

# Influence of Socio-Economic and Educational Background of Parents on their Children's Education in Nigeria

Ahmad Kainuwa\*, Najeemah Binti Mohammad Yusuf\*\*

\* M.Ed. Sociology of Education Candidate, School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia

\*\* Deputy Dean (Student Development and JIM), School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia

**Abstract-** This conceptual paper studies the influence of parent's socio-economic status and educational background on their children's education in Nigeria. The paper reviews literature on how socio-economic status and educational background of the parents affects the education of their children; examine the role of parents' socio-economic status and their educational background on the Educational process of their children. In addition, studies and researches from the previous works of scholars relating to the factors that influence children's Education were also analyzed and discussed throughout the paper. The discussion in the paper is base on the theoretical framework of conflict theory. This theory is appropriate for the study because it allows the reader to understand how children's education is significantly affected by the socio-economic status and educational background of their parents. Finally, Suggestions for parents on how to overcome personal and economic challenges and to help in the Educational process of their children were presented. Conclusions from the literature were drawn, and the paper concludes that Parents' educational and socio- economic backgrounds influenced the Education of their children.

**Index Terms-** Socio-economic Status, Educational Background, Parents, Children, Nigeria.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, family status variables such as socio-economic status and parents' level of education have been regarded as predictors of children's academic achievement. Increasingly, research has suggested that, rather than having a direct association with children's academic achievement, socio-economic status and parents' level of education is part of a larger constellation of psychological and sociological variables influencing children's school outcomes (Joan, 2009). Attendant on higher levels of education may be access to resources, such as income, time, energy, and community contacts, that allow for greater parental involvement in a child's education. Thus, the influence of socio-economic status and parents' level of education on student outcomes might best be represented as a relationship mediated by interactions among status and process variables (Joan, 2009).

The literature also suggests that level of education influences parents' knowledge, beliefs, values, and goals about

childrearing, so that a variety of parental behaviors are indirectly related to children's school performance. For example, higher socio economic status and high levels of education may enhance parents' facility at becoming involved in their children's education, and also enable parents to acquire and model social skills and problem-solving strategies conducive to children's school success. Thus, students whose parents have higher socio-economic status and higher levels of education may have an enhanced regard for learning, more positive ability beliefs, a stronger work orientation, and they may use more effective learning strategies than children of parents with lower socio-economic status and lower levels of education (Joan, 2009). With this information, it is important to note that parents are one of the most influential yet significantly underrated factors in their children's education, and society should encourage more parental participation in public education as it has been highlighted by most researches (Ramachandrant et al 2003; Palmer 2005; Verpoor 2005; Cooter 2006; Nannyonjo H. 2007; Hanushek 2007; Lynch 2009 Okummu et al 2008; cited in Robert Onzima 2010),

## II. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Students' academic achievement and educational attainment have been studied within different frameworks. Many of them have a focus on parents' education, occupation or home background (like; family income, language of the home, activities of the family and work methods), while other studies looked at it from the teachers' variables (such as teacher's age, experience, education, gender, etc), school variables (such as environment, structures, buildings, location, etc), students' variables (such as attitude, self-concept, self-esteem, study habit, interest, etc) or parents' support (such as achievement motivation of wards, parental attitudes towards education, the aspiration of parents, etc). There is evidence that parents' education will affect students' academic achievement in schools. According to Grissmer (2003) parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting students' academic achievement. Taiwo (1993) submits that parents' educational background influence the academic achievement of students. This, according to him, is because the parents would be in a good position to be second teachers to the child; and even guide and counsel the child on the best way to perform well in education and provide the necessary materials needed by the child. This was supported by Musgrave (2000) who said that a child that comes from an educated home

would like to follow the steps of his or her family and by this, work actively in his or her studies. He said further that parents who have more than a minimum level of education are expected to have a favored attitude to the child's education and to encourage and help him or her with school work. They provide library facilities to encourage the child to show examples in activities of intellectual type such as reading of newspapers, magazines and journals. They are likely to have wider vocabulary by which the children can benefit and develop language fluency.

Onocha (1985) concludes that a child from a well educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from an illiterate family. This is because the child from an educated family has a lot of support such as a decent and good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent feeding. He or she is likely to be sent to good schools where well seasoned teachers will handle his or her subjects. Children's academic achievement was found to be affected by varying family processes. Campbell and Wu (1994) said that the home environment and family processes provide a network of physical, social and intellectual forces and factors which affect the students' learning. According to them, the family's level of encouragement, expectations, and education activities in the home are related to socio-economic status, while Song and Hattie (2004) agreed that families from different socio-economic groups create different learning environments that affect the child's academic achievement. There is no doubt that parents' attitudes help to condition their children's attitudes. A parent who shows complete regard for education might have some effect upon his or her children's education progress. Many studies have examined the relationships among those constructs and students' achievement. Schunk, Pintrich and Meece (2008) affirm the fact that there is a consistent finding of motivation being related to achievement behaviors. In a nutshell the influence of socio-economic and educational background of the parents on their children education cannot be undermined.

### III. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The study is based on conflict theory which sees the purpose of education as maintaining social inequality and preserving the power of those who dominate society. Conflict theorists see the educational system as perpetuating the status quo by dulling the lower classes into being obedient workers. Conflict theorists agree that the educational system practices sorting, and argue that schools sort along distinct class and ethnic lines. According to conflict theorists, schools train those in the working classes to accept their position as a lower-class member of society. Conflict theorists call this role of education the "hidden curriculum."

Conflict theorists see education not as a social benefit or opportunity, but as a powerful means of maintaining power. They argued that teachers treat lower-class kids like less competent students, placing them in lower "tracks" because they have generally had fewer opportunities to develop language, critical thinking, and social skills prior to entering school than middle and upper class kids. When placed in lower tracks, lower-class kids are trained for blue-collar jobs by an emphasis on obedience and following rules rather than autonomy, higher-

order thinking, and self-expression. Likewise children from low socio-economic status will be given equal treatment as lower class kids in the school and society at large compared with those from high socio-economic status. They point out that while private schools are expensive and generally reserved for the upper classes, public schools, especially those that serve the poor, are underfunded, understaffed, and growing worse. Schools are also powerful agents of socialization that can be used as tools for one group to exert power over others – for example, by demanding that all students learn English, schools are ensuring that English-speakers dominate students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Many conflict theorists argue, however, that schools can do little to reduce inequality without broader changes in society (e.g. creating a broader base of high-paying jobs or equalizing disparities in the tax base of communities).

In the case of schooling and Educational Opportunities Weber and his followers believed that inequality of resources in society is the source of conflict and, that schools are ultimately linked to the kinds of economic opportunities individuals have. Conflict Theory and Education Schools play a vital role in legitimizing the inequalities and transmitting knowledge in accordance with the power elite's interests. Social class awareness, ethnical superiority and gender difference are transmitted via hidden curriculum. Language and culture is embedded within the formal curriculum. Power Elite controls the schools, religious communities and the media in order to maintain the social order.

### IV. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is:

1. To review literature on how socio-economic status and educational background of the parents affects the education of their children.
2. To examine the role of parents' socio-economic and educational background on the Educational process of their children.
3. To discuss about studies and researches from the previous works of scholars relating to the factors that influence children's education.
4. To explain how children's education is significantly affected by the socio-economic status and educational background of their parents.
5. To provide some suggestions for parents on how to overcome personal and economic challenges and to help in the Educational process of their children.

### V. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **How socio-economic status and educational background of the parents affects the education of their children.**

Parent's socioeconomic status and educational background are based on family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community (such as contacts within the community, group associations, and the community's perception of the family). Despite all the research and policy making, the relativity between those of high and low status from among the parents in relation to their children's' education is

widening rather than narrowing across educational achievement (Galindo-Rueda, Marcenaro-Gutierrez & Vignoles, 2004; Conger & Donnellan, 2007). It is believed that low SES and low Educational Background negatively affects academic achievement because they both prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home (Eamon 2005, Majoribanks 1996, Jeynes 2002).

According to a draft report of the Australian commission on health Krieger, Williams and Moss (2007) refer to socioeconomic position as an aggregate concept that includes both resource-based and prestige-based measures, as linked to both childhood and adult social class position from among the children. Akanle (2007) also mentioned Parental income in his work to be a strong factor upon which the academic and vocational successes of secondary and junior secondary school students lie. According to his investigation, parental income cannot be sufficient to sustain the academic and personal social life of the student in sub rural school areas. And this can seriously affects the psychological balance or homeostatic balance in the classroom, which causes low concentration, low perception, frustration, sickness and emotional disability in academic performance of the students and can also lead to dropping out or withdrawal. Therefore a child may be found to perform poorly in his school work and even drop out of school, when he is deprived of essential needs. This is consistent with Bugembe et al (2005) finding which suggested that child welfare at school is a determinant of child retention and also incorporates the rights of children to adequate living standards (shelter, nutrition and healthcare, water, and sanitation services) that are vital for child growth and development .Bugembe et al (2005) explained that In urban areas, most poor families can hardly afford the cost of water talk less of education of their children; and this can no dough lead to a low academic performance and high dropout rate.

The educational background on the other hand basically means the type of education acquired by an individual; it can be western or religious depending on the environment and geographical location. Educational background may be the number of schools attended and the type of certificates obtained right from primary to tertiary level. Research shows that pupils from families where parents have less education tend to systematically perform worse in schools than pupils whose parents have more education. According to Nannyonjo H. (2007) students from the educated parents who attended and finished senior four or senior 6 or university performed considerably better than the students with parents who did not finish primary or just finished primary school. Students whose fathers had university degree may likely expect to have the highest increase in test score. Similarly Okumu et al (2008) cited in Robert Onzima (2010) in a study of Socioeconomic Determinants of Primary School Dropout found that High academic attainment of the parents significantly reduces chances of primary school drop out for both boys and female children in rural and urban areas. Also educated parents are more concerned and more effective in helping their children in academic work. In doing so, they are also able to supervise and monitor their children's academic progress. And this can in no small measure contribute to the academic progress of children. But parents with low educational attainment mostly do not care to supervise their children

performance due to lack of sufficient knowledge to face the challenge and this will discourage the children and may lead to their dropping out of school (Ramachandran et al 2003; Palmer 2005; Verpoor 2005). Educational level usually creates differences between people in terms of access to information and the level of proficiency in benefiting from new knowledge, whereas income creates differences in access to scarce material goods.

In families where parents happen to experience difficulties in reading and writing continuously, there is a danger that low literacy is passed on to the next generation( Cooter, 2006).In another research Dearing et al. (2004); Cooter (2006) and Lynch (2009) put forward that the importance of literacy development stretches far beyond children's school achievements. Well-developed literacy ability is an important condition for children's development in other intellectual and social areas and vice-versa (Dearing et al., 2004; Patall et al., 2008).

### **The Role of Parent's Socio-economic and Educational Background on the Educational Process of their Children.**

In determining access to education by children, household income is found to be an important factor; this is because there are many costs associated with schooling and educational process ranging from school fees, uniform PTA fees and the opportunity costs of sending a female- child to school. Household income is linked to a range of factors: when children start school, how often they attend, whether they have to temporarily withdraw and also when and if they drop out (Barrera- Osorio et al; Glewwe & Chang 2010).The link between socio-economic and educational background of the parents and children educational process had been highlighted by number of studies in looking at the interaction between the children in particular and the household income and socio-economic status. All the studies agreed that children's 'enrolment, retention and completion can seriously be affected by the low socio-economic status and low educational level of the parents which resulted to poverty. (Porteus et al, 200; Gakuru cited in Ackers et al, 2001; Ranasinghe & Hartog, 2002; Vavrus, 2002;Hunter & May, 2003; Dachi & Garrett, 2003; UNICEF, 2005; Birdsall et al, 2005; Bruneforth, 2006; Cardoso & Verner, 2007; Guo & Zhang 2008; Zhao & Glewwe,2010; Wang 2010). Poverty could be regarded as 'the most common primary and contributory reason for many children to be out of school' (Glewwe, 2010) call poverty, 'a plausible explanation of school disruption'. According to Dachi and Garrett (2003) a Series of questions were asked to parents and guardians about the financial circumstances surrounding children's school enrolment in Tanzania their answers was no more than financial problem militating against sending their children to school. Wang (2010) also mentioned poverty as a contributing factor of children's dropout in rural areas of China.

Children from better off households are more likely to remain in school, whilst those who are poorer are more likely never to have attended, or to drop out once they have enrolled. This has been suggested by both statistical data and empirical research. For example, a research conducted in rural China by Glewe & Kreme (2006) saw 'poor and credit constrained children' three times more likely than other children to drop out of primary school. The links between wealth and school retention has been described in more detail by Colclough (2000) where he

stated that “amongst those out-of-school, the mean wealth index for school drop-outs was generally higher than for those who had never enrolled ... children at school were, on average, from better-off households than those who had dropped out, who were, in turn, from richer backgrounds than school-age children who had never enrolled”. Poor households tend to have lower demand for schooling than richer households: whatever the benefits of schooling, the costs, for them, are more difficult to meet than is the case for richer households. The pressure on children from poorer background in particular, to withdraw from school increases as they get older, particularly as the opportunity cost of their time increases (Colclough et al, 2000: 25). In African traditional societies including the study area, several studies indicated that the children’s schooling has been found to have links with socio-economic factors. According to Barrera-Orsorio et al, (2008) the most important of these factors include direct and opportunity costs of schooling, limited employment opportunities, socio-economic status, parental and family investment behavior, the economic value of girls, rural and urban residence, and the level of parental education.

The major reasons parents offer for not educating their children or for removing them from the school are no more than the fees for registration and admission, examination, Parent Teachers Association (PTA) fees, the cost of books and uniforms, the provision of other daily monetary demands to their daughters, and the cost of transportation to and from the school on daily basis. These reasons have been discussed from several perspectives. Graham-Browne (1991) and Nejema (1993) argue that low socio-economic status which include poverty and the fiscal crises which force families to cover shortfalls have a devastating impact on household’s and the education system as far as children’s education is concerned. Glewwe & Chang et al (2010) link the severity of direct costs with the shift of educational costs to parents in the name of cost sharing. It has been mentioned earlier that in Nigeria, about 7.3 million children are out of school and 62% of the total population is female children mostly due to poverty of their households (UNICEF, 2004). In general, several studies suggest that the direct costs or financial constraints affected children and lead to their low participation in schools.

Fizbe & Shady (2009) observed that the opportunity costs of schooling are associated with labor shortage, resources and services lost due to sending children to school. Child labor is Indispensable to the survival of many rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa: agricultural work, domestic work (cooking, collecting fuel, fetching water) marketing as well as child care services are required from children. The need for domestic labor has grown also with the rapid growth of urban areas. Poor rural parents responded by sending their children into the domestic labor market in exchange for regular cash income Kukreti & Saxena v(2004) cited in Kotwal N Neelima & Rani S (2007) Dorsey (1989) refers to a Zimbabwean experience where the economic value of girls takes priority over education.

The relationship between certain household characteristics, poverty and school enrolment has been Empirical evidence from other countries is rich and the main results seem to be in agreement with a priori expectation of a close link between poverty and female student’s dropout. Although the list is by no means exhaustive, the works of Carter (2000), Cockburn (2001)

Parker & Pederzini (1999), Handa *et al.* (2004), Kurosaki & Khan (2001), Oxaal (1997), and World Bank (2004) are among recent researches from outside Nigeria documenting the links between childrens’ education attainment, enrolments, retention completion and household characteristics and poverty (Garba T & Sanda A, 2007). The research conducted by Ahmad Sanda and Tukur Garba (2007) based on data collected from 600 rural households of Sokoto State, Nigeria provided an empirical evidence on the extent to which poverty and household demographic characteristics may affect educational attainment and school attendance of children. The results confirmed significant gender disparity in educational attainment and school attendance, with female children at a serious disadvantage.

Base on the fore going discussions of statistical data and empirical researches in the reviewed literatures, it could be evidently agreed that the socio-economic status and financial well-being of the family greatly affects the participation of children in schooling and minimize the high level of dropout in Nigeria.

Educational Background of the parents on the other hand is found to be another influential factor on their children’s’ education. According to Ersado (2005), educational level of household members is influential particularly on children and it determines their access to schooling. The notion is widely accepted as the most consistent determinant of child education. Also higher parental or household head level of education is associated with increased access to education. (Ainsworth et al, 2005; Al Samarrai & Peasgood, 1998; Ersado, 2005; Connelly & Zheng, 2003; Grant & Hallman, 2006; Hunter & May, 2003; Duryea, 2003; Rose & Al Samarrai, 2001; Seetharamu, 1984 cited in Chugh, 2004). Parental education and retention in school has been linked together by putting forward many reasons and opinions of scholars. It has been observed that non-educated parents cannot provide the support or often do not appreciate the benefits of schooling (Juneja, 2001; Pryor & Ampiah, 2003).

According to Al Samarrai and Peasgood, (1998: 395).the probability of girls enrolling in primary school can be increased by 9.7% and secondary by 17.6% by her married mother’s primary education and it has no significant effect on the enrolment of boys. They claim that educated mothers giving preference to girls’ schooling, implies that ‘mothers have a relatively stronger preference for their daughters’ education and that their education affords them either increased household decision-making power or increased economic status. Glick and Sahn’s (2000) results was in line with Al Samarrai and Peas good (1998) when conducting a research in an urban poor environment in West Africa. The outcomes of his research favored the female children by relating the improvements in fathers’ education to the schooling of both sons and daughters. But mothers’ education has significant impact only on daughters’ schooling. In order to bolster sustained access to education for many children, Ersado (2005) suggests the provision of adult education programmers to counter the educational deficit facing many households. Yet, this might not be enough.

#### **Discussions on the previous works of Scholars relating to the Factors that influence children’s Education.**

Many factors have positive or aversive influence upon a child’s education. To optimize the positive influencers and limit

the negative influencers one must first understand the primary factors that come into play with regard to education. One of the most important influencers in education is worldview. Worldview comes into the equation from a variety of sources. Every curriculum, text book, and teacher has a worldview that influences the students. Parents need to identify what that worldview is and whether or not it is healthy for their children. One worldview can lean towards a disregard for education in and of itself, whereas another can challenge students to love learning in whatever form throughout their entire lives. One worldview can promulgate philosophy that hinders personal growth and restricts the students from experiencing true life whereas others can free them thereby preparing them to mature into their destiny. Thus, worldviews are instrumental in education whether they are good influencers or not so good (Karla Perry, 2010).

Parents are also of primary influential importance. If children do not have the support of parents who value their education and help challenge them to learn, do their homework, pay attention in class, etc. they will not adopt the necessary drive to become well educated. Parents cannot relegate the education of their children to the school system, whether public or private. They need to be actively involved in the process of their children's education and maintain a high value for academic excellence. Just the same, a negative parental influence can be as much about over involvement as it can be about under involvement. If the parent rides the children to such great lengths that they begin to abhor education there is a problem. There needs to be a healthy support, not a lack of support or an over exertion of parental authority pushing children to their exhaustion. Peers are another factor in gaining an education. If the child has trouble socializing or has friends that are bad influences they could be under achieving due to peer pressure. Also they could become distracted by the values of the peers away from education. It is important for parents to know the friends of their kids and help their children navigate through any problems (Yusuf 2008).

The school system itself can have a positive or negative influence. For instance, if the child dislikes the school they may dislike education in general which could cause lasting problems. Parents can help by listening to their child and find out why there seems to be a disinterest in learning or a dislike for the school. Not every school is for every child. Not every method of learning works for every child. Some need one on one help. Others thrive best in a class room full of children. Some need a structured environment and some need a creatively free environment. Pay attention to what is the real issue hindering the child's education and a solution will become more obvious (Warou, 2006).

The aforementioned influences are an overview of a few big impact influencers that one needs to pay attention to when making educational decisions for children. These factors can even affect college age youth or adults. They are the big picture factors that can make it or break it for getting a good education. Many problems can be avoided by examining the environment, the worldview, and the parental involvement and make sure it is of optimum health for the student. There will always be factors influencing education, but careful navigation can thwart unwanted influences and maximize the desired ones increasing the smooth sailing of the educational experience.

Education covers a number of elements of life, not only what we generally think of as the progress through school and college. These include; attitudes of various people, money, peer behavior and cultural expectations among others. Attitudes to education vary. Parents either have expectations of their child that it will do its best or they are passive in their understanding of education. These ideas can come from the parents' experience of a good education and the benefits it can bring or they can come from healthy ambition not based on personal experience but expecting much from the schools. Again it can come from not believing that education for its own sake is worth anything. In this case it is an unusual child who can overcome this (Rosemary Redfern, 2010).

Education can be enhanced by the parents with visits to museums and interesting places, with exposure to more than the work in school such as books, theaters and films. Part of the parental job is to extend the child's horizons by offering experiences which broaden the child's understanding of the world. The attitudes of teachers can influence children. Most people have experienced a teacher who loved their subject and inspired their classes and many have come across teachers who are ineffectual and uninteresting. Peers have an influence, especially with boys, because they can bully or tease a boy who wants to work at school, treating him as someone who does not belong to the current male culture of the group. Being an outsider is always difficult and it is easy to succumb to such pressure. This is why there is often a problem for able youngsters, who naturally want to belong (Bada, 2003).

However, there are some environments which are actively against education, unable or refusing to see what benefit it can offer. If a child comes from this sort of background it is hampered in making use of what is available. Money is a factor in education. A family which is struggling with everyday needs does not have the money to take the children out and give them experiences, nor can they buy all the supplies the child needs. An affluent family might have the money available but not have the will or understanding of how to use it to help the child.

The emotional development of the child is an important factor in education. A child who has not established some confidence will not believe they can do well and not make the necessary effort. Some success in school can also do wonders for the child's confidence. Confidence can also influence student's approach to college level education. A level of emotional stability is needed to make the best use of educational experiences. Education appears to be straightforward but there are many factors which affect what use is made of it (Bada, 2003).

### **How children's education is significantly affected by the Socio-economic Status and Educational background of their parents.**

Significantly, children's education was affected with the level of education of their parents and it is reflected in the high aspirations of the more educated for the education of their own children. Father's and mother's educational aspirations were found to be the two most consistent factors affecting the children's' education, and this is evidenced in a research conducted on 1,700 husbands and wives in urban and rural areas of Ghana (Cochrane, Mehra, & Osheba, 1985). In another survey

conducted by Yeoman (1985) on a sample of 346 dropouts, 83% of the researches counted parental interest and encouragement among the major factors of children's enrolments and retention in schools. Children with families where parents have less education and low socio-economic status tend to systematically perform worse than children with families where parents have more education and high socio-economic status.

Income shocks do not only affect investment in children's education but also children's performance. When families are constrained by fewer resources, children's learning is consequently affected (Bjorkman M.2005). According to Alisa (2010), Children's test scores are lowest when poverty persist across the generations, and highest when material advantage is long-lasting. On the other hand, while good social skills also appeared to be linked across generations, these do not make a significant direct contribution to the current gap in cognitive test scores between rich and poor children. Alisa found that the gap in attainment between children from the poorest and richest backgrounds grew particularly fast during the primary school years. By age eleven, only around three-quarters of children from the poorest fifth of families reached the expected level at Key Stage 2, compared with 97 per cent of children from the richest fifth. according to Alisa, Poorer children who performed well in Key Stage tests at age seven were more likely than better-off children to fall behind by age eleven, and poorer children who performed badly at seven were less likely to improve their ranking compared with children from better-off backgrounds – an important factor behind the widening gap. Akanle, (2007) identified Parental income in his work to be a cogent factor upon which the academic and vocational successes of secondary school students lie. He found Parental income not to be sufficient to sustain the academic and personal social life of the student in sub rural school areas. This to a large extent affects the psychological balance or homeostatic balance in the classroom, which causes low concentration, low perception, frustration, sickness and emotional disability in academic performance of the school children. Therefore when a child is deprived of the essential needs he may be found to perform poorly in his school work. This is consistent with Bugembe et al (2005) finding that child welfare at school is a determinant of child retention and also incorporates the rights of children to adequate living standards (shelter, nutrition and healthcare, water, and sanitation services) that are vital for child growth and development. Bugembe explained that In urban areas, most poor families can hardly afford the cost of water, resulting in children from poor families being sent on long treks in search of water, often having to stand in long queues and consequently being late or absent from school.

### **Suggestions for parents on how to overcome personal and economic challenges and to help in the Educational process of their children.**

Most research that has been done on parental involvement in schools shows that low-income families are less involved in their children's education, and because of this lack of participation, their children are less likely to be successful in school. Considering this statement, Government and society should focus on how to alleviate some of the stress in the lives of these families, and how to help students of all backgrounds thrive

in school. One idea that has already been proposed is the concept of establishing workshops to develop the relationships between parents and their children. These workshops could help parents of lower-incomes and of less privileged educational backgrounds to learn how to help their children succeed in school. Ann (1993) writes, "During the last decade, educators and policy makers have become increasingly interested in the notion that educationally disadvantaged parents and children are a learning unit and that family and intergenerational literacy programs are a promising approach to supporting parents in their role as first teachers." Programs, such as these, not only help parents learn how to teach their children, but they also put an emphasis on the importance of parental involvement in the public school system. Parents would be learning how to be good teachers, and additionally they would discover the hardships of being a teacher and perhaps become more willing to work with their children's teachers, instead of against them. There have also been programs suggested specifically for mothers and ways they can improve their children's education. In his research, Ann (1993) found that "the Intergenerational Literacy Action Research Project (ILAR) conducted by Wider Opportunities for Women, involved mothers participating in community-based programs that provide women with basic-skills instruction and job training. The study revealed that 65 percent of the children benefited from their mother's participation in the adult education and training programs." Although this type of program may seem time-consuming, the benefits received after the process greatly outweigh the initial costs. The burden of attending classes on how to be a good first teacher to your children dissipates as soon as a child is excited about learning.

Another solution to the challenges of parents, which may seem oversimplified, is returning to reading to children every night instead of watching television or playing video games. Sclafani (1984) says, "A parent should begin reading to a child as soon as possible...Books provide interesting visual stimuli to infants, which forms the basis for future interest in books and reading. Keeping a child in age-appropriate books is one of the best investments any parent or grandparent can make." Today, there is more and more emphasis on the use of television, video games, and computer games in the education of children and less and less emphasis on the simple act of reading. Parents need to go back to the basics of "providing a warm, supportive home environment that supports exploration and self-directed, autonomous behavior, and that will greatly increase the chances of having an academically successful child." An emphasis on the parental involvement in education is the key to their children's successful education because they are their first teachers, and therefore establish the beginning of the learning process.

## VI. CONCLUSION

One of the biggest problems with children in today's society is youth apathy. Parental involvement in school can help solve this problem by emphasizing the importance of a good education, and getting their children excited about learning. "For most children to succeed in school, their parents' interest in their learning is of paramount importance. But this interest ought to be with what happens on a daily basis, because this is how the child lives, and this is how he understands his life. The essential

ingredient in most children's success in school is a positive relation to his parents." (Bettelheim, 1987) Parents' personal educational backgrounds and economic backgrounds have a significant effect on their children's education. However, if parents are a positive influence in their Children's everyday lives, and most importantly in their everyday education, the future of our society will look brighter and brighter every day.

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#### AUTHORS

**First Author** – Ahmad Kainuwa, M.Ed. Sociology of Education Candidate, School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, ahmadkainuwa@yahoo.com  
**Second Author** – Najeemah Binti Mohammad Yusuf (PhD), Deputy Dean (Student Development and JIM), School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia, najineen@usm.my