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The Influence of Parental Factors on Gender Performance of Lower Primary School Children

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of parental factors on gender differences in academic performance among lower primary school children. Guided by a descriptive survey research design, the study examined how Parent involvement in school activities, Parent socioeconomic status, Parent educational background, and Parenting style relate to the performance of lower primary school pupils. A sample of pupils and their parents was selected using multi-stage sampling techniques, while data were collected through structured questionnaires and school records. Descriptive statistics and inferential tests were employed to analyse the relationships between variables. Findings from the results show that parent involvement in school activities is the main factor that influences the academic performance of lower primary school pupils. The study concludes that Parental involvement positively influences pupils' academic performance by equipping parents with the skills to support learning at home. It recommends targeted parental sensitisation on the importance of educational support for children, and school-home collaboration strategies to narrow early gender achievement gaps.

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Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right and a public good that enables individuals to develop their abilities, attitudes, and behaviours to participate fully in society (UNESCO, 1996). Education at the lower primary school level provides the foundation for lifelong learning and development. At the lower primary level, children acquire basic literacy, numeracy, and social skills that serve as the building blocks for future learning. At an early age, children are highly influenced by both home and school environments, with parents playing a critical role in shaping their learning outcomes. The success of pupils at this formative stage is determined by multiple factors, among which parental influence is considered most crucial. Parents serve as the first teachers of their children, shaping their learning attitudes, motivation, and achievement.

Parent-related factors such as socioeconomic status, educational background, involvement in learning, cultural expectations, and parenting styles significantly contribute to variations in pupils' performance along gender lines. Gadsden, Ford, and Breiner (2016) opined that parental factors such as educational background, income level, involvement in schoolwork, and parenting style play a vital role in determining children's performance. They continue that parents with higher educational attainment and stable income provide more academic support, better learning resources, and an enabling environment for their children. Conversely, low-income or less-educated parents may face limitations in supporting their children's education effectively. Understanding these influences is essential for designing interventions that promote equity and improved learning outcomes in the lower primary school years.

Glick and Sahn (2020) enumerated the parent-related factors that can influence pupils' performance, including parental educational background. One major factor influencing pupils' academic performance by gender is the educational background of parents. Parents with higher levels of education are often better equipped to support their children's learning at home, provide instructional materials, and guide

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homework effectively. Glick and Sahn (2020) show that mothers' educational attainment in particular strongly predicts children's literacy and numeracy skills, often with girls benefiting more due to role modeling and closer mother-daughter interactions.

Conversely, low parental education may limit exposure to supportive learning environments, perpetuating gender disparities in performance at the early primary level. Also, socioeconomic status is another factor that can influence pupils' performance; parental income and occupational status influence access to educational resources, nutrition, and conducive learning environments. Children from wealthier families are more likely to have access to books, school supplies, and private tutoring. However, socioeconomic status also interacts with gender, as parents in resource-limited settings may prioritize boys' education over girls due to cultural norms (UNESCO, 2015). This often results in boys receiving more financial and material support, while girls may face early responsibilities at home, reducing their study time and academic outcomes.

Likewise, parental involvement in education is a factor that can influence pupils' performance. The level of parental involvement in school-related activities also affects gender performance. Parents who regularly communicate with teachers, attend school meetings, and monitor homework create stronger support systems that improve academic success for both boys and girls. Eccles and Wang (2016) opined that parents sometimes adopt gender-specific expectations, for instance, encouraging boys more in mathematics and science, while emphasizing reading and household-related skills for girls. These expectations can reinforce gender stereotypes, shaping performance outcomes in lower primary school. Also, cultural beliefs and gender roles are factors that can influence pupils' performance. Cultural beliefs about gender roles strongly influence parents' attitudes towards their children's education.

In some societies, boys are seen as future breadwinners, while girls are prepared for domestic roles, leading to differences in parental investment (Glick and Sahn, 2020). This bias can impact school attendance, motivation, and eventual performance. Eccles and Wang (2016) explained that parents who believe boys should excel academically may provide more study time, supervision, and resources

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for them, inadvertently limiting girls' potential. On the other hand, in communities where education for both genders is equally valued, performance gaps tend to narrow. Parenting styles such as authoritative, permissive, or neglectful parenting shape learning outcomes. Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth, responsiveness, and firm guidance, is linked with higher achievement for both boys and girls (Steinberg, 2001). As Steinberg (2001) put it, authoritarian or neglectful parenting may disproportionately affect girls, who often require more encouragement in traditionally male-dominated subjects like mathematics. The emotional climate at home thus plays a crucial role in pupils' gender-related academic performance.

In addition, gender has traditionally been a subject of interest in educational performance studies. Cultural beliefs, parental expectations, and societal norms often influence how boys and girls are encouraged to participate in learning. Eze (2019) argued that when boys and girls are provided with equal opportunities and adequate parental support, both genders tend to perform equally well, especially in the early stages of education. Gender performance differences in academic achievement between boys and girls remain a key concern for educators and policymakers in many contexts. Understanding how parental factors interact with gender performance is crucial for improving educational outcomes in Nigeria, where socioeconomic inequalities and cultural biases often shape access to learning opportunities.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the emphasis on achieving universal basic education, many lower primary pupils in Nigeria continue to experience poor academic outcomes. These challenges are often linked to home-related factors such as low parental involvement, inadequate financial resources, and limited educational backgrounds of parents. Gender differences in performance have often been debated. Hyde (2005) argued that males and females are more alike than different in most cognitive and academic outcomes, challenging claims of large, consistent gender gaps. Stoet and Geary (2013) opined that boys often outperform girls in mathematics while girls outperform boys in reading, adding nuance to the gender gap debate. But evidence from primary schools remains inconclusive.

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In some households, cultural stereotypes still assign more academic encouragement to male children than females, while in others, both genders receive equal support. This inconsistency raises the need to examine the real influence of parental factors on children's academic performance, particularly whether these factors differentially affect boys and girls. Addressing this problem is essential to achieving equity and quality education at the foundational level.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study examines the influence of parental factors on gender performance of lower primary schools in Ekiti State.

The specific objectives of the study are:

I. To examine the influence of parental factors (education, income, involvement, and parenting style) on the academic performance of lower primary school pupils.
II. To determine the significant gender-induced differences in pupils' academic performance at the lower primary school level.
III. To interrogate the relationship between parental factors and the academic performance of lower primary pupils.
IV. To highlight the parental factors that best predict pupils' academic success

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:
I. What are the parental factors influencing the academic performance of lower primary school pupils?
II. What are the significant gender-induced differences in pupils' academic performance at the lower primary school level?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between parental factors and pupils' academic performance.

Ho2: Parental factors do not significantly predict the academic performance of pupils.

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Theoretical Framework.

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) is a framework that explains human development by examining how individuals interact with different layers of their environment. According to the theory, development is not influenced by individual traits alone but also by the complex relationships within environmental systems. Bronfenbrenner identified five interrelated systems: microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem that shape a person's growth over time. Each system represents a different level of environmental influence, ranging from direct interactions with family and peers to broader societal and cultural contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The microsystem includes the child's immediate environment, such as family, school, and peers, where direct interactions occur. The mesosystem describes the interconnections between microsystems, for example, how parental involvement in school affects a child's learning. The exosystem refers to external settings that indirectly impact the child, such as parents' workplaces or community services. The macrosystem encompasses broader cultural values, laws, and socioeconomic conditions that shape developmental outcomes. Finally, the chronosystem addresses the dimension of time, acknowledging that life transitions, historical events, and socio-economic changes influence development across the lifespan (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Ecological Systems Theory has significant implications for education and child development research, particularly in understanding how various environmental factors affect learning and behavior. For instance, in the Nigerian context, a child's academic performance may be shaped not only by the quality of classroom instruction (microsystem) but also by parental attitudes toward education (mesosystem), economic hardship (exosystem), cultural expectations about gender roles (macrosystem), and political reforms in the education sector over time (chronosystem). By emphasizing the interconnectedness of these systems, Bronfenbrenner's theory highlights the need for holistic approaches in policy-making and intervention programs that support children's optimal growth (Tudge et al., 2009).

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Conceptual Framework

The Concept of Academic Performance

Academic performance is commonly understood as the extent to which learners successfully attain intended educational objectives, typically assessed through test scores, grades, classroom engagement, and demonstrated skill mastery (Hornby, 2012; Santrock, 2018). It is widely regarded as a critical indicator of student learning outcomes and school effectiveness (Akinsolu, 2010). Aremu (2003) defined academic performance as the observable and measurable behaviour of students within the school environment following exposure to instructional experiences. Among lower primary pupils, performance is particularly consequential as it forms the cognitive and behavioural foundation for subsequent learning in literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving (UNESCO, 2014). At this stage, achievement is shaped not only by innate cognitive capacity but also by social and environmental determinants such as home support, peer influence, and teacher quality (Epstein, 2010; Eamon, 2005).

Parental factors play a crucial role in shaping children's academic performance, particularly at the primary level. Parents' educational background, socio-economic status, and involvement in school activities have been shown to affect learning outcomes. For example, Ali et al. (2013) found that children whose parents actively supported their education performed better academically than those with minimal parental involvement. Furthermore, parental encouragement, provision of learning materials, and monitoring of homework help pupils to develop positive attitudes toward learning. In the Nigerian context, Adeyemo (2005) highlighted that pupils from supportive family environments display higher motivation, confidence, and academic success compared to those from less supportive homes.

Gender is another dimension influencing academic performance in early education. Studies suggest that boys and girls may perform differently in specific subject areas due to cultural expectations, socialization patterns, and teacher perceptions. Okoye and Eze (2011) observed that in lower primary schools, girls tend to perform better in literacy-based subjects while boys excel in numeracy, though such differences are often linked to parental and teacher biases rather than

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innate ability. This implies that gender disparities in performance are socially constructed and can be reduced when parents provide equal encouragement, learning opportunities, and resources to both male and female children. Hence, academic performance is not only a product of individual effort but also shaped by parental involvement and gender-related expectations, making these factors central to improving educational outcomes in lower primary pupils.

Parental Education and Socioeconomic Status on Gender Performance
Adeyemi (2012) examined the joint effect of parental education and socioeconomic status on gender performance and reported that pupils whose parents were educated achieved significantly higher academic scores than those whose parents had little or no formal schooling. Educated parents are more likely to provide learning resources, model positive academic behaviours, and create home environments that promote effective study habits (Davis-Kean, 2005; Eccles and Harold, 1993).

These advantages accrue to both boys and girls, although cultural norms sometimes shape gendered responses to parental guidance. Studies suggest that girls often benefit more when mothers possess higher education due to motivational and role-model effects, whereas boys may be more sensitive to the educational attainment of fathers (Baker and Stevenson, 1986; Shapiro, 2014). In line with this view, Adeyemi (2012) reported that parental education reduces gender gaps by ensuring that both boys and girls receive adequate academic support.

Adeyemi (2012) further stressed that socioeconomic status (SES) is instrumental in shaping educational outcomes and gender differences. Children from high-SES households typically enjoy access to well-resourced schools, quality learning materials, and enriched extracurricular exposure, all of which promote higher achievement (Sirin, 2005). By contrast, learners from low-SES backgrounds are often constrained by scarce resources, suboptimal learning environments, and financial stressors that undermine performance (Bradley and Corwyn, 2002). These disparities can deepen gender gaps, especially in cultural settings where boys are preferentially invested in over girls (UNESCO, 2015; Colclough, Rose, and Tembon, 2000). Adeyemi (2012) concluded that both parental education and SES are powerful

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predictors of academic achievement and recommended that policies that expand parental literacy and reduce economic inequality are critical to narrowing gender-based performance differentials.

Okeke (2014) investigated the relationship between parental education, socioeconomic status, and gender performance and reported that educated parents are more inclined to offer balanced academic support to both boys and girls, thereby narrowing achievement disparities. The study further showed that parental education elevates children's performance by cultivating positive study habits, strengthening self-confidence, and ensuring access to instructional resources that facilitate learning (Okeke, 2014; Davis-Kean, 2005). Educated parents also tend to place equal value on the schooling of sons and daughters, countering entrenched gender norms that privilege boys' education (Colclough, Rose, and Tembon, 2000; UNESCO, 2015). Such equitable encouragement contributes to closing gender gaps and enables both male and female learners to excel academically (Okeke, 2014).

Eze (2015) reinforced further the strong link between socioeconomic status and academic achievement, noting that SES is one of the most influential factors determining students' success in school. According to the study, students from high-SES backgrounds have access to better learning facilities, well-resourced schools, and parental support, all of which improve their academic performance. In contrast, low-SES students struggle with limited resources, overcrowded classrooms, and financial pressures that negatively affect their studies. Unlike Adeyemi (2012) and Okeke (2014), who examined both education and gender perspectives, Eze (2015) focused more directly on the broader impact of SES, showing how poverty and inequality remain key barriers to academic achievement regardless of gender.

Furthermore, the studies of Adeyemi (2012), Okeke (2014), and Eze (2015) demonstrate that both parental education and socioeconomic status are powerful determinants of students' academic performance, with significant implications for gender equality in education. Adeyemi (2012) and Okeke (2014) showed that educated parents are more likely to support both boys and girls equally, reducing gender disparities, while Eze (2015) highlighted how socioeconomic disadvantage undermines performance across the board. The three

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studies collectively suggest that raising parental education levels and addressing socioeconomic inequalities are essential strategies for improving academic achievement and promoting gender equity in Nigerian schools.

Parental Involvement and Parenting Styles on Gender Performance

According to Epstein (2001), parental involvement is a crucial determinant of students' academic performance and can influence gender-related outcomes in schools. In her framework of six types of involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community, she argued that when parents actively participate in their children's education, both boys and girls benefit academically and socially. Parental engagement helps foster positive attitudes toward learning, greater motivation, and stronger confidence in students. As he (2001) noted, such involvement can reduce gender performance gaps by ensuring that both boys and girls receive equal encouragement and opportunities to succeed.

In addition, Epstein (2001) explained that active parental involvement helps to counteract cultural stereotypes that sometimes favor boys' education over girls. By setting equal expectations and providing academic support at home, parents create inclusive environments where both genders can thrive. For example, boys may gain from parental reinforcement of responsibility and discipline, while girls benefit from encouragement that builds persistence and self-confidence. Epstein concluded that collaboration among families, schools, and communities is essential in reducing gender disparities and ensuring equitable academic outcomes.

Also, Nwankwo and Uche (2016) investigated the influence of parental involvement on students' academic achievement with particular attention to gender differences. Their study revealed that when parents actively participate in their children's education through monitoring homework, attending school meetings, encouraging reading, and providing necessary learning materials, both boys and girls tend to perform better academically. The researchers found that parental involvement boosts students' confidence, motivation, and discipline,

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which are critical factors in academic success. Importantly, they noted that parental support helps to reduce the performance gap between boys and girls, as both genders benefit from consistent guidance and encouragement at home.

Furthermore, Nwankwo and Uche (2016) emphasized that parental involvement can challenge traditional gender stereotypes that often prioritize boys' education over that of girls. Parents who treat sons and daughters equally in educational matters create an enabling environment that promotes fairness and equal opportunities for academic success. The study concluded that strong parental engagement not only improves overall student achievement but also plays a key role in narrowing gender disparities in schools.

Thus, promoting active parental participation is essential for achieving gender equity in education. Epstein (2001) argued that active parental engagement enhances students' academic outcomes across genders by building motivation, responsibility, and confidence. Epstein stressed that when parents set high expectations and support learning activities at home, both boys and girls benefit equally, thereby reducing gender disparities in performance. Her work highlighted the importance of family–school–community partnerships in ensuring that gender stereotypes do not undermine academic opportunities.

Similarly, Nwankwo and Uche (2016) found that parental involvement significantly improves academic performance among Nigerian students, with a notable effect on narrowing gender performance gaps. Their study revealed that children whose parents actively monitored homework, encouraged reading, and attended school meetings were more likely to excel academically. Importantly, they noted that parental involvement helps challenge cultural practices that often privilege boys' education over girls', thereby fostering greater equity in academic achievement. For both male and female students, consistent parental encouragement was associated with higher levels of motivation and discipline, which translated into improved school performance.

Furthermore, the study of Epstein (2001), Nwankwo and Uche (2016) demonstrates that parental involvement is a universal factor in shaping academic outcomes, but its influence is particularly significant in contexts where gender disparities exist. While Epstein provided a

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global framework for understanding parental engagement, Nwankwo and Uche extended this discussion into the Nigerian setting, showing how parental involvement can counteract socio-cultural biases that affect gendered educational experiences. Both studies confirm that when parents treat boys and girls equally and actively support their learning, gender performance gaps in education are minimized.

Gender Performance of Lower Primary School Pupils

Gender performance among lower primary school pupils has been a central concern for educators and policymakers, as early childhood education lays the foundation for lifelong learning. At this stage, children begin to develop academic and social competencies that can be shaped by both biological traits and cultural expectations. Globally, research shows that girls in the early years often outperform boys in literacy-related tasks due to stronger attention spans and communication skills, while boys sometimes show an advantage in spatial and problem-solving activities (UNESCO, 2018). These early differences, however, are not fixed and are significantly influenced by the educational environment, family support, and teacher expectations.

Parental education and involvement play a vital role in shaping gender performance during lower primary schooling. Adeyemi (2012) noted that children of educated parents, regardless of gender, are more likely to excel academically because their parents provide encouragement, guidance, and access to resources. Okeke (2014) emphasized that educated parents also reduce gender disparities by treating boys and girls equally, thereby ensuring that both benefit from supportive learning environments. Similarly, Epstein (2001) highlighted in her framework of school–family–community partnerships that parental involvement through activities such as monitoring homework, reading at home, and engaging with teachers improves learning outcomes for both boys and girls and helps close gender gaps.

Socioeconomic status (SES) is another critical determinant of gender performance in lower primary education. Eze (2015) observed that pupils from higher SES families have access to better school environments, learning materials, and nutrition, which promote higher academic achievement. Conversely, children from disadvantaged backgrounds often struggle with limited resources, overcrowded

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classrooms, and poor health, all of which hinder learning. Nwankwo and Uche (2016) further argued that in contexts where financial challenges exist, families may prioritize boys' education over girls', thereby widening the performance gap. However, when resources are distributed equitably, SES-related disadvantages can be mitigated, and both genders can achieve comparable outcomes.

Moreover, gender performance among lower primary school pupils is influenced by an interplay of parental education, socioeconomic status, cultural expectations, and levels of parental involvement. International perspectives, such as those provided by Epstein (2001) and UNESCO (2018), highlight that equitable support and inclusive practices at home and in school are crucial in ensuring balanced outcomes between boys and girls. Nigerian studies, including those by Adeyemi (2012), Okeke (2014), Eze (2015), and Nwankwo and Uche (2016), reaffirm that parental education and socioeconomic status are strong predictors of early academic success. Strengthening parental engagement, reducing economic inequalities, and adopting gender-sensitive policies will help narrow disparities and promote equitable learning opportunities for all pupils at the foundation stage of education.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The study was conducted in four lower primary schools within Ikere-Ekiti Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The population of this study consists of all lower primary school pupils (Primary 3) and their parents in the selected schools within the study area. A multistage sampling technique was adopted for this study. A stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting four school types (public and private). Simple random sampling was used to select four schools (2 public and 2 private). Also, simple random sampling was used to select 100 pupils and 100 parents, with 25 pupils and 25 parents from each school.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument contains two sections: Section A: Demographic information of parents (e.g., education, occupation, income level). Section B: Items on parental factors such as educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement in school activities, and parenting style. Also, Section C of the instrument elicits

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information on Pupils' academic performance records in Mathematics collected from school records to compare gender differences. The questionnaire has a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree) to measure parental involvement and related variables. The two instruments were validated by subjecting them to expert criticism and comments. The instruments were subjected to validation through experts' judgment. The reliability of the instruments, Parental Factors on Gender Performance Questionnaire (PFGPQ), is 0.8, and Pupils' Academic Performance Records (PAPR). Data were analyzed using frequency count, mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression.

Results

- What parental factors influence the academic performance of lower primary pupils?

To determine the parental factors influencing the academic performance of lower primary pupils, data from PFGPQ were subjected to descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation). The result is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Parental Factors Influencing the Academic Performance of Lower Primary Pupils in Ikere- Ekiti.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Parenting style	100	22.00	27.00	24.6400	1.09655
Parent educational Background	100	30.00	42.00	40.0800	2.25487
Parent socioeconomic status	100	43.00	50.00	45.7600	1.48474
Parent involvement in school Activities	100	44.00	54.00	49.1600	2.17757

The results in Table 1 revealed the parental factors that influence the academic performance of lower primary pupils. Where Parent involvement in school activities (x=, 49.1600, SD =2.17757), Parent socioeconomic status (X =, 45.7600, SD= 1.48474), Parent

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educational background (X =, 40.0800, SD= 2.25487), and Parenting style (X =, 24.6400, SD= 1.09655). The Table shows that Parent involvement in school activities is the main factor that influences the academic performance of lower primary pupils.

- Are there gender differences in the academic performance of lower primary pupils?

  To determine if there are gender differences in the academic performance of lower primary pupils, data from PAPR were subjected to descriptive analysis (mean and standard deviation). The result is presented in Table 2

Table 2: The Gender Differences in The Academic Performance of Lower Primary Pupils in Ikere-Ekiti.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	50	44.00	61.00	53.6000	5.69282
Female	50	47.00	51.00	49.5200	1.18218

The result in Table 2 revealed the gender differences in the academic performance of lower primary pupils, where Male scores (X = 53.6000, SD 5.69282) and Female scores (X = 49.5200, SD 1.18218). The Table shows that the performance of male pupils is better than that of female pupils. This implies that there were gender differences in the academic performance of lower primary pupils.

Hypotheses Testing

- There is no significant relationship between parental factors and pupils' academic performance.

To determine the relationship between parental factors and pupils' academic performance, data from the PFGPQ PAPR were subjected to multiple regression. The result is presented in Table 3.1

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Table 3.1 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.692[a]	.480	.458	.85603

Predictors: (Constant), parent involvement in school activities, parenting style, parent educational background, parent socioeconomic status

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	64.145	4	16.036	21.884	.000
	Residual	69.615	95	.733		
	Total	133.760	99			

Dependent Variable: Pupils' Academic Performance

Table 3.3 Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	39.083	3.867		10.106	.000
	Parenting style	.137	.081	.129	1.682	.096
	Parent educational background	.038	.040	.073	.941	.349
	Parent socioeconomic status	-.215	.064	-.274	-3.370	.001
	Parent involvement in school activities	.316	.040	.592	7.843	.000

Dependent Variable: Pupils' Academic Performance

The result in Table 3.1 reveals the multiple regression coefficient (R), which indicates that a linear relationship exists between the predictors (parent involvement in school activities, parenting style, parent educational background, and parent socioeconomic status) and the criterion variable (Pupils' Academic Performance). In this model, they significantly predict the criterion variables ($F_{(4,95)}$= 21.884; $p<0.05$) and jointly account for 45.80 of % observed variance in pupils' academic performance.

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Further result shows that two predictors, Parent involvement in school activities (β =..592, t (100) =7.843, P< 0.05) and Parent socioeconomic status (β = -.274, t(100) = -3.370, P< 0.05) have a significant effect in this prediction model. This means that every one of them has related variables that allow significant prediction of pupils' academic performance. However, parent educational background and parenting style did not contribute significantly to this particular model. Therefore, Parent involvement in school activities is the most potent in predicting pupils' academic performance in this particular model.

Discussion of findings

The result of the study shows that parent involvement in school activities is the main factor that influences the academic performance of lower primary school pupils. This result agrees with the study of Epstein (2001), which shows that parental involvement is a crucial determinant of students' academic performance and can influence gender-related outcomes in schools. She argued that when parents actively participate in their children's education, both boys and girls benefit academically and socially.

This result also aligns with the study of Nwankwo and Uche (2016), which shows that when parents actively participate in their children's education through monitoring homework, attending school meetings, encouraging reading, and providing necessary learning materials, both boys and girls tend to perform better academically. Also, parental involvement boosts students' confidence, motivation, and discipline, which are critical factors in academic success. This study, as well as the studies of Epstein (2001), Nwankwo and Uche (2016), show that parental involvement is a universal factor in shaping academic outcomes, but its influence is particularly significant in contexts where gender disparities exist.

The study demonstrates that there are gender differences in the academic performance of lower primary school pupils. It also corroborates UNESCO's position (2018) that girls in the early years often outperform boys in literacy-related tasks due to stronger attention spans and communication skills, while boys sometimes show an advantage in spatial and problem-solving activities. But the result of this study is not in line with the study of Eze (2019) that when

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boys and girls are provided with equal opportunities and adequate parental support, both genders tend to perform equally well, especially in the early stages of education. Gender performance differences in academic achievement between boys and girls remain a key concern for educators and policymakers in many contexts.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

I. Parental involvement positively influences pupils' academic performance by equipping parents with the skills to support learning at home.
II. Socioeconomic status significantly affects pupils' academic outcomes, with wealthier families providing better educational opportunities.
III. Parental involvement is a crucial determinant of pupils' academic success, as active support enhances learning outcomes.
IV. Gender differences in academic performance are significant in lower primary schools, but both boys and girls can achieve equally if parental involvement is strong.
V. Parental factors collectively serve as strong predictors of pupils' academic performance, accounting for a substantial portion of their achievement levels.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

I. Government and NGOs should organize literacy and parenting workshops to sensitize parents on the importance of educational support for children.
II. Policymakers should design welfare schemes and educational subsidies to reduce the financial burden on low-income families, thereby improving pupils' access to quality education.
III. Schools should establish regular parent-teacher meetings and home-school partnerships to encourage active participation of parents in pupils' learning.
IV. Interventions should focus on both male and female pupils to

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avoid stereotypes and ensure balanced educational outcomes.

V. Ministries of Education should integrate parental engagement strategies into school improvement policies to enhance learning outcomes at the primary level.

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