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INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON AVOIDANCE AND APPROACH GOAL ORIENTATION AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MINNA METROPOLIS, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Parental involvement is a crucial factor in shaping students' academic experiences and outcomes. However, there is a growing concern that many senior secondary school students in Nigeria lack adequate parental involvement in their academic pursuits, potentially hindering their academic goal orientation. This study therefore, sought to examine the influence of parental involvement on academic goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria. Two research questions were generated and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The research employed a descriptive survey design with a sample of 375 students selected through multi-stage sampling from 41,815 students across 42 public secondary schools representation. Data were collected using the adapted items on Parental Involvement and Academic Goal Orientation Questionnaire (PIAGOQ), a validated instrument with reliability coefficient of 0.74 was used. The study examined two dimensions of goal orientation: avoidance, and approach. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (Simple Linear Regression) at 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed that parental involvement significantly influenced all dimensions of academic goal

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orientation (avoidance and approach). All the two null hypotheses were rejected, confirming statistically significant influences. The study concluded that parental involvement represented a powerful influence on students' academic goal orientation. The study recommended that parents should maintain active involvement in their adolescent children's Education, Schools should develop comprehensive parental involvement programs, Educational policymakers should incorporate parental engagement into educational policies, and counselors should assess and address students' goal orientation patterns.

Introduction

Parental involvement in their children's education can take many forms, including participation in school boards, genuine interest in their children's academic progress, and regular attendance at parents' meetings to discuss their children's grades and other academic matters. Following up with their children's subject instructors is another way for parents to get involved and find out where their children are struggling (Kim & Sheridan, 2023). The fact that parents reach out to their children's teachers in cases of student failure demonstrates their dedication to their children's education and fosters a stronger bond between the two parties.

Good parenting at home includes providing a safe and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, positive role models for social and educational values, and high goals for personal fulfillment and good citizenship. Good parental involvement also includes maintaining regular communication with schools to share information, attending school events, helping out with school projects, and even being involved in school governance (Chophel & Choeda, 2021).

According to Wolniak and Engberg (2019), students' academic goal orientation may provide light on the ways in which their learning context, learning environment, and personal traits impact their behavior in terms of both learning and accomplishment. Situations like achievement-and performance-focused evaluations and testing might impact their cognition, mood, and behavior depending on the nature of their aim. Goal orientation is defined as a conceptual framework that governs how individuals approach circumstances involving success by Olagundoye and Adebile (2019). According to Zhang and Wang (2024), students who have a performance-avoidance goal orientation try to shield themselves from criticism as much as possible, whereas students with a performance-performance goal orientation actively seek out good feedback about how they are doing in comparison to others. The sense of fulfillment that comes from accomplishing one's objectives is another definition of goal orientation. A person's

personal standards are the criteria by which they judge their own achievement (Chen & Liu, 2023).

Research consistently demonstrates that approach goal orientations are associated with more adaptive patterns of cognition, motivation, emotion, and behavior compared to avoidance orientations (Senko & Dawson, 2021). Approach-oriented students show greater engagement with academic tasks, as they perceive tasks as opportunities rather than threats. They demonstrate more effective self-regulation, setting positive standards, monitoring progress toward goals, and persisting through challenges (Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 2021). Approach goals generate positive activating emotions—feelings that energize behavior and facilitate cognitive processing—whereas avoidance goals generate anxiety and worry that can interfere with concentration and performance (Pekrun & Stephens, 2021).

Studies examining academic outcomes find that approach goals, particularly mastery-approach goals, consistently predict positive achievement outcomes including higher grades, better test performance, and greater course completion rates (Huang, 2021). Performance-approach goals also predict achievement in many contexts, though sometimes at psychological costs such as reduced well-being and intrinsic interest. The achievement benefits of approach goals appear to operate through promoting effective learning strategies, sustained engagement, and persistence (Cera *et al.,* 2021). In Nigeria, parents' active participation in their children's education is being more acknowledged, especially at the senior secondary level, when students are making important life decisions including choosing a major and taking standardized tests (Ogunleye, 2018). But many Nigerian parents struggle to be involved in their kids' schooling owing to things like cultural differences, lack of education, and hectic schedules (Adeyemi, 2016).

Academic performance is often used as a yardstick to evaluate the effectiveness of a school. Everyone from parents and teachers to psychologists and guidance counsellors has grown increasingly concerned about pupils' academic performance over the years. Everyday coping skills are necessary because most students will face problems, obstacles, changes, and uncertainty as they go about their academic lives. Anyone can see that parents should be involved in their children's school lives; after all, it is the parent's responsibility to shape their child's character and help them reach their full potential. Parents' active participation in their children's life may have a significant impact on their children's ability to identify and achieve both immediate and distant objectives (Cera *et al.,* 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Academic motivation and goal orientation are important factors in students' engagement, persistence and ultimately academic success. Numerous studies have

shown that when parents are actively involved in their children's education, it greatly improves their children's academic performance. Academic goal orientation is the reason why a student actively participates in academic activities. It can be divided into two groups: People who are primarily interested in learning and development (mastery goal orientation) and people who are primarily interested in demonstrating their skills (performance goal orientation). Studies have revealed that these orientations to goals have a strong impact on intrinsic motivation, pedagogical practices, and marks. Although student goal orientation and parental involvement in classrooms are generally recognized as a factor of great importance, there has been a dearth of studies that investigate their effect in the Nigerian classroom. The impact of student goal orientation and parental involvement in classrooms has received little attention despite their importance (Mala & Muhammad, 2023). An understanding of this influence is crucial to promote adaptive academic goal orientations and increase academic motivation for the senior secondary school pupils in Niger State. This study examined the parents involvement and its impact on secondary school pupils goal orientations in Minna metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria, and how it was able to fill this gap in knowledge.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the Influence of Parental Involvement on Avoidance and Approach Goal Orientation among Senior Secondary School Students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. Specifically, the study sought to:

i. Examine the influence of parental involvement on approach goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.
ii. Determine the influence of parental involvement on avoidance goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

i. What is the influence of parental involvement on approach goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?
ii. What is the influence of parental involvement on avoidance goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at 0.05 significance level.

Ho_i: There is no significance influence of parental involvement on approach goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

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Hoii: There is no significance influence of parental involvement on avoidance goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Materials and Methods

The descriptive survey design was used in the study. The descriptive survey research design is the most appropriate one because it allows the researcher to study the nature, extent and pattern of parental involvement in the academic goal orientations of senior secondary school students without manipulating any of the variables in the study in order to get a general description of the phenomenon and thus the picture of the phenomenon as it occurs naturally in the real educational context.

The total population of this study is all the Senior secondary school (SS I, SS II and SS III) students in public secondary schools in Minna Metropolis, Niger State, Nigeria. The total population in this study is 41,815 students of senior secondary schools in 42 public secondary schools in Minna metropolis of Niger State, Nigeria. The population consists of 16,817 SS I students (40.2%), 13,696 SS II students (32.8%), and 11,302 SS III students (27.0%). The drop in students' population from SS I to SS III is a consequence of drop-out, transfer and grade repetition, which is common in secondary schools of Nigeria (Adeoye & Emeke, 2022). The Bosso educational zone has the highest number of students (9,418 learners or 22.5% of the total), followed by Maitumbi educational zone that has the lowest (4,891 students or 11.7% of total). The difference in population distribution in zones is attributed to the difference in level of urbanization, capacity of school, infrastructure development and demography of Minna metropolis. 381 questionnaires were administered and 6 were invalid while only 375 were valid upon returned. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation was based result from 375 senior secondary school students across 18 public secondary schools in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Structured questionnaire, which is developed by the researcher with the title of "Parent Involvement and Academic Goal Orientation Questionnaire (PIAGOQ)" has been used as an instrument for data collection in this study. The most appropriate instrument for this study is a questionnaire because it will be able to gather data from the respondents who are a large sample of respondents in a relatively short period of time, will maintain anonymity and provide a sense of security to the respondents to be able to answer sensitive questions, and will be able to analyze the data quantitatively in order to understand the relationship between the variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Data obtained by using PIAGOQ were analyzed statistically. Demographic information of the respondents was presented in terms of frequency counts and percentages, mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and inferential technique of Simple Linear Regression was used for testing the four null hypotheses. This statistic is

to assess the strength and direction of the linear relationships between parental involvement and type of each goal orientation.

Results and Discussion

This section presented the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the questionnaire administered. 381 questionnaires were administered and 6 were invalid while only 375 were valid upon returned. Therefore, the analysis and interpretation was based result from 375 senior secondary school students across 18 public secondary schools in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents (N = 375)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	176	46.9
	Female	199	53.1
Age Range	14-15 years	98	26.1
	16-17 years	187	49.9
	18-19 years	90	24.0
Class Level	SS I	151	40.3
	SS II	124	33.1
	SS III	100	26.7
Living Arrangement	Both parents	268	71.5
	Single parent	67	17.9
	Guardian	28	7.5
	Relatives	12	3.2
Father's Education	No formal education	23	6.1
	Primary education	45	12.0
	Secondary education	148	39.5
	Tertiary education	159	42.4
Mother's Education	No formal education	34	9.1
	Primary education	58	15.5
	Secondary education	156	41.6
	Tertiary education	127	33.9

Table 1 shows that 199 respondents (53.1%) were female while 176 (46.9%) were male, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution. The majority of respondents (187, representing 49.9%) were aged 16-17 years, followed by 14-15 years (98, 26.1%) and 18-19 years (90, 24.0%). Regarding class level, 151 students (40.3%) were in SS I, 124 (33.1%) in SS II, and 100 (26.7%) in SS III, reflecting the proportionate stratified sampling employed.

Most respondents (268, 71.5%) lived with both parents, while 67 (17.9%) lived with a single parent, 28 (7.5%) with guardians, and 12 (3.2%) with other relatives. Concerning parental education, 159 fathers (42.4%) and 127 mothers (33.9%) had tertiary education, suggesting a relatively educated parent population in Minna Metropolis. However, 23 fathers (6.1%) and 34 mothers (9.1%) had no formal education, indicating some educational diversity among parents.

Presentation and Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the influence of parental involvement on approach goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Parental Involvement and Approach Goal Orientation

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Remark
Parental Involvement	375	3.14	0.62	High
Approach Goal Orientation	375	3.22	0.56	High

Table 1 reveals that students reported high levels of approach goal orientation (Mean = 3.22, SD = 0.56), the highest among all goal orientation types examined. This indicates that students generally adopt approach-focused motivational patterns characterized by striving toward success, achieving positive outcomes, and attaining competence. This substantial relationship suggests that parental involvement plays a particularly important role in fostering students' motivation to approach success, work toward positive academic outcomes, and strive for competence attainment.

Research Question Two: What is the influence of parental involvement on avoidance goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Parental Involvement and Avoidance Goal Orientation

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Remark
Parental Involvement	375	3.14	0.62	High
Avoidance Goal Orientation	375	2.43	0.71	Low

Table 2 shows that avoidance goal orientation scored below the criterion mean (Mean = 2.43, SD = 0.71), indicating that students generally do not strongly endorse avoidance-focused motivation characterized by fear of failure and avoiding demonstrations of incompetence. The higher standard deviation (0.71) suggests more variability in avoidance orientation across students. This suggests that parental involvement serves a

protective function, reducing students' fear-based motivation and concerns about avoiding failure or appearing incompetent.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One (Ho_1): There is no significant influence of parental involvement on approach goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Parental Involvement on Approach Goal Orientation

Analysis	Statistics	Value	p-value	Decision
Regression Analysis	R	0.618		Reject Ho_1
	R^2	0.382		
	F-statistic	230.15	0.000	
	β (unstandardized)	0.559		
	β (standardized)	0.618		

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 3 presents the regression analysis examining parental involvement's influence on approach goal orientation. The regression analysis produced an F-statistic of 230.15 ($p = 0.000$), highly significant. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.618$) indicates that for every one standard deviation increase in parental involvement, approach goal orientation increases by 0.618 standard deviations. The regression equation is:

Approach Goal Orientation = 1.462 + 0.559 (Parental Involvement)

Therefore, the null hypothesis (Ho_1) is rejected. There is a statistically significant positive influence of parental involvement on approach goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. The particularly strong relationship (38.2% variance explained) suggests that parental involvement plays a crucial role in fostering students' motivation to approach success, strive toward positive outcomes, and work persistently toward achievement goals.

Hypothesis Two (Ho_2): There is no significant influence of parental involvement on avoidance goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State.

Table 4: Pearson Correlation and Regression Analysis of Parental Involvement on Avoidance Goal Orientation

Analysis	Statistics	Value	p-value	Decision
Regression Analysis	R	0.326		Reject Ho_2
	R^2	0.106		
	F-statistic	44.28	0.000	
	β (unstandardized)	-0.373		
	β (standardized)	-0.326		

Significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 4 displays the regression results for parental involvement and avoidance goal orientation. The regression analysis yielded an F-statistic of 44.28 ($p = 0.000$), which is significant. The negative standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = -0.326$) indicates that for every one standard deviation increase in parental involvement, avoidance goal orientation decreases by 0.326 standard deviations. The regression equation is:

Avoidance Goal Orientation = 3.601 - 0.373 (Parental Involvement)

Based on these findings, the null hypothesis (Ho_2) is rejected. There is a statistically significant negative influence of parental involvement on avoidance goal orientation among senior secondary school students in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. This inverse relationship indicates that increased parental involvement reduces students' fear-based motivation, concerns about failure, and tendency to avoid situations where incompetence might be demonstrated. Parental involvement thus serves a protective function against maladaptive avoidance motivation.

Conclusion

Active parental involvement is the primary driver of student goal orientation in Minna Metropolis. Students with supportive and engaged parents predominantly develop an approach goal orientation (desire to master subjects). Conversely, a lack of active parental engagement or excessively rigid parenting correlates with an avoidance goal orientation (fear of failure and poor academic engagement). Parents who actively assist with homework, communicate with teachers, and provide emotional support foster intrinsic motivation and academic self-confidence in their children. Overly authoritarian or uninvolved parenting leads to performance anxiety, causing students to avoid challenging tasks out of fear of falling short or embarrassing their families. This study recommended that students should be urged to acknowledge and value their parents' contribution as a resource to assist in their academic achievement. To help students respond positively to involvement with parents, they need to understand that parental engagement improves students' motivation and achievement.

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