
	Total	202	100	17	100

According to the table 1 above, 58.4 % of the participants were male student whereas, 41.6 % of them were female participants. Age wise, the category of 10-14 are 86(42.6) of total participants, and 116(57.4%) were between 15-19 years old. Teachers participants data sources included 9 males (53 %) and 8 females (47%). Teachers with age category of 15-19 was 2 (12%) of total respondents, and 15(88%) of informants were age 20 and above years old.

4.2 Parental Educational Background

Table 2: Parental Educational Background

Variable	Group	No	%
Mother Educational Status	Illiterate	38	19
	Primary	76	37.6
	Secondary	25	12.4
	Diploma	19	9.4
	Degree and Above	44	21.6
	Total		202
Father Educational Status	Illiterate	25	12.5
	Primary	38	18.8
	Secondary	19	9.4
	Diploma	32	15.6
	Degree and Above	88	43.7
	Total		202

Table 2 illustrates that 164 (81%) of students come from literate (educated) mother. That is 76(37.6%) of them completed primary education, 25 (12.5%) of them completed secondary education, 19(9.37%) of them completed Diploma program and 44 (21.6%) of them had degree or above, and only 38 (19%) students come from illiterate (uneducated) mothers. Regarding the father or male guardian education level, 177 (87.62%) of students come from literate (educated) fathers. Accordingly, 38(18.8%) of them had completed primary education, 32(15.6%) of them completed secondary education and 88(43.7%) of them had degree and above and only 25(12.5%) of the students fathers were illiterate (uneducated). Hence, there were more educated father than mothers of the participants.

Table 3: Both parents educational Status

Both Parents' Educational Status	Illiterate	22	21
	Primary	21	20
	Secondary	13	12
	Diploma Level	15	14
	Degree and Above	36	33
	Total	107	100

The table depicts that, 107 (52.8 %) of the parents of the students had parallel educational level; out of which 36 (33 %) of them had Degree and above level together; 22 (21%) of them reported that they come from both parents illiterate followed by primary education complete , diploma program and secondary education complete with 20 %, 14 % and 12 % respectively.

4.3 Parents' Involvement in their Children's schooling

One of the interests of this study was to examine the extent to which parents are involved in children's schooling. The following table presents this finding:

Table 4: The Frequency of parental support in the week; the response of students

The frequency (Rate in the week)	No	%
Daily(abt. 1-3hrs)	95	46.87
Twice in the week(abt. 1-3 hrs per day)	25	12.5
Once in the week (abt. 1-3hrs)	38	18.75
Once in the month (abt. 1-3hrs)	44	21.88
Total	202	100

The frequency of support by parents at home ranges from those students getting help every day in the week to those students getting it once in the month. Accordingly, significant proportion 95(46.87%) of the students got support almost every day at least one hours to three hours, 25 (12.5%) of them responded that they are assisted twice in the week at least for two and half hours per day, 38 (18.75%) of them saying they get help only once in the week, and 44(21.87%) of them said that they are supported once in the week. From this explanation, one can understand that significant proportion (.75 %) of the students reported that they get support from their parents at least once a week. More than 21 % of the respondents reported that they get support only once a month which is probably for those uneducated (illiterate) families.

4.4 The Correlation between Parental Education and Children's Academic Achievement

The main interest of this study was to examine the relationship between parental education and student's academic achievements.

Table 5: The correlation between parental education and children's academic performance

Correlations			
		Parents' Education Level	Children Academic Performance
Parents' Education Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.073**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	202	202
Children Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.073**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	202	202

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in table 5, there was a positive strong correlation between parental education and student's academic achievement. The value of $r=0.73$; this shows that parental education is positively correlated with children's academic achievements. There was strong correlation between these two variables (Parents Educational Level and Children Academic Performance).

4.5 Difference in Academic Achievement between Children from Literate (educated) and Illiterate (uneducated) Parents

One of the objectives of the study was to examine to determine whether difference exists between children from educated and uneducated parents to answer to this question, independent sample T-test was employed for the purpose. The parents of 22 students were reportedly illiterate and the other 22 were selected by stratified random sampling from level remaining for comparison reason. This equivalence was made to minimize the standard error of measurement that could come due to sample size difference. The following table presents the outcome of computation of T-test.

Table 6: The Statistical computation of T-test for difference in student academic performance

Variable	N	Mean(M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	Df	T-obtained
Average score of student from educated parents	22	70.6	10.94	20	2.68
Average score of student from un educated parents	22	63.8	7		

$a=0.05$ Df=20, critical at $a=0.05$ Df=20=2.145

An examination of the t-test results in table 6 above indicates there was statistically significance difference between children's from literate (educated) and illiterate (uneducated) parents. This table depicts the mean score difference of children from educated parent $M_1=10.94$ and $M_2=7$ respectively. The difference between the mean scores of the two groups is statistically significance at 0.05 alpha levels by t-test. So we can say that children from educated parents are better in academic achievement than children from uneducated parents.

Table 7: One Way ANOVA on Parental Education and Children Academic Achievement

Academic Achievement					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	76.718	1	76.717	69.876	.001
Within Groups	240.350	20	1.098		
Total	317.068	21			

According to the above table Summary of ANOVA in table 7 showed that there was significant difference in Academic Achievement of children ($F(1,21); P < 0.01 = 69.876$) between children form educated parents and uneducated parents.

4.6 Analysis of Focused Group Discussion; With Teachers

For triangulation purpose, the results obtained through focused group discussions (FGD) held with teachers were presented. The first issue of discussion was about the difference between children from educated parents and uneducated parents on their academic performance. In relation to this, teachers reported that there were differences between the two groups. Especially on helping their children on doing their home work and on school follow up of their children's education. As teachers gave their ideas, they reported that educated parents fulfill necessary educational materials like exercise books, and other supportive books to help their children's to read, study, analyze and understand. Teachers mentioned that children's who are from educated parent often do their home work usually before coming to the school and they read their books before teachers teach that topics in the class. Hence, this could have helped them to easily understand what teacher talk in the class.

Regarding the ways the educated parents might help their children to improve their performances, the participants responded that the educated parent often motivate their children to go school on a time, rewarding their children whenever they got better marks on their schooling, discuss with their children on their educational matters at home.

The view of teachers was also asked on how parental education can be related to their children schooling. Teachers indicated that they have positive relation in which they said that as parental education increases, children academic performance also increases. This might be because of the fact that, the more parents are educated, the more they become supportive for their children. For example those children who come from the parent that completed secondary education are more concerned about their children's future education than those who come from parents who complete primary education.

In comparison to this, teachers also mentioned that illiteracy can hinder the good practice of parental support for their children education. Non conductive home environment (eg lack of reading room, lack enough time to study and do their home work) was taken as a reason for student's low achieving in school for some cases.

In relation to this, other point of discussion was whether educated mother support their children's schooling than educated father. The teachers explained that literate mothers play a vital role for the success of their children's education. Because most children are more close to their mothers than fathers; they are the primary sources of knowledge, language, value and social relationship to the child. So as teachers tried to mention, literate mothers provide their children's with necessary material, they know more about their children school performance and they help their children to improve their schooling.

4.7 Discussion of the Findings

The main concern of this study was to examine the relationship between parental education and children's academic achievement at primary school level. With regard to this, the present study finding indicated the existence of positive strong relationship between parental education and children's academic achievement ($r=0.73$). These results suggest that parental education is an important variable for predicting academic

achievement. The result of the present study agreed with the previous studies, like Epstein et al (1991) which noted that educational level of parents is positively related to the children's academic achievement from early childhood through high school. Additionally, Engine-Demir (2009) concluded that parental education on children's education has a powerful impact on their attainment and adjustment in education. In line with this, it appears that frequency of support offered at home, ranges from those students getting help every day in week to those students getting it once in month which created positive impact on children academic performance. Griffith, J. (1999) explained, that child's capacity to properly understand academic activities depends, to considerable extent, on the amount of parent support he/she receives. This findings regarding the parental involvement in their children education was related to previous investigations like that of Konu and Rimplela (2002) stated that parental helps on doing assignment, project works, home works and class works are important activities to improve their academic achievement.

The result of focused group discussions with teachers also indicated that children academic performance increases as their parental education increases. In support to this idea,, Wills, Judy. (2010) indicated that children whose parents had primary school education or less were more than three times as likely to have low test score or grade repetition than children whose parents had at least some secondary schooling. They also stated that parental education does not only influence parent-child interactions related to learning, but also affects parents' income and need for help in the home or field.

The other objective of this study was to examine the difference in academic performance between children from educated and uneducated parents. As a result on table 6, indicated that there is statistically significance difference between child from educated and uneducated parents. Supporting this finding, the studies of Epstein, J. L. (1986) suggested that children from low level of parental education, parents and neighborhood with negative attitude towards schooling in general, and children from disadvantaged background have significant poor academic achievement. In addition to this, Schiller et al (2002) argued that regardless of national context, parents who are more educated appear better able to provide their children with the academic and social support that are important for educational success when compared to parents with less education.

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

The main objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between parental education and children's academic performance in Primary school of Genda Tesfa School. The study was designed to answer the following basic questions.

- 1) Is there relationship between parental education and academic performance of the students?
- 2) Do academic performance of student increases as educational level of their parent increases?
- 3) Is there statistically significance difference between academic performance of children from literate (educated) and illiterate (uneducated) parents?
- 4) How do educated parents influence their children's schooling?

This study was conducted I Genda Tesfa Primary School, which was one of several primary schools in Dire Dawa city Administration, randomly selected. The total 202 were sampled out by stratified random sampling technique. After Identifying 22 children from uneducated parents, 22 more children from educated parents were again selected to be compared again them by stratified random sampling. The instrument used in this study was structured questionnaire. Student's academic achievement scores of 202 students (two semester average scores) were collected from school record offices. Also 17 teachers (9 male 8 females) were selected based by simple random technique. FGD was employed for teacher participants. Correlation coefficient of Pearson showed that there was strong relation between parental education and their children academic performances with $r=0.73$. Moreover, T-test and ANOVA results showed that there was statistically significance difference between academic performance of children from literate (educated) and illiterate (uneducated) parents on academic achievement.

5.2 Conclusions

From the above findings, the researchers had driven the following conclusions.

1. Parental education was strongly correlated with students' academic achievements
2. There was statistically significance difference between children of illiterate (uneducated) and literate (educated) parents on academic performance.
3. Children's academic performance increased as their parental education level increased.
4. Educated parents positively influenced the children's schooling.

5.3 Recommendations

1. Teachers and the school administrators should give attention to students specially those who come from uneducated parents in class room activities and encourage them to actively participate in class room

instruction.

2. Educated parent should encourage the uneducated parent to help their children's schooling. .
3. The parental involvement and the awareness of the whole community should be encouraged to improve children schooling.
4. The observed significant contribution of the independent variable up on the dependent variable in this study call for repeating research on wider population by including some other variables which could possibly contribute to children's academic achievement

References

- Astone, N. M., & McLanahan, S. S. (1991).** Family Structure, Parental Practices and High school Completion. *American Sociological Review*, 56, 309 - 320.
- Baker, P. D & Stevenson, D. L., (1987).** The Family - School Relation and the Child's School Performance. *Child Development*, 58, 1348 – 1357
- Barasa D.S. (2003).**A study of factors affecting the quality of education in day secondary schools in Bungoma, Kenya.
- Barnard, W. M. (2004).** Parent involvement in elementary school and Educational attainment. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 26, 39- 62.
- Brooks - Gunn, J., & Duncan, J. G. (2000).** Family Poverty, Welfare Reform, and Child Development. *Child Development*, 71(1), 188 - 196
- Engelhard, G (2002).** Attendance and Academic Achievement. Iowa, USA
- Engin - Demir, C. (2009).** Factors influencing the academic achievement of the Turkish urban poor. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 29, 17-29.
- Epstein, J. L. (1991).** Effects on student achievement of teachers' practices of parent involvement. In S.B. Silvern (Ed.), *Advances in readings/language research* (5th ed.), 276). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press
- Epstein, J. L. (1986).** Parents' Reactions to Teacher Practices of Parent Involvement. *The 152 Elementary School Journal*, 86 (3), 277-294.
- Epstein, J. L. (1987).** Parent involvement: what research says to administrators. *Education and Urban Sociology*, 19, 277- 294
- Griffith, J. (1999).** School Climate as "Social Order" and "Social Action": A Multi-Level Analysis of Public Elementary School Student Perceptions. *Social Psychology of Education*, 2, 339 -369.
- Graham-Clay, S. (2005).** Communicating with parents: Strategies for teachers. *School Community Journal*, 16(1), 117–129.
- Konu, A., & Rimpela, M. (2002).** Well - being in schools:a conceptual model. *Health Promotion International*, 17(1).
- Schiller, K. S., Khmelkov, V. T., & Wang, X. Q. (2002).** Economic development and the effects of family characteristics on mathematics achievement. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64, 730 - 742.
- Shumox, L., & Lomax, R. (2001).** Parental efficacy: Predictor of parenting behavior and adolescent outcomes. *Parenting*, 2 (2), 127-150
- Simmons, J., & Alexander, L. (1978).** The determinants of school achievement in developing countries: a review of the research. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, 26(2), 341- 357.
- Sirin, S.R. (2005).** Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research*
- Wills, Judy. (2010).** A study guide for learning to love mathematics: teaching strategies that change student attitudes and get results: Oxford