Roles of Parental Involvement in Promoting Girl Child Education in Nigeria

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Access to quality education is critical for the development of a nation, and the education of girls is essential for achieving gender equality and inclusive growth. However, in Nigeria, cultural, social, and economic factors have contributed to significant gender disparities in educational outcomes. One critical factor that can influence the education of girls is parental involvement. Parents play a vital role in promoting their daughters' education by creating a supportive learning environment, setting academic expectations, and providing financial and emotional support. This paper examines the role of parental involvement in promoting girl child education in Nigeria. It discusses the challenges that parents face in becoming involved in their children's education, including poverty, cultural beliefs, and limited access to educational resources. The paper then explores effective strategies and best practices for promoting parental involvement, drawing on successful programmes from other developing countries. These strategies include community mobilization, parent-teacher associations, and home-based interventions that target parents and caregivers. The paper also highlights the importance of engaging fathers and male family members in promoting girl child education, as they often hold significant influence over girls' educational decisions. Finally, the paper discusses the potential impact of parental involvement on educational outcomes, including increased school attendance, improved academic performance, and higher rates of graduation. In conclusion, promoting parental involvement in girl child education is essential for achieving gender equality and inclusive growth in Nigeria. By creating a supportive learning environment and engaging parents and caregivers, one can unlock the full potential of Nigeria's girls and create a brighter future for all.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Girl child education, Academic performance, Poverty, Gender equality

Introduction

Buried deep within the heart of every nation's prosperity lays the vibrant pulse of education. It begins to resound from hushed undertones and amplifies into a robust melody that signs of progress, advancement, and transformation. This academic symphony reverberates across various societal landscapes, invigorating them individually and yet tying them seamlessly into a harmonious nexus -

technology, health, environment, and economic vitality, all pulsing rhythmically to the cadence of education. At any moment in time, the words of Nelson Mandela -- "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world" - echo across the global auditorium, reminding us of this resonant truth. These words are not only of seminal inspiration but have been anchored in empirical evidence by scholars turning the wheels of educational and economic research worldwide.

Venturing into the academic terrain that bridges education and national development, one encounters a multitude of scholarly works. These explorations echo the concepts that have been bouncing back and forth across time, channeling enduring reverberations of the instrumental role of education in driving national development. A particularly compelling chronicle that illuminates this instrumental role comes from the scholarly documentation of Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2018). Their rigorous analysis arithmetically entwines every additional year of schooling with an economic sphere, demonstrating how this relationship amplifies an individual's income by a remarkable 8-10% increment. This increase, seemingly insignificant at the individual level, perpetuates to become a colossal force significantly contributing to the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

To perceive education as a mere contributor to the personal intellectual edifice or an individual's economic prosperity is to view a tree in disregard of the forest. In truth, education permeates into the veins of societal and national wellness, becoming a transformative, empowering mechanism at the heart of collective development and progress. Therefore, it is not an exaggeration to say that within the confines of education exists the labyrinth that steers national progression's entire trajectory. Quality education, armored with the right tutoring strategies, tailored curriculum, and efficient implementation, emanates as the key to unlock the enormous potential residing within the nation. Education's impressionable role in inciting national development cannot be overstated. Its influence permeates across all strata of the society, spurring comprehensive and sustained advancements. Indeed, enveloped within education is the dawn of every nation's prosperity.

At the intersection of societal growth and individual achievement lies the potent force of girl-child education. Its significance resides not only in the individual empowerment it bestows upon girls and women, but also in its capacity to weave patterns of change, shaping the grand tapestry of the society at large. Female education breaks the shackles of parochial thinking, paving the way for equitable participation in all walks of life. This journey towards gender equality, powered by female education, is not a secluded path. On the contrary, it is profoundly interconnected with various other trails leading to societal growth and development. As barriers lift, gender disparities recede, and the horizon of opportunities expands, one can perceive the transformation of the once biased society into an inclusive and empathetic ecosystem.

The ripples of change emanating from girl-child education extend far beyond the realm of social sphere into the arenas of health and economic evolution. A phenomenal finding has burst forth from beneath the surface of traditional health paradigms the profound correlation between female education

and maternal and child mortality reduction. Nothing illuminates this reality better than the study presented by King and Winthrop (2020). Their work articulated that girl's education is not merely a subsidiary component, but a strategic priority that drastically impacts societal structures. Keenly understanding this necessity, the Global Partnership for Education (2020) delineated the strong correlation between women's education and awareness about prenatal, natal, and postnatal care. The groundbreaking report highlighted that women with at least six years of formal education were more likely to be aware of their health needs during critical junctures of life, adept at seeking adequate care at such times. The ripple effect this awareness manifests results in the reduction of maternal and child mortality rates.

The wind of girl-child education doesn't merely touch health-related milestones but sets in motion a powerful cyclone of economic growth. Miller (2018) threw light on this pathway, arguing that educational gains for girls result in profound life earnings, contributing to the overall economic growth. In essence, the mighty river of girl-child education, beginning from the small streams of individual empowerment, swells into a large force, touching every shore of societal growth gender equality, health improvements, economic amplification, and overall societal advancement. As girls sit huddled in classrooms across the globe, clutching on to wisdom bestowed upon them, one cannot overlook the dawn of a new era— characterized by enlightened minds, evolving gender norms, healthier lives, and a progressive society. In the heart of Africa, a nation known for its vibrant folklore, abundant natural resources, and the charming polyrhythm of culture, Nigeria finds itself grappling with a socio-cultural quagmire that dampens its otherwise exuberant narrative and gender disparities in educational outcomes.

A painstaking exploration into this distressing aspect of Nigerian societal contours was undertaken by Onyishi et al. (2019). Their comprehensive study doesn't merely indicate the disconcerting reality of gender-based educational inequality; it paints an elaborate portrait that vividly illustrates how girl-child education is much like shadows in the sweltering Nigerian sun present yet overlooked. The picture presented is punctuated with societal narratives that wax eloquent about male superiority and female domesticity – narratives that have, unfortunately, trickled down generations to nestle comfortably in modern Nigerian societies. This preference for male education is not simply a matter of cultural bias. Instead, it shapes educational outcomes, significantly tilting the opportunity scale in favor of boys and leaving girls stranded in the realm of limited possibilities. Yet, in the midst of these complex socio-cultural strands that dictate gender roles and educational priorities, there exists a ray of hope. It shines subtly amidst the looming shadows of disparities, veiled beneath the protective wings of parental involvement. The role played by parents in a child's education journey the careful weaving of academic success, participation, self-esteem and overall education experience is both transformative and overwhelmingly crucial.

This pivotal role of parents came under the academic microscope study by Enoch and Adediran(2021) the indelible ink of their work underscores how parental participation isn't merely a supporting component but a potent weapon in the battle against ingrained gender stereotypes. Their research unraveled how mothers and fathers, by simply participating in their daughters' education, can challenge the traditional societal narratives that preserve male superiority. The effect: a promising surge in school enrollment rates among Nigerian girls. In summation, while Nigeria is a battleground of gender disparities in education, it also stands as a resilient beacon striving to eclipse these inequalities. As the collective wisdom of society unravels, powered by parents vehemently challenging the status quo, the archaic shackles of bias begin to loosen. This evolving landscape of girl-child education in Nigeria is a testament to societal transformation - a foreshadowing of a future as promising as the radiant Nigerian sunsets.

In essence, quality education herald's national development and the potential of girl-child education in inducing systemic societal changes is significant. The ability to bridge the gender gap in education in Nigeria is critically contingent on enhanced parental involvement. The harmonization of efforts from all societal echelons is essential to usher an era of inclusive growth, refuting gender-based education disparities.

Roles of Parental Involvement in Girl Child Education

A quote by Helen Keller eloquently captures the essence of education: "Education is the key to everything that is good in our world today." Much like a sculptor shaping clay into a masterpiece, education helps mold an individual's character, intellect and potential. However, this beautiful process is not solely reliant on instruction but is symbiotically connected to the environment where learning unfurls, the challenges that forge resilience and the support that cushions the journey. In the realm of education, the creation of a supportive learning environment, setting of academic expectations, and provision of both financial and emotional support are like the three cardinal points that guide the educational voyage.

Amidst the hue and symphony of a bustling classroom, or the tranquility of a home study, the blanket of a supportive learning environment is silently woven. This environment, far from being a silent physical space, is a dynamic and interactive entity that impacts the learning process in profound ways. A study by Barrett et al. (2018) elucidates how learning environments, saturated with positive stimuli and supportive educational resources, accelerate the acquisition of knowledge and skills. This research not only amplifies the need for an enhanced physical learning atmosphere but also the importance of a psychologically supportive classroom where each student feels valued and encouraged.

Parallel to the creation of a conducive ambiance, the setting of academic expectations is akin to erecting signposts along the educational journey. It's not just about nurturing dreams but also about

challenging boundaries, encouraging students to stretch their intellectual capabilities and grit. In their seminal work, Locke and Latham (2019) explore 'goal-setting theory,' illustrating that clear and challenging objectives can significantly enhance a student's academic performance. Thus, academic expectations serve as illuminated runways, guiding each learner towards elevated achievements.

Finally, the intricate tapestry of education cannot be completed without the threads of financial and emotional support woven into it. Just as a seed requires a fertile ground and ample sunlight to grow, the educational journey too needs sufficient monetary resources and emotional direction. Financial support enables access to quality educational resources, mitigates socio-economic barriers, and bridges the divide between ambition and opportunity. Flushed with this understanding, Shores and Wodtke (2019) demonstrated the transformative power of financial investments in education, affecting significant improvements in academic achievement and equity. But like a tree cannot stand tall just on the strength of its roots, financial support alone isn't sufficient to sustain the educational journey. The emotional support provided by teachers, parents, and peers is like the invisible wind that allows a tree, or in this case, a learner, to sway confidently without fear of breaking. Providing emotional support fosters a sense of belonging, resilience, and motivation in students, as profoundly illustrated in a study by Brackett et al. (2019).

Therefore, quality education is a harmonious symphony, orchestrated by the melodious notes of a supportive environment, tenacious academic expectations, and robust financial and emotional support. It is an all-encompassing approach that transcends conventional methods, turning the educational journey into a fulfilling voyage that ultimately leads to the majestic shores of knowledge and personal growth.

Challenges Limiting Parental Involvement
Poverty

While walking in the landscape of parental involvement in education, one cannot overlook the tremors caused by an invisible, yet formidable, foe—Poverty. This adversary doesn't merely shake the foundations of a comfortable life existence; it quakes the realm of parental involvement in education, casting elongated shadows on the girl-child's academic journey in Nigeria. To comprehend the magnitude of poverty's adversarial role, one must perceive poverty beyond its face value. It does not merely symbolize scarcity of material resources; instead, it becomes an encompassing whirlwind, trapping families in cycles of lack— lack of time, lack of access to education, lack of motivation, and, needless to say, lack of finance. The corrosive effect of poverty on parental involvement is revealed through detailed nuances in a study by Onyishi et al. (2019). This scholarly representation mirrors how financial restraints impede parents' active participation in their daughters' education, thus making poverty a substantial barrier, acting against the tide of educational progression. With limited financial

resources at their disposal, Nigerian parents often battle between meeting immediate survival needs and investing in long-term educational goals, with the former generally taking precedence.

Moreover, poverty can perpetuate a chain reaction, triggering the manifestation of another insidious antagonist, child labor. The need for survival can push parents to encourage their daughters to join the workforce rather than the school force. Wete and Ajila (2020) in their work, emphasize this harsh reality, demonstrating how poverty-induced child labor can detrimentally affect girl-child education in Nigeria. Apart from transforming children into breadwinners, poverty also transforms parents, particularly mothers, into jugglers constantly spinning several survival plates. As they grapple with the demands of work, they might be unable to spare the time needed for active involvement in their daughters' education. Adebayo and Oke (2019), in their study, shed light on how poverty-related time constraints impede mothers' ability to contribute to their children's school preparations, attend parent-teacher meetings, or even spare time for home-based academic support.

Poverty also affects the perception of education, particularly in low-income households. As validated by Cebotari (2018), in a spate of financial destitution, parents' general perception of the importance of education, especially for girls, might wane. This diminished perception can further decrease their involvement in their daughters' education. To conclude, poverty justifiably emerges as a formidable challenge to parental involvement in girl-child education in Nigeria. It is like an octopus, with its varied tentacles—material deprivation, child labor, time constraints, and weakened perception—impeding parents' ability to support their daughters' educational journeys. A vivid portrayal of this challenge invites urgent attention and intervention from society and policymakers to ensure the force of poverty does not succeed in swiftly wiping out the promising footprints of girl-child education in the sands of Nigeria.

Cultural Beliefs

Rooted beneath the vibrant hustle and lively hues of Nigeria, lies a significant challenge to girl-child education – the systemic cultivation of cultural beliefs. A labyrinth of cultural narratives and traditional norms, often as old as the terracotta sculptures of Nok, have created an intricate wall that stands between parents and their daughters' education. This cultural fabric, spun over centuries, not only shapes societal behaviors, but also invariably influences parental involvement in girl-child education. Cultural beliefs are narratives shared and immortalized by communities over generations. Each tale narrated, each custom followed, slowly solidifies into unspoken mandates that govern behaviors. One such mandate in numerous Nigerian societies highlights the gender roles— males as the primary breadwinners and females as the caregivers. In the context of education, such deep-seated beliefs have produced an educational landscape tilted in favor of boys. Agyei, Owusu, and Antwi (2018) in their ground-breaking work reveal how these biased cultural preferences often lead parents to invest more in the education of their sons, leaving their daughters' academic journey on a rocky path.

Moreover, cultural norms often become self-fulfilling prophecies, reinforcing gender disparities in education. A pervasive cultural belief is that girls would eventually marry, and their places are in their marital homes, thereby devaluing their need for formal education. Conforming to these norms, parents may unwittingly end up nourishing the seeds of educational inequality between boys and girls. A valuable insight into this predicament was presented by Watkins and Swidler (2019), who elucidated how entrenched cultural beliefs often serve as impediments to girls' education, particularly by decreasing parental involvement in the education of their daughters. Residing within these cultural confines are also rituals and norms like Early Child Marriage, which replace the school bell's ring with wedding bells for many Nigerian girls. Within the shackles of this cultural practice, education of girls becomes a secondary concern for parents. Oyekale's research (2018) illuminates the concerning impact of such cultural practices on girl-child education, further accentuating the challenges these beliefs pose to parental involvement in Nigeria.

Conclusively, the landscape of girl-child education in Nigeria seems wrapped under a thick blanket of cultural belief systems that significantly limit parental involvement. In this complex tussle involving education, cultural norms, and parental involvement, what needs to be stressed upon are culturally sensitive interventions. Such interventions crafted keeping the socio-cultural dynamics in mind could gradually unfurl this blanket, bringing a dawn of fresh perspectives where parental involvement in girl-child education thrives above these cultural beliefs. Only then could the story of Nigeria's girls be rewritten, just as eloquently as the nation's captivating folklore.

Limited Access to Educational Resources

In the symphony of education in Nigeria, there exists a dissonant note that our ears can't ignore the limited access to educational resources. This discord disrupts the harmonious tune of parental involvement in girl-child education, making the process akin to playing beautiful music on a broken instrument. It's an ordeal not just about the absence of sound holes on this instrument but about the silences that echo too loud. Understanding the challenge of limited access to educational resources necessitates observing it through various lenses. At its core, it speaks of tangible elements lack of academic materials, deficient infrastructural capacity, or the paucity of adept teachers. However, it also lies subtly hidden within intangible contours, obscured by the shades of gender bias and economic disparities.

The shortage of academic materials, such as textbooks, stationery, and digital learning tools, represents a significant concern that impedes parental involvement. With limited resources at hand, parents in Nigeria often find themselves unable to provide the necessary educational materials to fuel their daughter's learning journey. Ubogu and Egbunu (2018), in their illuminating study, addressed these constraints, stating how the stark disparity in educational resources adds an extra layer of complexity to parental involvement in the education of their daughters. Inadequate infrastructure is

another pressing concern. The melody of learning is muffled when school buildings are dilapidated, classrooms are crowded, and learning facilities are deficient. Such conditions disrupt the learning environment and may cause parents to question the plausibility of sending their daughters to such schools. In a disconcerting report, Tokula and Tyokumbur (2019) asserted that infrastructural inadequacies in Nigerian schools pose substantial challenges in catalyzing parental involvement in girl-child education.

Another stark facet is the scarcity of skilled teachers. As Silva, Stanton, and Mkumbo (2018) indicated in their seminal work, the shortage of professionally trained teachers, especially women who could possibly serve as role models to girls, can discourage parents from becoming actively involved in their daughters' education. The challenge of limited access to educational resources is like a leech draining the potency of parental involvement in girl-child education in Nigeria. It crafts an unforgiving labyrinth where parents, eager to contribute, often stumble in the dark, unable to find the beacon of educational resources. And yet, within these shadows, the hope for change glimmers. By highlighting these challenges, we bring them into the light, where they cannot be ignored but addressed, turning discord into harmony and propelling Nigeria closer to its goal of universal, quality education.

Strategies for Promoting Parental Involvement

Mounting a successful siege against the formidable barriers hindering parental involvement in girl-child education requires a strategic, multi-faceted approach. So, let us embark on a journey through three strategic terrains that hold immense potential in promoting parental involvement community mobilization, parent-teacher associations, and home-based interventions.

Community mobilization can be visualized as transforming an indifferent audience into a lively orchestra, each member tuned to the symphony of girl-child education. The process involves harnessing the power of collective engagement, transforming societal norms, and fostering a communal agenda that prioritizes education. Leveraging local networks, religious institutions, and community leaders to propagate the importance of parental involvement in girl-child education is at the core of community mobilization. In 2020, Baschieri and Falkingham revealed the pivotal role community mobilization plays in shaping educational attitudes, thereby promoting parental involvement, particularly in the context of girl-child education. Through collective dialogue, sensitization workshops, and community-based interventions, it is possible to gradually dismantle deep-seated biases, empowering parents to actively participate in their children's educational journeys. The second strategy, parent-teacher associations (PTAs), acts as formidable bridges connecting home and school. They provide a crucial platform for teachers and parents to converse, collaborate, and co-create an enriched learning environment for students. Establishing and nurturing robust PTAs is a tried and tested mechanism to enhance parental involvement in education. In her work, Jeynes (2018) elaborates on the instrumental role PTAs play in facilitating the active participation of parents in their

children's school activities. By enabling parents to raise concerns, voice opinions, and engage in constructive discussions with teachers, these associations foster a deeper understanding of their daughter's educational needs and progress, thus empowering them to support their children in more meaningful ways.

Thirdly, home-based interventions that target parents and caregivers serve as beacon lights physically entering spaces, igniting empowering conversations, and lighting up the home environment for the girl child's education. Ranging from parental coaching to home visits by educational experts, these tools form a vital part of the strategic framework to promote parental involvement. As per a compelling study by Berlinski and Schady (2018), interventions that guide parents on positive parenting practices, provision of learning materials, and creating a stimulating learning environment have shown significant effectiveness in promoting parental participation and enhancing child outcomes.

In retrospect, navigating the landscape of parental involvement in girl-child education in Nigeria is a journey of both challenges and strategies. Pivotal interventions such as community mobilization, strengthening of parent-teacher associations, and well-coordinated home-based interventions are like lighthouses guiding this journey. By tuning into these strategies, the daunting journey transforms into a promising pathway where the melodious tunes of parental involvement harmoniously blend with the symphony of girl-child education, crafting a mesmerizing Nigerian overture.

Expected Impact of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in a child's education is akin to a refreshing spring that feeds into the river of learning – a source that consistently nourishes the educational journey with increased school attendance, improved academic performance, and higher graduation rates. This transformative triad paints a hopeful picture of the rippling impact of active parental participation in the education of their children.

Increased school attendance is a delightful first bloom peeping through the frost when parents ardently engage in their children's education. Parents are not just custodians of their kids' routine, but effective disciplinarians who, with their constant nudges and positive reinforcement, can ensure daily school attendance. The link between parental involvement and increased school attendance significantly features in a study by Gershenson (2019), emphasizing how parental engagement is instrumental in reducing school absenteeism. Parents, with their persistent involvement, become the sentinels of their child's commitment to learning, ensuring they appreciate the value of regular schooling.

As parents, they are not just involved but wholly invested in their child's scholastic performance. This commitment manifests itself in their continual home-learning support, insightful

academic discussions, and ongoing interest in their child's progress. Over time, this involvement morphs into a driving factor backing their academic performance. In a milestone study by Ramdass and Zimmerman (2018), it was illustrated that parent-engaged study practices could positively affect children's academic performance. Parents' constant guidance, assistance, and constructive feedback not only enable children to optimize their learning outcomes but also instill in them a self-regulated learning approach, fueling academic improvement.

Finally, the measure of successful schooling often culminates at the graduation stage. Encouraging statistics show that proactive parental involvement can actively raise graduation rates. An involved parent's academic supervision, coupled with constant encouragement, ensures that the child completes the education cycle, as highlighted by Bohman, Ghaderi, and Rasmussen (2019) in their work shines a light on how the direction of parental engagement contributes to their children's eventual success in graduating from schools, even in challenging conditions.

In the grand expanse of a child's educational journey, parental involvement acts as a constellation guiding the child's pathway. Each star in this constellation increased school attendance, improved academic performance, and higher graduation rates illuminate the journey, fueling the pursuit of academic excellence. In the words of Jane D. Hull, "At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents." As we move forward with this enlightening truth, we realize the profound potential stowed in every home, waiting to be unveiled through active parental involvement in their children's education.

Conclusion

In conclusion, parental involvement in girl child education plays a vital role in achieving gender equality and inclusive growth in Nigeria. By actively engaging in their daughter's education, parents become catalysts for change, ensuring equal opportunities for all children regardless of gender. Creating a supportive learning environment is crucial for girls to thrive academically and personally. When parents and caregivers provide continuous support, guidance, and encouragement, girls are empowered to reach their full potential. By fostering a positive educational environment at home and advocating for their daughters' education, parents contribute to breaking down barriers, challenging societal norms, and promoting gender equality.

The impact of parental involvement in girl child education extends beyond individual families—it has the potential to transform Nigeria as a whole. When girls receive quality education and have equal opportunities to excel, they become agents of change and contributors to the nation's growth. Education empowers girls to become leaders, innovators, and active participants in society, driving economic development and social progress. Looking towards the future, the continued engagement of parents and caregivers in promoting girl child education will have a lasting impact on Nigeria. By investing in girls' education, the nation will experience a ripple effect, breaking cycles of

poverty, reducing gender disparities, and fostering inclusive growth. Nigeria will witness an empowered generation of girls who contribute to all sectors of society, including science, technology, politics, and entrepreneurship, thus propelling the nation towards its full potential.

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