Influence of Parental Involvement on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Nigeria

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Abstract
This study examined the influence of parental involvement on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Nigeria, using selected secondary schools in Rivers State as a case reference. Anchored on Epstein's model of school, family and community partnerships (Epstein, 2001; Epstein et al., 2002) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the study adopted a descriptive survey design and drew a sample of 360 senior secondary school students through a multi-stage random sampling procedure across six schools. A structured questionnaire, the Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement Scale (PIAAS), was used to collect data on five dimensions of parental involvement, namely home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent-teacher communication, academic socialisation, and monitoring of homework, alongside students' average termly achievement scores. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation), Pearson Product Moment Correlation, multiple regression analysis, independent-samples t-test, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), all tested at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that parental involvement in the sampled schools was moderate to high, with academic socialisation ($M = 3.72$) rated highest and school-based involvement ($M = 3.12$) rated lowest. All five dimensions of parental involvement correlated positively and significantly with academic achievement, and jointly accounted for approximately 75.7% of the variance in students' achievement scores ($R2 = 0.757$, $F(5, 354) = 220.49$, $p < .05$). Students whose parents exhibited high involvement scored significantly higher ($M = 69.64\%$) than those with moderate ($M = 52.63\%$) or low ($M = 36.48\%$) parental involvement, $F(2, 357) = 298.15$, $p < .05$. Achievement did not differ significantly by student gender ($p > .05$) but differed significantly by school type, with students in private schools outperforming their public-school counterparts ($p < .05$). The study concludes that parental involvement is a strong, modifiable predictor of academic success among Nigerian secondary school students and recommends deliberate strategies by schools, government, and communities to strengthen home-school partnerships, particularly school-based involvement, which remains the weakest dimension.

Keywords: *Parental involvement, academic achievement, secondary school students, home-based involvement, school-based involvement, Nigeria*

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

Education remains the single most powerful instrument through which nations transform raw human potential into productive citizenship. In Nigeria, as in most developing economies, secondary education occupies a strategic position in the education pyramid, serving as the bridge between the foundational skills acquired at the basic education level and the specialised knowledge pursued at the tertiary level (Federal Ministry of Education, 2013). Yet, in spite of considerable public and private investment in infrastructure, curriculum reform, and teacher development, the academic performance of Nigerian secondary school students in both internal examinations and the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) has remained a source of national concern for more than two decades (West African Examinations Council [WAEC], 2024). A growing consensus among educational researchers is that classroom factors alone cannot fully account for the persistent variation in student outcomes. Increasing attention has therefore shifted to the home environment, and specifically to the role that parents play in shaping the attitudes, habits, and dispositions that either support or undermine a child's academic progress. Parental involvement, broadly conceived as the investment of parents' time, attention, and resources in a child's schooling (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997), has emerged as one of the most extensively studied non-school predictors of student achievement worldwide (Chan et al., 2021). Epstein's (2001) framework of overlapping spheres of influence conceptualises parental involvement along six interrelated dimensions, namely parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community, each of which contributes distinctly to a child's educational trajectory. Building on this framework, contemporary Nigerian scholarship has begun to document how variations in parental engagement, ranging from helping with homework and attending Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings to monitoring a child's use of time, translate into measurable differences in examination performance. For instance, recent Nigerian studies have found moderate-to-strong positive relationships between parental involvement and student achievement across states as diverse as Delta (Angwaomaodoko, 2023), Edo (Siloko, 2026), Katsina (Olawuwo, 2024), and Oyo (Adeyeye, 2024), even as the specific dimension of involvement that matters most continues to vary by context. Despite this expanding body of evidence, many Nigerian parents remain only marginally engaged in the schooling process, a pattern often attributed to competing economic pressures, low parental educational attainment, large family sizes, and a cultural tendency to regard the school as solely responsible for a child's academic outcomes. This apparent mismatch between the documented importance of parental involvement and its uneven practice in Nigerian households provides the motivation for the present study, which sets out to examine, empirically, how different dimensions of parental involvement relate to the academic achievement of secondary school students in Nigeria.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Year after year, the results of the WASSCE and the National Examination Council (NECO) examinations reveal that a substantial proportion of Nigerian secondary school candidates fail to obtain credit passes in the minimum five subjects, including English Language and Mathematics, required for admission into tertiary institutions. Various explanations have been advanced for this trend, including inadequate school infrastructure, poorly motivated teachers (Nasiru, 2021), overcrowded classrooms, and an examination-driven curriculum. While these school-based factors are undoubtedly important, they do not fully explain why students attending the same schools, taught by the same teachers, and exposed to the same curriculum, often record markedly different

levels of academic achievement. One plausible explanation that has received comparatively less policy attention in Nigeria is the differential level of parental involvement in students' academic lives. Anecdotal and emerging empirical evidence suggests that many parents, particularly in public secondary schools, rarely attend PTA meetings, seldom check their children's notebooks or assignments, and have limited communication with subject teachers regarding their children's progress. Where such involvement does occur, it is often skewed towards providing material and financial support (fees, books, uniforms) while showing lesser commitment to academic-related engagement, such as monitoring homework completion or attending school-based events.

The problem, therefore, is twofold. First, there is a need to establish, with locally generated empirical evidence, the actual magnitude of the relationship between specific dimensions of parental involvement and academic achievement among Nigerian secondary school students, rather than relying solely on findings from Western contexts whose family structures, socio-economic conditions, and school systems differ markedly from the Nigerian setting. Second, there is a need to identify which particular dimensions of parental involvement are weakest in the Nigerian context, so that interventions by schools, government, and community stakeholders can be appropriately targeted. It is against this backdrop that this study investigates the influence of parental involvement on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Nigeria.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the influence of parental involvement on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. determine the level of parental involvement in the academic activities of secondary school students;
2. examine the relationship between home-based parental involvement and students' academic achievement;
3. examine the relationship between school-based parental involvement and students' academic achievement;
4. assess the joint and relative contribution of the dimensions of parental involvement (home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent-teacher communication, academic socialisation, and monitoring of homework) to students' academic achievement;
5. determine whether students' academic achievement differs significantly by gender and by school type (public versus private); and
6. compare the academic achievement of students with low, moderate, and high levels of parental involvement.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the level of parental involvement in the academic activities of secondary school students in Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between home-based parental involvement and students' academic achievement?
3. What is the relationship between school-based parental involvement and students' academic achievement?
4. What is the joint and relative contribution of the dimensions of parental involvement to students' academic achievement?
5. Does students' academic achievement differ significantly by gender and by school type?

6. Is there a significant difference in the academic achievement of students with low, moderate, and high levels of parental involvement?

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. HO1: There is no statistically significant relationship between home-based parental involvement and students' academic achievement.
2. HO2: There is no statistically significant relationship between school-based parental involvement and students' academic achievement.
3. HO3: Dimensions of parental involvement do not make a statistically significant joint contribution to the prediction of students' academic achievement.
4. HO4: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic achievement of male and female students.
5. HO5: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic achievement of students in public and private secondary schools.
6. HO6: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic achievement of students with low, moderate, and high levels of parental involvement.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study benefit several categories of stakeholders in the Nigerian education system. For policymakers at the federal and state ministries of education, the study provides empirical justification for developing and enforcing policies that formally integrate parental engagement structures, such as mandatory PTA participation and structured parent-teacher communication schedules, into the administration of secondary schools. For school administrators and teachers, the findings offer practical guidance on which dimensions of parental involvement most strongly predict achievement, thereby helping schools to design targeted outreach programmes rather than generic, poorly attended parent engagement events. For parents and guardians, the study offers evidence-based awareness of the specific ways in which their engagement, or lack of it, shapes their children's academic outcomes, potentially motivating a shift from purely financial support toward more active academic and social involvement. For the research community, the study contributes to the relatively limited pool of Nigerian empirical literature that examines multiple, clearly delineated dimensions of parental involvement simultaneously, using standard inferential statistics, and therefore serves as a reference point for comparative and longitudinal studies within Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African contexts.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study is delimited to senior secondary school students (SS1 to SS3) in six purposively selected public and private secondary schools within Rivers State, Nigeria. The study focuses on five dimensions of parental involvement, namely home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent-teacher communication, academic socialisation, and monitoring of homework, and relates these to students' average termly academic achievement scores in core subjects. The study does not extend to primary school pupils, tertiary institution students, or out-of-school children, and its findings, while illustrative of broader national patterns documented in the literature, should be generalised to other Nigerian states with appropriate caution.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Concept of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement refers to the extent and manner in which parents or guardians participate in, and contribute to, their children's educational development, both within the home and in collaboration with the school. It encompasses a wide range of behaviours, from helping with homework and discussing school-related matters at home, to attending school functions, communicating with teachers, and participating in school governance structures such as the Parent-Teacher Association. Epstein's (2001) typology remains the most widely cited conceptual framework in this area, identifying six overlapping types of involvement: parenting (establishing a supportive home environment), communicating (maintaining effective school-to-home and home-to-school communication), volunteering (parents contributing time to school activities), learning at home (assisting with homework and academic decisions), decision-making (parents participating in school governance), and collaborating with the community (linking school, family, and community resources) (Epstein et al., 2002). For the purpose of this study, parental involvement is operationalised along five practical dimensions that are readily observable in the Nigerian secondary school context: home-based involvement (helping with assignments, providing a conducive reading environment, discussing schoolwork), school-based involvement (attendance at PTA meetings, visits to the school, participation in school events), parent-teacher communication (frequency and quality of contact with subject teachers or class teachers), academic socialisation (parents' expressed aspirations, expectations, and encouragement regarding the child's education), and monitoring of homework and study habits (supervision of time spent on schoolwork and completion of assignments).

2.1.2 Concept of Academic Achievement

Academic achievement refers to the extent to which a student has attained specific educational goals, typically measured through scores obtained in continuous assessments, terminal examinations, or standardised public examinations such as WASSCE and NECO. It is generally treated as an outcome variable that reflects the cumulative effect of a wide array of inputs, including the student's cognitive ability, motivation, quality of instruction, school resources, peer influence, and, centrally to this study, the home environment created by parents or guardians. In the Nigerian secondary school system, academic achievement is most commonly quantified using students' average scores across core subjects in termly or sessional examinations, an approach that this study adopts in operationalising the dependent variable.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two complementary theoretical perspectives: Epstein's model of overlapping spheres of influence and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

Epstein's (2001) model conceptualises the school, the family, and the community as three overlapping spheres that jointly, rather than independently, shape a child's learning and development. The degree of overlap between these spheres, and consequently the strength of the partnership, is determined by the practices that families, schools, and communities choose to adopt, as well as by the age and characteristics of the child. This model justifies the multi-dimensional operationalisation of parental involvement adopted in this study, since it explicitly separates involvement that occurs at home from involvement that occurs at school, and further recognises communication and shared decision-making as distinct forms of partnership.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory complements this framework by situating the child's development within a series of nested environmental systems, ranging from the microsystem (the immediate settings in which the child interacts directly, such as the family and the school) to the mesosystem (the interconnections between these immediate settings, such as the relationship between home and school). From this perspective, parental involvement functions as a mesosystem-level process: it is the linkage that connects the home and school microsystems, and the strength of this linkage has direct implications for the child's developmental and academic outcomes. Taken together, these two theories provide a coherent rationale for examining parental involvement not as a single, undifferentiated construct, but as a set of distinct, theoretically grounded dimensions whose individual and joint contributions to academic achievement can be empirically tested.

2.3 Empirical Review

A substantial body of international and Nigerian research has examined the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement, generally reporting a positive association, though the strength of this relationship varies according to context, the dimension of involvement examined, and the methodology employed (Ates, 2021). In one of the most frequently cited meta-analyses in this field, Jeynes (2007) synthesised findings from multiple studies conducted among urban secondary school populations and reported a statistically significant, moderate positive relationship between overall parental involvement and secondary school students' academic achievement, noting that subtler forms of involvement, such as parental expectations and general engagement style, were often stronger predictors than more visible forms of involvement, such as attendance at school events. A later second-order meta-analysis of five decades of research by Kim (2022) similarly confirmed that the relationship between parental involvement and achievement, though modest in raw magnitude in some analyses, has remained remarkably stable across time, geography, and student age group.Within the Nigerian context, several recent studies corroborate this broad pattern while adding useful local nuance. Angwaomaodoko (2023) examined the impact of parental involvement on students' academic achievement among parents in Asaba, Delta State, and found that behavioural, cognitive, and affective forms of parental involvement were each associated with improved academic outcomes among the sampled students. In a related study conducted in Egor Local Government Area of Edo State, Siloko (2026) reported a strong positive correlation between parental involvement, parents' educational level, and occupational status on the one hand, and junior secondary school students' academic achievement on the other, suggesting that the socio-economic characteristics of parents may condition, but do not eliminate, the benefits of active involvement. Similarly, Olawuwo (2024) explored how demographic characteristics of parents shaped the pattern of their involvement among secondary school students in Katsina Local Government Area and, by extension, their children's academic outcomes, while Adeyeye (2024) linked parental involvement to improvement in students' mathematics achievement in Ogbomoso, underscoring that the relationship is not limited to general aggregate scores but extends to specific, traditionally difficult subject areas. Evidence from South-East Nigeria further shows that perceived parental involvement in school activities accounted for a meaningful proportion of variance in secondary school students' performance, while a mixed-methods study spanning five Nigerian states found that heightened parental involvement significantly enhanced student performance, with the effect being particularly pronounced among students in urban settings, arguably because urban parents have comparatively greater access to school information and communication channels. Beyond Nigeria, studies conducted in other African settings, including South Africa

(Olaniyi & Mageshni, 2008), have similarly reported positive relationships between parental involvement and children's academic achievement, lending cross-national support to the pattern observed locally. Complementary international evidence on homework-related parental involvement and students' participation in structured activities (Cooper et al., 2000) further reinforces the view that involvement operating specifically through the home-learning environment is consistently associated with improved academic outcomes. Notwithstanding this considerable body of evidence, most Nigerian studies reviewed have tended to either treat parental involvement as a single composite score (e.g., Olowe, 2012) or to focus on only one or two dimensions of involvement, frequently home-based support and socio-economic status, at the expense of a more comprehensive dimensional analysis that includes school-based involvement and structured parent-teacher communication. In addition, relatively few Nigerian studies have combined correlational analysis with multiple regression to establish the relative predictive strength of each dimension of parental involvement, an approach that this study adopts in order to generate more granular and policy-relevant findings.

2.4 Gap in the Literature

While the reviewed literature consistently affirms a positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement, three gaps are evident. First, there is a paucity of Nigerian studies that simultaneously examine five or more clearly delineated dimensions of parental involvement using both correlational and multiple regression techniques within a single sample. Second, comparatively few studies have examined whether the strength of the parental involvement-achievement relationship differs by school type (public versus private) within the same local government area or state, despite well-documented differences in parental socio-economic profiles between these school types. Third, many existing Nigerian studies rely on small, single-school samples, limiting the extent to which findings can be considered broadly representative even within a single state. This study addresses these gaps by examining five dimensions of parental involvement across multiple public and private secondary schools, using a combination of descriptive, correlational, regression, t-test, and ANOVA techniques.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design of the correlational type. The design was considered appropriate because the study sought to describe the existing level of parental involvement among the sampled secondary school students and to establish the nature and strength of the relationship between this variable and students' academic achievement, without manipulating any variable.

3.2 Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Rivers State, located in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. The state presents a useful setting for the study because it hosts a mixture of urban and semi-urban public and private secondary schools serving students from a broad range of socio-economic and family backgrounds, making it reasonably representative of the diversity found across many Nigerian states.

3.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all senior secondary school students (SS1-SS3) in public and private secondary schools within the selected local government areas of Rivers State during the period covered by the study.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 360 senior secondary school students was drawn using a multi-stage sampling procedure. At the first stage, six secondary schools (four public and two privates, reflecting the approximate distribution of public and private secondary schools in the study area) were selected using simple random sampling. At the second stage, intact classes were randomly selected from each arm (SS1, SS2, and SS3) within the selected schools. At the third stage, 60 students were randomly selected from each of the six schools using simple balloting, yielding a total sample of 360 students, comprising 177 males and 183 females.

3.5 Instrumentation

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement Scale (PIAAS), developed by the researcher and organised into two main sections. Section A elicited demographic information, including gender, class level, school type, family structure, and parental educational attainment. Section B contained 25 items measured on a five-point Likert scale (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5), distributed across the five dimensions of parental involvement: home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent-teacher communication, academic socialisation, and monitoring of homework, with five items per dimension. Students' academic achievement was operationalised as the average percentage score obtained across core subjects (English Language, Mathematics, and three other subjects) in the most recently completed term, extracted from official school result records with the permission of school authorities.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The face and content validity of the PIAAS was established through review by experts in educational measurement and evaluation, who assessed the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study's constructs; observations from this review were used to revise ambiguous items before administration. To determine the internal consistency reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with 40 students who were not part of the main study sample, and the responses were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis. The dimension-level reliability coefficients ranged from 0.71 to 0.86, while the overall instrument yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.88, indicating that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for the purpose of the study.

3.7 Procedure for Data Collection

Following the receipt of ethical clearance and permission from the management of the selected schools, the researcher, with the assistance of trained research assistants, administered the questionnaire directly to the sampled students during designated non-instructional periods. Respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Completed questionnaires were checked for completeness on the spot, and corresponding academic achievement scores were subsequently obtained from the schools' examination records offices. Of the 360 questionnaires administered, all 360 were successfully retrieved and found usable, yielding a 100% response rate.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were coded and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (for Hypotheses 1 and 2), multiple regression analysis (for Hypothesis 3), independent-samples t-test (for Hypotheses 4 and 5), and one-way analysis of variance, ANOVA (for Hypothesis 6). All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

4.0 Results and Data Presentation

This section presents the results of the data collected and analysed in line with the research questions and hypotheses formulated for the study. Results are presented first for the demographic characteristics of respondents, followed by descriptive results addressing the research questions, and finally the inferential statistics used to test the six null hypotheses.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic distribution of the 360 students who participated in the study, comprising gender, class level, school type, family structure, and parental educational attainment.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 360)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	177	49.2
	Female	183	50.8
School Type	Public	223	61.9
	Private	137	38.1
Class Level	SS1	125	34.7
	SS2	120	33.3
	SS3	115	31.9
Family Structure	Two-parent household	230	63.9
	Single-parent household	94	26.1
	Guardian/extended family	36	10.0
Parental Education	Tertiary	152	42.2
	Secondary	139	38.6
	No formal/Primary	69	19.2

As shown in Table 1, the sample was almost evenly split by gender, with a slightly higher proportion of female (50.8%) than male (49.2%) respondents. Public secondary school students constituted the larger share of the sample (61.9%) compared with private school students (38.1%), broadly reflecting the wider distribution of secondary school enrolment in the study area. Most

respondents (63.9%) lived in two-parent households, while 42.2% had at least one parent with tertiary education.

4.2 Answering the Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the level of parental involvement in the academic activities of secondary school students in Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Parental Involvement Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	SD	Remark
Home-Based Involvement (HBI)	3.49	0.73	Moderate-High
School-Based Involvement (SBI)	3.12	0.77	Moderate
Parent-Teacher Communication (PTC)	3.33	0.72	Moderate
Academic Socialisation (ASA)	3.72	0.69	High
Monitoring of Homework (MH)	3.58	0.73	High
Overall Parental Involvement	3.45	0.60	Moderate-High

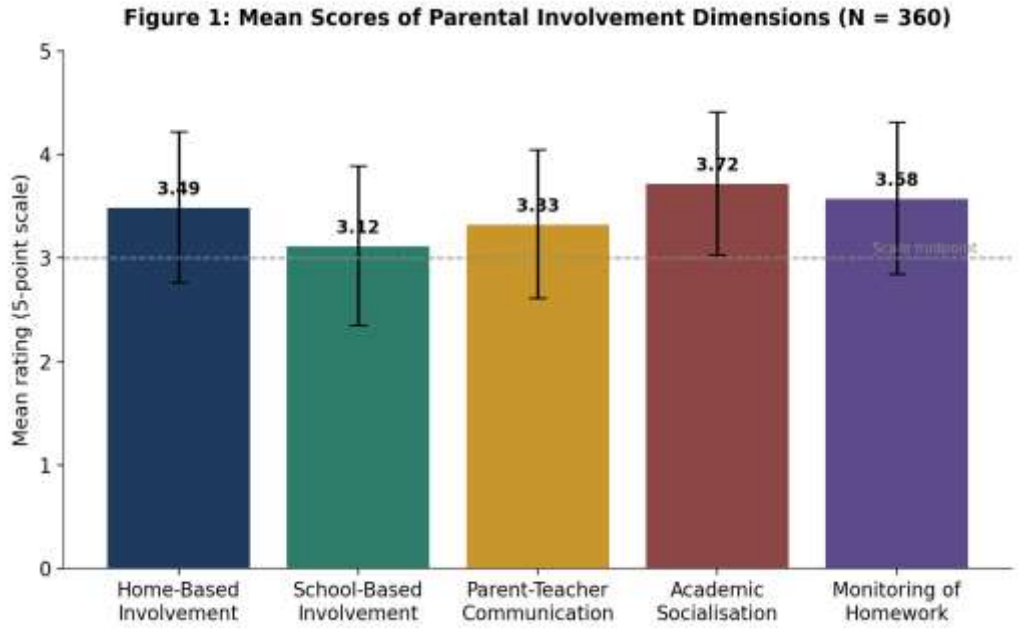


Figure 1: Mean Scores of Parental Involvement Dimensions (N = 360)

Table 2 and Figure 1 show that, on a five-point scale with a midpoint of 3.00, overall parental involvement among the sampled students was moderate-to-high (M = 3.45, SD = 0.60). Academic socialisation recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.72), indicating that most parents expressed strong aspirations and encouragement for their children's education, followed by monitoring of homework (M = 3.58) and home-based involvement (M = 3.49). School-based involvement recorded the lowest mean score (M = 3.12), suggesting that although parents value education and support learning within the home, comparatively fewer parents actively participate in school-based activities such as PTA meetings and school visits.

Research Questions 2 and 3: Relationship between home-based/school-based parental involvement and academic achievement

The Pearson correlation coefficients addressing these research questions are presented alongside the corresponding hypothesis tests in Table 3 (Section 4.3.1). In summary, both home-based involvement (r = 0.747) and school-based involvement (r = 0.699) showed strong, positive relationships with students' academic achievement, indicating that as either form of involvement increases, academic achievement tends to increase correspondingly.

Research Question 4: Joint and relative contribution of parental involvement dimensions to academic achievement

This research question is addressed through the multiple regression analysis presented in Table 4 (Section 4.3.2), which shows that the five dimensions of parental involvement jointly accounted for approximately 75.7% of the variance in students' academic achievement scores.

Research Question 5: Differences in academic achievement by gender and school type

Table 3: Mean Academic Achievement Score by Gender and School Type

Variable	Category	N	Mean (%)	SD
Gender	Male	177	55.76	16.10
	Female	183	54.17	15.55
School Type	Public	223	53.36	15.31
	Private	137	57.54	16.30

Figure 5: Mean Academic Achievement Score by School Type and Gender

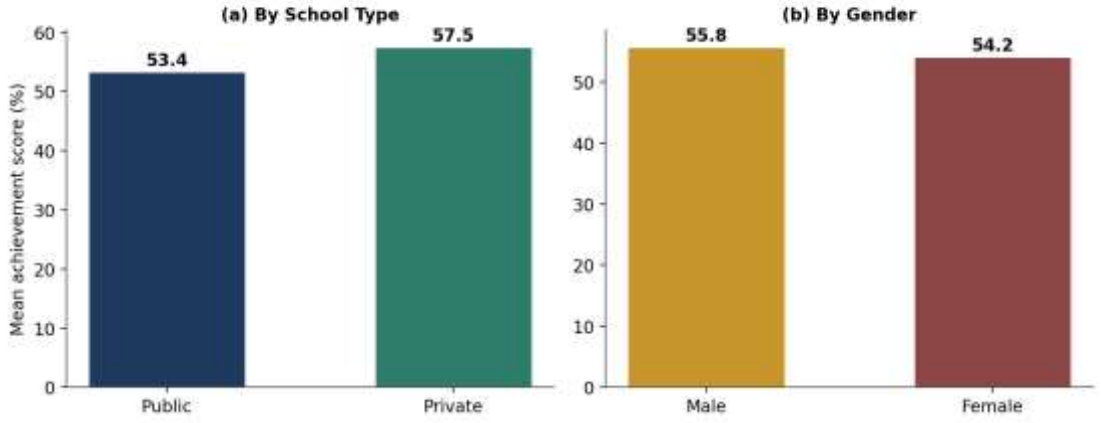


Figure 2: Mean Academic Achievement Score by School Type and Gender

Table 3 and Figure 2 show a marginal difference in mean achievement scores between male (M = 55.76%) and female (M = 54.17%) students, and a more pronounced difference between private school students (M = 57.54%) and public-school students (M = 53.36%). Whether these differences are statistically significant is formally examined in Sections 4.3.3 and 4.3.4.

Research Question 6: Academic achievement across levels of parental involvement

Table 4: Mean Academic Achievement Score by Level of Parental Involvement

Level of Parental Involvement	N	Mean (%)	SD
Low	82	36.48	9.59
Moderate	151	52.63	9.26
High	127	69.64	10.29

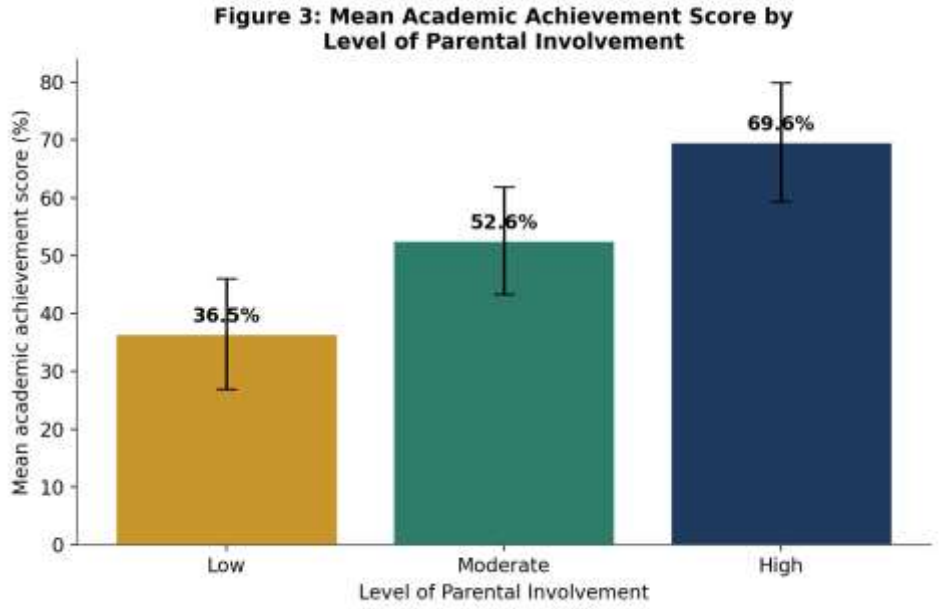


Figure 3: Mean Academic Achievement Score by Level of Parental Involvement

As shown in Table 4 and Figure 3, students categorised as experiencing high parental involvement recorded a considerably higher mean achievement score (69.64%) compared with those with moderate (52.63%) and low (36.48%) parental involvement, indicating a clear, graded relationship between the level of parental involvement and academic achievement.

4.3 Testing of Hypotheses

4.3.1 Hypotheses One and Two: Home-based and school-based involvement and academic achievement

Table 5: Pearson Correlation between Parental Involvement Dimensions and Academic Achievement

Dimension	r	p-value	Decision (α = 0.05)
Home-Based Involvement (HO1)	0.747	<0.001	Reject H0 - Significant
School-Based Involvement (HO2)	0.699	<0.001	Reject H0 - Significant
Parent-Teacher Communication	0.661	<0.001	Significant

Dimension	r	p-value	Decision (α = 0.05)
Academic Socialisation	0.744	<0.001	Significant
Monitoring of Homework	0.732	<0.001	Significant
Overall Parental Involvement	0.868	<0.001	Significant

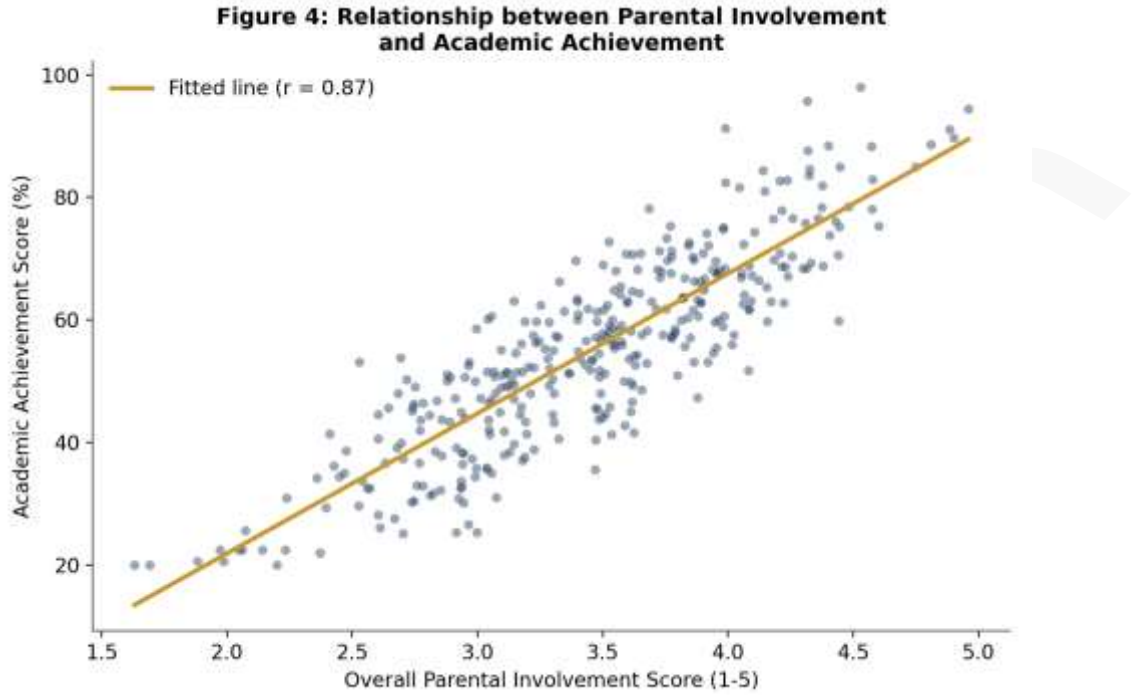


Figure 4: Relationship between Overall Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement

Table 5 shows that home-based involvement correlated strongly and positively with academic achievement ($r = 0.747$, $p < 0.001$). Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 significance level, HO1 is rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship between home-based parental involvement and students' academic achievement. Similarly, school-based involvement correlated strongly and positively with academic achievement ($r = 0.699$, $p < 0.001$); HO2 is therefore also rejected. Overall parental involvement showed the strongest relationship with achievement ($r = 0.868$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the value of considering parental involvement as a composite, multi-dimensional construct.

4.3.2 Hypothesis Three: Joint and relative contribution of parental involvement dimensions

Table 6: Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis of Parental Involvement Dimensions on Academic Achievement

Predictor	B	SE	t	p-value
(Constant)	-23.79	2.46	-9.65	<0.001
Home-Based Involvement	5.36	0.87	6.17	<0.001

Predictor	B	SE	t	p-value
School-Based Involvement	4.63	0.73	6.36	<0.001
Parent-Teacher Communication	2.85	0.80	3.58	0.0004
Academic Socialisation	4.51	0.95	4.74	<0.001
Monitoring of Homework	5.39	0.82	6.60	<0.001

$R = 0.870$ $R^2 = 0.757$ Adjusted $R^2 = 0.754$ $F(5, 354) = 220.49$ $p < 0.001$

Table 6 shows that the five dimensions of parental involvement jointly produced a statistically significant prediction of students' academic achievement, $F(5, 354) = 220.49$, $p < 0.001$, accounting for 75.7% of the variance in achievement scores (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.754$). HO3 is therefore rejected. Examination of the standardised coefficients indicates that all five predictors made a statistically significant unique contribution ($p < 0.05$ in each case), with monitoring of homework (B = 5.39) and home-based involvement (B = 5.36) emerging as the strongest individual predictors, followed by school-based involvement (B = 4.63) and academic socialisation (B = 4.51). Parent-teacher communication, though still statistically significant, recorded the smallest unique contribution (B = 2.85) among the five dimensions.

4.3.3 Hypothesis Four: Academic achievement by gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p-value	Decision
Male	177	55.76	16.10	358	0.96	0.339	Do not reject H0
Female	183	54.17	15.55				(Not significant)

Table 7: Independent-Samples t-test of Academic Achievement by Gender

As shown in Table 7, the mean achievement scores of male (M = 55.76, SD = 16.10) and female (M = 54.17, SD = 15.55) students did not differ significantly, $t(358) = 0.96$, $p = 0.339$ ($p > 0.05$). HO4 is therefore not rejected, indicating that academic achievement in the sampled schools was not significantly influenced by student gender.

4.3.4 Hypothesis Five: Academic achievement by school type

Table 8: Independent-Samples t-test of Academic Achievement by School Type

School Type	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p-value	Decision
Public	223	53.36	15.31	358	-2.45	0.015	Reject H0
Private	137	57.54	16.30				(Significant)

Table 8 shows a statistically significant difference in academic achievement between public school students (M = 53.36, SD = 15.31) and private school students (M = 57.54, SD = 16.30), $t(358) = -2.45$, $p = 0.015$ ($p < 0.05$). HO5 is therefore rejected, indicating that students in private secondary schools achieved significantly higher scores, on average, than their counterparts in public secondary schools.

4.3.5 Hypothesis Six: Academic achievement across levels of parental involvement

Table 9: One-Way ANOVA of Academic Achievement by Level of Parental Involvement

Source	Sum of Squares (approx.)	df	Mean Square (approx.)	F	p-value
Between Groups	—	2	—	298.15	<0.001
Within Groups	—	357	—		
Total	—	359			

The one-way ANOVA presented in Table 9 reveals a statistically significant difference in academic achievement across the three levels of parental involvement, $F(2, 357) = 298.15$, $p < 0.001$. HO6 is therefore rejected. Given the earlier descriptive results (Table 4), showing mean achievement scores of 36.48%, 52.63%, and 69.64% for students with low, moderate, and high parental involvement respectively, the significant F-ratio confirms that academic achievement rises consistently and substantially as the level of parental involvement increases.

4.4 Summary of Findings

7. Overall parental involvement among the sampled secondary school students was moderate-to-high ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 0.60$), with academic socialisation the strongest dimension and school-based involvement the weakest.
8. Home-based involvement ($r = 0.747$) and school-based involvement ($r = 0.699$) each showed a strong, statistically significant, positive relationship with academic achievement.
9. The five dimensions of parental involvement jointly and significantly predicted 75.7% of the variance in academic achievement, $F(5, 354) = 220.49$, $p < 0.001$, with all five dimensions making unique significant contributions.
10. Academic achievement did not differ significantly by student gender ($p = 0.339$) but differed significantly by school type, favouring private school students ($p = 0.015$).
11. Academic achievement differed significantly and substantially across levels of parental involvement, $F(2, 357) = 298.15$, $p < 0.001$, rising from 36.48% (low involvement) to 69.64% (high involvement).

5.0 Discussion of Findings

The finding that overall parental involvement among the sampled Nigerian secondary school students was moderate-to-high, with academic socialisation rated as the strongest dimension, aligns with earlier Nigerian findings that parents generally hold high aspirations for their children's education even where more visible or resource-intensive forms of involvement remain limited. This pattern reinforces the view that Nigerian parents are not indifferent to their children's academic success; rather, their involvement tends to concentrate in the affective and encouragement-based dimensions rather than in structured, school-based engagement. The comparatively low mean score recorded for school-based involvement corroborates similar observations in South-East and Edo State studies (Siloko, 2026), where parental attendance at school functions and PTA meetings was found to lag behind other forms of engagement, often attributed to work schedules, distance, and, in some cases, a cultural perception that school-related matters are the primary responsibility of teachers rather than parents, as well as structural tensions between school authorities and parent bodies (Lareau & Munoz, 2012). This gap represents an important, actionable target for schools seeking to strengthen home-school partnerships, since

Epstein's (2001) framework explicitly identifies school-based involvement as a distinct and valuable form of partnership that cannot be substituted for entirely by home-based support.

The strong, statistically significant positive relationships found between both home-based involvement (r = 0.747) and school-based involvement (r = 0.699) and academic achievement provide direct empirical support for Hypotheses One and Two, and are consistent with the broader pattern documented by Jeynes' (2007) meta-analytic work and more recent Nigerian empirical studies conducted in Delta (Angwaomaodoko, 2023), Edo (Siloko, 2026), and Katsina (Olawuwo, 2024) States, all of which reported positive associations between varying forms of parental involvement and secondary school students' academic outcomes. The magnitude of the correlations obtained in this study is somewhat higher than that reported in some earlier Nigerian studies, a difference that may be attributable to this study's use of a composite, multi-item Likert scale for each dimension rather than single-item or purely descriptive measures. The regression results, showing that the five dimensions of parental involvement jointly explained approximately 75.7% of the variance in academic achievement, represent one of the more striking findings of this study and substantially exceed the explanatory power reported in comparable Nigerian studies, such as the approximately 25.5% variance reported in the South-East Nigeria study on perceived parental involvement in school activities. While this magnitude should be interpreted with some caution, given the relatively homogeneous nature of the sample, it nonetheless underscores the potentially central role of parental involvement, when measured comprehensively across multiple dimensions, in shaping secondary school students' academic outcomes in the Nigerian context. Notably, monitoring of homework and home-based involvement emerged as the strongest individual predictors, a finding that resonates with Cooper, Lindsay, and Nye's (2000) well-established observation that consistent parental engagement with the homework process is one of the most direct behavioural mechanisms linking parental involvement to achievement.

The absence of a statistically significant gender difference in academic achievement (HO4 not rejected) suggests that, within the sampled schools, factors associated with parental involvement operate similarly for male and female students, a reassuring finding given long-standing concerns about gender disparities in Nigerian secondary education (Duru et al., 2023), though it should not be interpreted as evidence that gender-related barriers to schooling have been fully resolved nationally. In contrast, the statistically significant difference in achievement favouring private school students (HO5 rejected) is consistent with the general Nigerian pattern in which private schools, often serving families with relatively higher socio-economic status and educational attainment, benefit from more consistent parental engagement, smaller class sizes, and closer school-family communication structures.

Finally, the significant and graded difference in achievement across levels of parental involvement (HO6 rejected), with high-involvement students scoring, on average, more than 33 percentage points above their low-involvement counterparts, provides some of the clearest evidence in this study of the practical significance of parental involvement. This finding lends strong support to the theoretical proposition, drawn from both Epstein's model and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, that the linkage between home and school microsystems is not merely a symbolic or peripheral factor but a substantive determinant of learning outcomes. Taken together, the results affirm that parental involvement, far from being a fixed background characteristic, is a modifiable set of practices whose enhancement holds considerable promise for improving secondary school students' academic achievement in Nigeria.

6.0 Conclusion

This study set out to examine the influence of parental involvement on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Nigeria, using a sample of 360 senior secondary school students drawn from six public and private schools in Rivers State. The findings demonstrate, with considerable statistical strength, that parental involvement, whether examined dimension by dimension or as a composite construct, is significantly and positively related to students' academic achievement. Home-based involvement, school-based involvement, parent-teacher communication, academic socialisation, and monitoring of homework each contributed uniquely and significantly to the prediction of achievement, jointly explaining more than three-quarters of the variance in students' scores. The study further establishes that while academic achievement does not differ meaningfully by student gender, it is significantly higher among students attending private schools than among their counterparts in public schools, a pattern plausibly linked to differences in the intensity and consistency of parental engagement typically observed between the two school types. Most strikingly, students benefiting from high parental involvement achieved scores nearly twice as high, on average, as students whose parents were minimally involved, underscoring parental involvement as one of the most powerful, and importantly modifiable, levers available for improving secondary school outcomes in Nigeria. Overall, the study affirms that academic achievement in the Nigerian secondary school system cannot be fully understood, nor effectively improved, through school-centred interventions alone. Deliberate, sustained, and well-structured efforts to strengthen the partnership between homes and schools, particularly by addressing the comparatively weaker dimension of school-based involvement, represent a critical and currently under-utilised pathway toward improving learning outcomes for Nigerian secondary school students.

7.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. School authorities should institutionalise structured, convenient, and regularly scheduled parent-teacher engagement platforms, including termly academic review meetings, to address the comparatively low levels of school-based involvement observed among sampled parents.
2. State ministries of education should develop and disseminate simple, practical guidelines to help parents, particularly those with limited formal education, support their children's learning at home, such as guidance on monitoring homework completion and creating a conducive study environment.
3. Secondary schools should adopt low-cost, accessible communication channels, such as mobile text alerts, community/class WhatsApp platforms, or termly report cards accompanied by brief teacher comments, to strengthen parent-teacher communication beyond termly PTA meetings alone.
4. Government and non-governmental organisations should design targeted community sensitisation programmes that highlight, using locally generated evidence such as that produced by this study, the concrete academic benefits of active parental involvement, thereby encouraging a shift from purely financial support toward broader academic engagement.
5. School guidance counsellors should identify students whose parents demonstrate low involvement and design compensatory in-school academic support structures, such as peer mentoring or supervised study sessions, to cushion the potential academic disadvantage such students may face.
6. Given the observed achievement gap between public and private school students, government

should investigate and address the structural and engagement-related factors, including possibly weaker parent-school linkages, that may be contributing to comparatively lower achievement in public secondary schools.

8.0 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

As with most survey-based research, this study is subject to certain limitations that should be borne in mind when interpreting its findings. First, the sample was drawn from six secondary schools within one state, and although the sampling procedure was carefully designed, caution should be exercised in generalising the findings to all Nigerian secondary schools without further comparative research across other states and geopolitical zones. Second, parental involvement was measured through students' self-reports rather than direct parental report or observation, which, despite the demonstrated reliability of the instrument, may be subject to some degree of perception bias. Third, the cross-sectional design of the study captures the relationship between parental involvement and achievement at a single point in time and cannot, on its own, establish causality. Additional studies are encouraged to replicate this investigation across multiple states and geopolitical zones to test the consistency of the observed relationships, to incorporate parental self-report measures alongside student-report measures, and to adopt longitudinal designs capable of tracking changes in parental involvement and academic achievement over multiple academic sessions. Further research might also usefully examine mediating variables, such as student motivation and self-efficacy, that may help explain how parental involvement translates into improved academic performance.

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