

Parental Participation in Children's Educational Activities: Experiences of Parents and Teachers in Cameroon

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Abstract: The encouragement of children's education requires several factors with parental involvement as a main factor in the educational experience. A large number of parents' participation in their children's education has been found to be less as compared to effective participation principles. This has led to the loss of the positive effects attributed to parent's participation in their children's educational activities. A qualitative research was conducted with parents and the school authorities to know the factors that motivate and hinder parents' participation in their children's education in secondary schools. Participants were purposively sampled due to their experience and knowledge in issues related to parental participation in the education of their children. Findings revealed that parents' belief that their participation in their children's education is part of the training they are supposed to give them and it has motivated them to participate. To comply with the system of integrated support for their children's, schools need to build partnership with parents and develop mutual responsibility for children's success in the educational system. Thus, an increase and encouragement emanate to a positive impact to a successful educational system of Cameroon. The results of the study show a significant positive relationship between parental participation in their children's education and their academic performance. It is recommended from this study that parents should be sensitized of their crucial role in supporting their children's education like exposing them to the social and academic world.

Keywords: Parents' motivation, parental participation, school, supervision, teachers.

I. INTRODUCTION

A person's education is closely linked with his or her life chances, income and general well-being. Therefore, the success of students in any academic task has become a major concern to educators, parents, researchers and society. Higher scores indicate better academic performance. It is a satisfactory and superior level of performance of students as they progress through and complete their school experience. The implication of this definition is underscored by studies which repeatedly demonstrate that the vast majority of students who withdraw from school do so for no reason other than non parental participation thus poor academic performance. Measuring academic performance can occur at multiple levels and serves multiple purposes. For instance, it has been indicated that classroom teachers often conduct formative and summative tests to evaluate student mastery of

course content and provide grades for students and parents (Amin,2004). Graduation tests in particular are used to determine whether a student has mastered the minimum content and competencies required to progress to the next class or level. Each of these kinds of assessments engenders significant questions related to test design, types of decisions supported by the results as well as alternative assessment (Fonkeng, 2012).

A number of studies have been conducted to explore the factors that affect academic performance of students in a number of educational institutions. Majority of these studies have focused on parents (family causal factors), teachers (academic causal factors), and students (personal causal factors) [5,6,7]. Even though a combination of these factors influence academic performance of students, they vary from one academic environment to another, from one set of students to the next, and from one cultural setting to another (Luma 1986 in,Amshetu 2020). Individual characteristics such as previous school achievements, academic self-efficacy or study motivation have been identified to correlate with academic performance (OECD,2020). Several researchers recognise the important role that strong positive bond between homes and schools, play in the development and education of children (Edwards & Alldred, 2000; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Richardson, 2009; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Sheldon, 2009). The theories put forward have been supported, and reaffirmed, by numerous studies that have shown that good cooperation between schools, homes and the communities can lead to academic achievement, and reforms in education. Research has also shown that successful students' have strong academic support from their involved parents (Sheldon, 2009). Furthermore, research has consistently shown that schools, working in low social and economic neighborhoods, have strong and positive school-home relationships (Sanders & Sheldon, 2009; Sheldon, 2009). More importantly, these effective schools with positive school climate, have made a real effort in reaching out to their students' families in order to bring good cooperation. *Sanders and Sheldon (2009) maintain that schools become successful when a strong and positive relationship among students, parents, teachers and the community has been established. All students' are more likely to experience academic success if their home environment is*

supportive (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Sanders & Sheldon, 2009).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The increased attention that has been paid to parental participation in children's education has culminated in some studies being conducted on the matter. According to Grolnick (2009), one of the key reasons behind parents' participation in their children's education is to motivate the children to work hard towards achieving good grades and other goals of their education. This is a psychological aspect of children's growth and development which is crucial to various aspects of their lives including their education. Another study that has revealed children's psychological and emotional growth as a motivation to parental participation in children's education was conducted by Pomerantz, Moorman, and Litwack (2007). Some parents in striving to boost the confidence of their children, make great effort to actively involve themselves in their children's education (Pomerantz, Moorman, & Litwack, 2007). In such instance, the parents engage themselves in various activities and programmes in their children's schools such as sports, drama, trips and others (Mo & Singh, 2008; Turney & Kao, 2009).

Beside the aforementioned motivators, some parents' perception of the invaluable role they can play in their children's education has motivated them to participate in their education. According to Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler (2007), some parents' active involvement in their children's education is motivated by their view that it is part of their responsibilities in nurturing their children into responsible adulthood. Such parents accept the role as partners of their children's teachers in the educational endeavours of their children. Yamamoto, Holloway, and Suzuki (2016) elucidated the crucial role assumed by some teachers in motivating parents to participate in their children's education. Some parents are able to assume the responsibility of playing more active roles in their children's school both at home and in school premises when their participation is sought by the teachers of their children (Yamamoto, Holloway, & Suzuki, 2016). This gives parents the impression that their involvement in school activities is not viewed as distractions but is welcomed and appreciated by the teachers and school authorities.

Regardless of the crucial impact of parents' involvement on their children's education as shown by studies, some parents have been passive in involving themselves in their children's education especially in ways beside the payment of school fees. In their study which was based on a review of literature on parental participation, LaRocque, Kleiman, and Darling (2011) and Sheng (2012) found that busy schedules and stressful life situations of some parents encumber their ability to actively participate in their children's education. Brock and Edmunds (2010) also added that whiles parents with busy schedules can send emails to their children's schools if they have access to computer and internet, their ability to visit the schools in person is constricted. Gordon and Cui (2014) in

their study on community poverty's effect on parental participation also added that this situation is usually faced by poor parents or people in poor communities who have to engage in multiple jobs during both day and night, in order to be able to provide the needs of the children.

On the economic issues, Jasso (2007) cited poverty as a key impediment in parents' ability to participate in their children's education as seen with effective social cases in public secondary schools in Cameroon since 2008. Some immigrant parents have also experienced certain structural barriers in their involvement in their children's education especially at the initial stages of their settlement in their new host environments. In some studies (Altschul, 2011; Smith, Stern, & Shatrova, 2008) which engaged Spanish-speaking immigrants whose children attended English-instructed schools, it was found that such parents experienced language and cultural impediments in their efforts to participate in the activities of their children's schools. These are key barriers because they inhibit or distort communication between the parents and their children's teachers especially in situations where there are no language translation facilities available (Fonkeng, 2010). Beside the language and cultural barriers, Altschul (2011 and Amine, 1999) added that some parents are encumbered by social and economic factors in their efforts to participate in the education.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted with the qualitative research design which afforded the researchers the opportunity to gather detailed data regarding parents' and teachers' perception about parental participation in their children's education. The qualitative research design was also crucial in helping the researchers build trustworthy relationship with participants based on which detailed information would be obtained from participants (Creswell, 2013).

Specifically, the phenomenological approach was used as my primary goal was to gain understanding of which factors motivate and impede parents' effective involvement in their children's education. This is a mixed day school which comprises of public, and lay private high schools parents. Targeted classes were Form five and upper sixth classes for the study. These two classes were selected for the study because there was an easy identification of students whose parents effectively participated in the activities in the school and those whose parents hardly take in academic activities both at home or in school. Examination classes were considered due to it summative evaluation as compare to formative evaluation in school by the same teachers. This was a crucial characteristic of these classes which distinguished them from the other classes. Having such characteristic enabled the teachers of those classes to extensively express their views on parental participation in school activities. There are Ten public secondary and high schools with four classrooms for each of the two classes, with two teachers in each of the classrooms. This means there are 20 teachers in the target population. These GBH school was selected for

Parental involvement reflected Cameroon Bilingual nature and both HSES and LSES are effectively registered here. The situation of the HSES and LSES students had been observed since 2008 in all the public colleges to reduce the level of educational wastage due to inequality in socioeconomic status of parents.

It therefore suited the study as the researchers were interested in understanding how parents' socioeconomic status influence their participation in their children's education. Purposive sampling was adopted because it offered the researcher the opportunity to select participants who were knowledgeable about the roles parents can play to support their children's education and how such participation affects children's academic performance at the official examinations in Cameroon such as the GCE Board and Office du BAC Examination. Socioeconomic status of parents made it clear that there are two types of parents "the Have and the Have not". The parent Delegates are parents representative in each class. Parent delegates know all the parents who participate in school activities and their challenges. PTA presidents of all the public colleges with all the knowledge and experiences over the years. Government Bilingual High School Principal with effective social cases with the detail information of the LSES and HSES in their various schools. As for the LSES parents, they were interviewed on their participation rate and the way forward.

Primary data which used for the study were obtained through semi-structured interviews with participants in English and French depending on participants' proficiency in any of the two languages. These interviews were conducted at places convenient and comfortable for participants and data collection. Interviewing were mostly with examinations related participants such as teachers of examination classes, parents of examination classes, Parents of students of examination classes in the school campuses. While the PTA presidents were interviewed during the PTA meeting and the principals in their offices at their convenience of venues. Interviewees were comfortable and free to express their views on issues discussed, so that detailed data could be gathered. The interviews aided the researchers to obtain detailed information through further probing into issues that were raised by participants.

Instrument for the interview were interview guide with specific questions on income, level of education, occupation, parenting style, parental involvement and the size of the family and the tape recorder which was later transcribed. Interview guide made is easier orderly questioning and answering. Data were collected through note taking and voice recording after permission had been sought from participants. Generated data were analysed using Creswell's (2013) and Amine, 1999 data analysis spiral which comprises of five steps, namely, organizing data, reading and reporting, describing and classifying data into codes and themes, interpreting data and presenting data. Data was organised by converting the collected audio recordings into

word format through a process called transcription. Generated transcripts were read thoroughly for familiarization, through which codes and themes were generated, described and classified based on the goal of the study. Through this process, information that were similar were grouped under distinct themes so that the findings could be differentiated from each other. This means that themes that have been presented as findings represent combination of similar information on the issues researched into, as provided by the various participants. Consequently, findings have been presented and interpreted. In order to create a vivid picture of the situation found by the study, quotes from participants have been presented. Ethical issues observed include informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality and avoidance of plagiarism.

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

In order to understand the dynamics among the participants of the study, to facilitate the clear depiction of the nature of parental participation in the study population, demographic characteristics have been presented below. Also, in order to clearly show the difference between the dynamics of parent and teacher, their characteristics are presented separately. Regarding the age of the participants, it ranges from 35 to 55 years for men while that of women were from 30 to 53 years .,

From the age range, all parents were in the productive years and as such have commitments in the jobs, which could inhibit their ability to devote more time to their children's education. There were 10 male and 10 female parents. Considering that these males have been traditionally considered as the primary breadwinners of their families, their commitment to activities in their children's school beside paying fees and providing school materials could be compromised. Also, five of the parents are university graduates, two of them only had secondary education while the remaining parents had no formal education. With many of the parents having had appreciable levels of formal education, they have a clear understanding of what is entailed in their children's education and the essence of their involvement. Another factor that could impact the time parents devote to their children's school is the number of children they have in the school. In this study, three of the parents interviewed had a child each in the, four of them had two children and one had three children. Regarding the job of the parents, three of them worked in as lecturers, three were in the corporate or business sector, many were petty trader and others engaged in menial jobs.

The characteristics of teachers whose conduct also influence parental participation have been presented in this section. Regarding their ages, three of them were between 21 – 30 years range, two of them were between 31 – 40 years range, two of them were 41 – 60 and one was between 61 range. Furthermore, some teachers had children in the school and as such had knowledge and experience as parents and their roles in the school. Two of them had a child each while one had

two children in the school. However, they were not recruited as parents but as teachers, although they expressed their views on their experiences as parents.

IV. FINDINGS

It was revealed that parental participation in activities were numerous. Their participation was found in ways such as providing snacks, uniform and shoes, paying school fees, supervising children to do their homework, supporting children during sporting activities, attending meetings meant to discuss the welfare of their children and the school as whole, responding to invitations by teachers, and also making random visits to the school. However, it was also revealed that the participation of some parents were discouraging due to their non participation neither at home or in school. Factors cited for their active participation and low participation are subsequently explained.

Effective Parental Participation in Children's Education

The most cited source of motivation is parents' responsibility and education is a legacy to give to the children. internal conviction about their role in their children's education. As revealed by the data, many parents actively participate in their children's education as a result of their intrinsic motivation to give their children quality education. According to some parents, it is very important that they participate as actively as possible in their children's education as a sign of their seriousness about their children's education. As it can be seen in the demographic characteristics of the parents, many of them by virtue of their enlightenment, appreciate the role they can play in their children's education. Such parents consider education as a lucrative investment in their children:

My parents were not rich, but they managed to educate me... I firmly believe that it is my responsibility to educate my children. I must do more than just paying their fees and buying books. I must attend meetings, try to support them in the various school activities. This is an investment that parents make in their children for both their present and future. With their investment in their children's education beyond paying fees and providing requisite materials, they can communicate their seriousness to the teachers.

With such communication, many teachers have become more committed to their job of teaching the children. The children upon seeing the commitment from both their parents and teachers, have also become serious with their studies, and more discipline.

Low socioeconomic parents view are never considered due to their non financial contribution. PTA presidents are against the poor parents and always remind them that education is an economic good and that it is not for the "HAVE NOT" These scarce LSES parents from attending meeting and even giving information about their children wellbeing at home and communicating with them. Education is a long term

investment which less educated parents are not interested due to it cost.

Family's stability is another issue, when parents are not living together, it difficult to plan for the children. They show up sometimes when you call them and then make promises just to look good. But you can tell they are not much committed to being active in their children's education. They are reluctant to pay fees on time and buy the needed materials that would help their children in their academic work (Teacher). Less qualified teachers are unaware of the importance of partnership with the parents. They are hostile towards LSES since their children have very few or no learning facilities which make it difficult for assignment to be done little. Teachers constantly asked the poor female students not to waste their time as they will pass any official examination.

Although this finding is seldom captured in existing findings, it was revealed to be a key motivating factor. In such instances, as explained by two teachers, both the school and children do not get the true involvement of these parents in the roles that other parents are participating. Another factor is that some parents consider their active participation in their children's education as part of the training being given to children. Thus, some parents consider the education of their children as an integral part of their responsibilities as parents and hope to inculcate such attitude into their children. Some parents were adamant about the fact that without education, whatever a parent gives to his/her child is not enough because the child misses out on school experiences which are valuable while the poor mentioned who are rich without formal

in This therefore motivates them to educate their children and play diverse roles to help the children to get the best out of their education. Many parents also expressed the need for parents to be active in their children's activities in the school, it is an important part of children's lives considering the hours they spend in school. A parent who was a businessman expressed how his presence in his children's lives in school helps his family in raising the children: ... If our goal is to help them build positive characters, we cannot do that only at home. They spend many hours in their school doing various activities so effective presence is the order. Parental effective presence support them in their sporting events and all that.

Findings also indicate that some parents are motivated by their intention to keep an eye on the conduct of the teachers and also protect their children from unfair treatment from the teachers. Parents with such intention randomly visit the school to check on how their children are faring in class. This they said sends the message that such parents are closely monitoring what is going on in the school. Although some teachers expressed their discontent about such random visits, others explained that it keeps both teachers and the children upright. A teacher who expressed his mixed feelings about such random visits had this to say: Few parents come to this

school uninvited to see their children and sometimes talk to me about their children. I think some do it in a way which seems like they are sniffing around to catch a teacher not treating their children well... However, I think the children of such parents usually comport themselves both in class and on the playground. A parent who has randomly visited his child's school thinks such unexpected calls to the school helps his child to be upright and take school activities seriously. He therefore thinks it is a technique that should be employed by other parents, although he also mentioned that while such visits should be unexpected by the children, the teachers and school's administration should be notified in advance: Sometimes my daughter's teachers invite me through a phone call, so I go to the school to see what the call is about.

However, I do not tell her about such calls as I want to see how she acts in school when she does not know I am around. And after doing this for about three times, I hear she tries to be active in all school activities. Although this is not a common motivation for many parents' participation in their children's education, it has been adopted by some parents who believe it helps to mold their children in an upright manner in their school. This then has served as a motivating factor for some parents to go beyond paying fees and providing items needed for their children's education, to making their physical presence felt in the schools.

Non -Parental Participation

A common barrier cited is the high cost of living and its effect on many parents. Some parents expressed that due to economic hardship, they are unconsciously separated from their children especially in their education, in their quest to make enough money to improve their economic situation. They stressed on the need to work hard in order to raise funds so that they can cater for their children's education needs among others. Such parents' participation is therefore seen to be limited to ways such as paying school fees and providing education materials. They added that they find it hard to visit Parental Participation in Children's the school of their children and engage in activities. Based on the demographic characteristics of the parents presented earlier, it can be deduced that some parents struggle to earn enough income to provide for their children's needs including those required for their education. Two participants explained that their busy schedule and erratic inflow of income have compelled them to spend long periods of time working to raise enough finances. Consequently, they are unable to make time to assist their children with their homework and actively engage in activities in their children's school. A parent who was a petty trader at the time of data collection had this to say: I would have liked to attend PTA meetings in her school, but it is not easy. I am always moving from one market to the other just to be able to make money to take care of her and her younger brother. I only get to spend some time with them on Sundays, so I try to make

the best out of it. This shows that although some parents genuinely want to participate in their children's education in diverse ways, their quest to provide the needs of the children has limited their ability to do so.

70% of the parents also attribute their inability to play more active roles in their children's schools to poor coordination from some teachers and changes in the school programmes. According to them, *some teachers look down on some parents especially the illiterate ones. That deters some parents from seeing the teachers who they perceive are disrespectful, especially when the teachers have not invited them. Other parents also explained that sometimes the notices and invitations from their children's school are sent too late that it becomes difficult to respond to them. Additionally, some participants explained that changes in the schedules for programmes in the school such as PTA meeting and Speech and Prize-giving days also pose a challenge to them. This is because they sometimes find it difficult to factor such changes into their itineraries:*

I think parents cannot be blamed entirely for missing some programmes in our children's schools...

Sometimes notices are sent too late, and this makes it difficult to factor them into my plans. I cannot say I am busy and so I will not be there to make decisions that concern my children's education... the teachers and administrators need to let us know in advance so that we can also plan (Parent, businessman). Inferring from the above quote, it can be understood that structural changes and lapses in the schools programme forecast has inhibited some parents' ability to honour some invitations from the school although they would have wanted to be there.

Another factor that impedes parental participation is their attachment to other things other than education.

Some teachers indicated that some parents spend time and resources on other things rather than their children's education. They cited that some parents eagerly sew clothes for funerals and other social functions at the expense of providing for their children's educational needs. This, they attribute this to the fact that some parents are not serious about their children's education and hence accord importance to other things. This shows that some parents leave the education of their children to the teachers and the schools who they believe are responsible for playing such roles.

It was revealed that some parents find it difficult to make sacrifices to attend programmes like PTA meeting and others, although decisions made during such meetings affect their children's upbringing and welfare in general in the school: I find it difficult to understand some parents, who can never make time to attend our calls and meetings. Some of these parents are always busy looking for money, travelling all over the country and abroad, but they always have excuse why they cannot attend meetings... You write notes and they do not write back or even call to discuss the issue at hand...

and some of these parents are educated and you would expect them to help us to train their children (Teacher).

As intimated by some teachers, some parents equate their participation in their children's education to paying school fees and providing materials needed by the children. Such parents, upon paying the fees and providing material needs, leave the remaining responsibilities to the school. Low self-esteem on the part of some parents was also found to be a factor that has inhibited some parents' participation in their children's education. It was found that some parents as a result of their illiterate statuses feel they do not have much to offer in their children's education. Some parents explained that they cannot help their children do their homework because they do not have the knowledge and expertise required to do so. This feeling of low self-esteem has also discouraged some parents from attending PTA meetings because over the years, they have not been able to share their views on issues discussed especially when the English language dominates discussions. They therefore limit themselves to paying school fees and providing the needs of their children, while they encourage their older children to assist their younger siblings in ways such as doing homework.

A parent participant who did not have any form of formal education explained that she has limited her role in her children's education to paying fees and encouraging her child to work hard. Although she attends few meetings, especially those that involve only her and a teacher, she is averse to attending PTA meetings: English language is mostly used in these meetings, so I did not understand many issues discussed... So, I stopped attending PTA meeting. Some time I go to see the teachers to discuss some issues, but that is between us so I can freely speak about my concern... I think I could have done more if I had formal education myself. The educational background of many parents has been a determinant of their participation in their children's education. Besides helping them understand the essence of playing active role in their children's education, it boosts their confidence and ability to do so. Illiterate parents in some instances, as captured above, are incapacitated to fully engage in certain activities. However, the appreciable level of education attained by many parents of children has limited the instance parental non-participation as a result of their illiteracy.

V. DISCUSSIONS

This study sought to identify factors that motivate parents' decision to actively participate in their children's education and factors encumbering their participation. A key factor that has motivated parental participation has been some parents' admission of their participation being part of their responsibilities in raising their children. Such parents who are mostly enlightened enough to understand that school is one of the main agencies of socialization, go beyond paying fees and providing requisite materials for their children's education. They make their presence felt in their children's schools in ways such as attending meetings, supporting

their children's sporting activities and helping school administration organize educational trips for children. This role played by parents in their children's education has also been found in other parts of the world beyond Africa, as reported by other studies. For instance, this finding corroborates Green, Walker, Hoover-Dempsey, and Sandler's (2007) argument that some parents' motivation to actively participate in their children's education stems from their innate Parental Participation in Children's... view that they have a crucial role to play in their children's education. It also lends credence to Grolnick's (2009) argument that some parents use their participation to inspire their children to work hard in school and safeguard their future through their education. Surprisingly, it was also found that some parents only make the impression of participation in various facets of their children's education without eventually doing much. This has been done by parents who are interested in gaining a positive image from their children's teachers and schools' administration. Whiles such parents readily promise to their children and the teachers to provide their children's needs and attend meetings and other programmes, they end up giving excuses to refrain from fulfilling their promises. Although this is not a very prominent problem, it has been identified with multiple parents regardless of their economic situation. Parents' conviction that their presence in their children's education is a major way of training them has also inspired some parents to participate in their children's education. Acknowledging that children spend many years of their lives in school, parents try to influence their school environment. As unequivocally explained by both parents and teachers, children tend to be more interested and focused on their academic and extra-curricular activities when their parents are actively involved. Hence, their general attitude to education improves with their parents' increased participation. This confirms Turney and Kao's (2009) observation that children's attitude to education has a positive relationship with parental participation, seen in ways such as limited absenteeism and high scores in examination. Although many parents have busy schedule as portrayed in the demographic characteristics of participants, some parents' intrinsic motivation to train their children through their education find time to collaborate with the school in training their children. This supports Pomerantz et al.'s (2007) observation that some parents consider their involvement in their children's education as one of the ways of training and instilling confidence in them. It is also worth mentioning that some parents' participation has stemmed from their intention to keep an eye on the conduct of their children and the teachers during school hours. These parents have the proclivity to visit their children's schools uninvited or unannounced. In their view, such surprise visits to discuss their children's conduct with the teachers encourages both the children and teachers to exhibit their best selves. Such comportment they believe, leads to the development of positive attitudes which are crucial for their children's academic progress and overall development. While this is

not a common finding in existing studies and has been explained by some teachers as problematic, some teachers and parents seem to have no discontentment with it. According to them, for as long as the integrity of the teachers, schools' activities and children's progress are not compromised, it is not a problematic motivating factor.

The financial burden on some parents and its accompanying high cost of living has prevented some parents from spending much time on their children's education. This is as a result of some parents' preoccupation with their jobs in order to raise money which is needed to pay for children's school fees and other needs. This challenge has usually been faced by parents who are not in stable jobs and as such have limited funds. 75% of the Parents are engage in menial jobs and small-scale sectors which are not very lucrative have been compelled to work for extra hours, which limits their ability to help their children with their homework and also participate in school activities in which parents involvement is needed.

Hence the demand for education is determine by the level of socioeconomic status of the parents or guidance. This observation supports Sheng's (2012) assertion that parents' busy schedules impede their ability to support their children's education beyond the payment of fees. Beside the high cost of living, some parents' heightened compulsion to work extra hours has been necessitated by the high school expenses and the various materials required by children for effective learning coupled with their erratic income-earning capacities This finding is also in line with Gordon and Cui (2014) observation that the working poor parents usually have less time within which they can participate in children's education. A LSES parents confirmed that education was an economic good and further explained that:

"Series of unjustified absences from LSES due to: -lack of soap to wash the uniform to wear and go to school -lack of food to eat ,and go to school , -lack of uniform to wear and go to school,-lack of exercise book to copy the notes from the classroom. lack of money to consult a sick child"

Socioeconomic status of the parents influence the students presence in the classroom, the health of the student, nutrition and even their concentration in class.

A large number of LSES never accepted the title "social cases" as they are identified by the PTA presidents and the principals due to their PTA and registration fees free

Additionally, some parents are unable to actively participate in their children's education due to some factors being existent in the schools' environment. These factors are the negative attitudes shown by some teachers to parents and late notification of parents about changes in school programmes. Some teachers' negative attitudes have discouraged some parents from having direct communication with them, although the welfare of their children is of interest to them. This observation supports La Rocque, Kleiman, and Darling's (2011) position that the attitudes

shown by some teachers towards their students' parents influence their level of involvement in school activities. Furthermore, in instances where changes in the planned programmes in schools are not communicated to parents in a timely manner, some parents are unable to attend such programmes due to their inability to factor such changes in their itineraries. This problem is exacerbated by the busy schedules which some parents are compelled to endure due to the high cost of living. Structural barriers to parental participation in schools have also been found in other countries (Okeke, 2014; Watson et al., 2012). Some parents have been found to play limited role in their children's education as a result of their relegation of this responsibility to other activities that are of high priority to them. As explained mainly by teachers, parents who play limited role blame their passiveness on various excuses such as travels and ill-health. This attitude has not been shown by only poverty-stricken parents but wealthy but less educated ones as well. Such attitudes have usually been shown by parents who believe the responsibility of training children in the school rests on the shoulders of teachers who have been paid for that role. Parents with little education think that upon paying their children's fees and providing materials needed, their physical appearance is rarely felt in their children's school. This belief held by such parents is not an isolated issue as it has also been reported by Levine-Rasky (2009) that ideological differences between parents and teachers concerning parents' role in children's education limit some parents' participation in activities undertaken in their children's schools.

Finally, although some parents have keen interest in their children's academic performance and welfare in their school, their participation is inhibited by their low self-esteem as far as dealing with issues related to formal education. Some parents are reluctant to involve themselves in their children's education due to a feeling of inadequacy in helping as a result of their illiteracy. Such parents have usually been hesitant to participate in activities undertaken in the school, such as PTA meetings, social group events with parents and direct individual meetings with teachers. This supports Okeke's (2014) view that the fear of being victimized on academic issues Parental Participation in Children's... compromises some parents' willingness and ability to participate in their children's education. Furthermore, parents with low or no formal educational background feel they have limited role to play in helping their children in doing homework at home. This shows that parents' educational attainment is a crucial determinant of their participation in their children's education both at home and in school, confirming observations by Dor (2012) and Mncube (2010) that some parents feel they have limited role to play in their children's education. However, it contradicts Chowa, Ansong, and Osei-Akoto's (2012) position that parents who have low educational qualification play more roles on their children's school compound than those with

high educational background. This contradiction could be explained by the population of this study.

Parents presence in school motivate the students and the teachers leading to quality academic performance, there many aspect of effective involvement or participation by the parents such as asking whether the home work had been done. Enquiring whether there was assignment ,monitoring their children behavior and communication with the teachers , providing food and clothing are essential participation aspects. Parents effective presence at home keep order with the children and follow-up interaction and Television usage at home improve students academic performance

VI. CONCLUSION

Parental participation refers to the extent to which parents or guardians devote their resources such as time, finances and knowledge to help their children in their educational endeavours. It comprises all activities that are undertaken by parents regarding the education of children such as supervising children to do their homework and attending P.T.A programmes in their schools. Several factors are responsible for the level of parents' participation. This includes busy schedules of parents, poor cooperation from some teachers due the qualification of the teachers and the feeling of low self-esteem on the part of most LSES parents. The main issue here is parental involvement in their children's education is socioeconomic status(the level of parental education , the level of income ,the type of occupation and the parenting style) the parents resulting to inequalities in the society. As extensively explained teaching and learning leading to quality academic performance in education, a key barrier to parental participation originate from poverty and low standard of living by some parents. As a result, they are unable to devote much time to their children's education due to the long hours of work. This shows that income inequality among its numerous consequences, to an extent translate into inequality in parental participation. Considering that income inequality is high in Cameroon as a developing country, the persistence of such developmental anomaly will continue to inhibit some parents' ability to play active roles in their children's education. This paper will enlighten the protagonists of formal education of the importance of parental involvement to the entire formal education system. (especially the primary and secondary education where more care, protection and safety is needed from the parents , teachers and the learners as well as the PTA presidents to provide facilities to all the learners) The consequences of non parental involvement is poor academic performance leading to educational wastage of Cameroon

From the past knowledge and experiences, parental involvement is the key factor in quality teaching and learning in formal education as a whole. It is about the three protagonists(parents, teachers and the students) that lead to quality inputs and outputs. Educated parents are willing to volunteer to assist the children of less educated

parents and this can only take place when they are involved in the academic activities both at school and at home.

Considering that studies have shown that parental participation contributes to improve the scores of the children, it is crucial that efforts are made by parents, teachers and schools' authorities to overcome the barriers that impede parents' involvement. The achievement of this will promote communication and resultant healthy collaboration among parents and teachers as partners in children's education. Such healthy communication and relationship would encourage higher parental participation.

Implications

In order to promote parental participation, the following recommendations have been made. It is, however, noteworthy that promoting parental participation is not the sole responsibility of parents but teachers and school administrators as well. On the part of teachers and school administrators, they should encourage parents to actively participate in their children's education during the admission into the school, the parents should be awarded by the PTA for their effective participation in academic activities of their children and PTA meetings.

Some parents may be interested in getting more involved in their children's education, and may not know how best to do that if he is not informed by the school . Language barriers should be avoided when parents are involved in their activities in schools in order to encourage colossal participation by parents . By encouraging them, they get to understand the various ways through which they can be actively involved in children's education. School administrators should also try to include some parents in the planning of programmes and activities in which parents' attendance is expected.

Teachers should do their best to report the conduct of their pupils to their parents. This will keep parents informed about issues and be able to assist their children to desist from bad conduct and motivate them to repeat the good ones. Additionally, it communicates to the parents that their inputs are needed not only at home but also in school. It is also incumbent that teachers and school administrators accord all parents respect irrespective of their socioeconomic status On the part of parents, they should endeavor to pay their children's school fees on time and provide the basic items they need for school. When children's fees have not been paid, they become uncomfortable in class They should also find time to supervise children to do their homework and ensure that they study at home. Parents should also show interest in children's education by visiting the school to talk to their teachers and attending P.T.A meetings and other programmes. Additionally, they should support children not only in their academic work but also in extracurricular activities. Parent should also take notices sent to them from their children's school seriously and respond to them

accordingly. These notices could be meant for reporting a child's conduct to parents or inviting parents to school. Parents should therefore respond to such notices accordingly so that the purpose for which they were sent can be achieved. Parents should also consider their children's teachers as their partners in their children's education and respect. This means that the teachers have immense influence on the child. Furthermore, parents can only demand respect from teachers if they respect them.

The problem of income inequality and its associated economic hardship faced by some families should also be paid attention by the government through economic and educational policies. It is important for the government to create more opportunities through which people can improve upon their financial situation. Ways through which this can be achieved include raising the minimum wage from 36250frs to 75000frs, creating more jobs and providing subsidies on basic goods. Through such means, families' economic situation Parental Participation in Children's can be improved, and parents will not be compelled to work for extremely long hours, and thereby miss out on participating in their children's education. It is also incumbent on the government to regulate the fees charged by the various educational institutions especially in the private sector, through educational policy. This would relieve some parents of the pressures associated with high school fees.

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