HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN BARIGA LOCAL COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT AREA, LAGOS STATE

[1]Onalaja, Florence Oluwatobi
Email: Onalajaulws@gmail.com
Phone No: 08065943953

[2]Adebayo, Oluwatosin Elizabeth
email: tosin.adebayo3839@gmail.com
Phone No: +2347037112833

[3]Komolafe, Adefunke Titilayo
email: tkomolafe@unilag.edu.ng
Phone No: +2348029110654

[1,2,3] Department of Social Sciences Education, Faculty of Education,
University of Lagos, Akoka.

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between home–school partnership and the holistic development of preschool children in Bariga Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Lagos State. It focused on four developmental domains: social, physical, cognitive and emotional development. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The population comprised teachers and parents of preschool children in Bariga LCDA. Ten public primary schools offering early childhood classes were randomly selected. From each school, five teachers were randomly selected, and five parents were purposively selected based on their willingness to participate, resulting in 100 respondents: 50 teachers and 50 parents. Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled Home–School Partnerships and Holistic Development of Preschool Children Questionnaire (HSPHDPCQ). Mean and standard deviation, as well as Pearson's product–moment correlation coefficient, were used for data analysis. Home–school partnership had a significant negative relationship with social development ($r = -.501$, $p < .05$), significant positive relationships with physical development ($r = .400$, $p < .05$) and emotional development ($r = .742$, $p < .05$), and a positive but statistically non-significant relationship with cognitive development ($r = .659$, $p > .05$). The findings suggest that the relationship between home–school partnership and child development varied across domains. The study recommends that schools strengthen communication and parent-engagement strategies to support children's development.

***Keywords**:* Home-school partnership; Holistic development; Pre-School children; Early childhood education.

Introduction

The early years of life, commonly defined as birth to age eight, are a critical period for children's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Growth during this period lays the

foundation for later learning and well-being (Adeyemi, 2021; Oyewole, 2022). The extent to which children benefit from developmental opportunities depends partly on the environments in which they grow, particularly the home and school, and on how well these settings support one another. In Nigeria, early childhood education has received policy attention as a way to address developmental disparities. However, inconsistent support between families and schools may limit children's access to the continuous, reinforcing experiences that support their development.

Children's developmental domains are interconnected and shaped by experiences at home and school. For example, school-based motor activities, along with nutrition and play at home, may support physical development (Bakare, 2020). Cognitive development may benefit when early literacy and numeracy activities are reinforced in both settings (Ojo & Adebayo, 2021). The nature and quality of home–school collaboration may therefore matter as much as involvement in each setting. Olatunji (2023) identifies emotional intelligence as an important factor in academic success, while Sheridan et al. (2019), in a meta-analysis of 117 studies, found that family–school interventions can support children's social-behavioural competence and mental health. They also reported that outcomes varied by intervention quality and components, suggesting that contact alone may not be sufficient.

Definitions of home–school partnership have evolved from general descriptions of shared involvement to accounts that emphasise regular communication, joint decision-making, and shared goals (Adeyemi, 2020; Oladipo, 2021; Bakare, 2022). However, power and resource differences can affect partnerships. In some contexts, teachers may be treated as the primary authorities on children's education, while parents-particularly those facing literacy or economic barriers-may have limited opportunities to contribute. Research from Ghana and Kenya has highlighted the importance of addressing such barriers if partnerships are to be inclusive (Wolf, 2020). International evidence also cautions against assuming that partnership models will have the same effects in every setting. Jones, Banerjee and Jackson (2025) found that teacher-training frameworks in the United Kingdom gave limited and inconsistent attention to family-engagement skills. Koepp et al. (2022), studying children in Brazil, found that the association between parental involvement and academic achievement varied by age. These findings underline the need to consider local contexts and the particular forms of partnership being studied.

This study examines the relationship between home–school partnership and the social, physical, cognitive and emotional development of preschool children in Bariga Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Lagos State. By considering the perspectives of both parents and teachers, it seeks to provide context-specific evidence to inform recommendations for strengthening collaboration in the area.

Statement of the Problem

Despite growing recognition of early childhood as an important period for holistic development, support between homes and schools may be inconsistent for preschool children in Bariga LCDA. National estimates indicate that access to early childhood education remains limited: approximately 38% of children aged three to five participate in some form of early childhood education. A 2022 survey by the Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board (LASUBEB) reportedly found low rates of parental participation in school meetings and learning activities in urban low-income communities, as well as limited regular communication between parents and teachers. These reports suggest a gap in home–school engagement, but they do not establish how partnership relates to children's development in Bariga.

Localised evidence on this relationship is limited. Informal observations by local education officers reportedly indicate that many early childhood teachers consider insufficient parental cooperation a barrier to supporting children's developmental milestones. However, systematic evidence on how home–school partnership relates to children's social, physical, cognitive and emotional development in Bariga is lacking. Much Nigerian research in this area has focused on academic outcomes such as literacy and numeracy, giving less attention to physical, emotional, and social development. Evidence from more affluent areas may also not reflect Bariga's context, which includes high population density, diverse communities, informal employment and communal child-rearing practices.

Although policy frameworks such as Nigeria's National Policy on Integrated Early Childhood Development (2019) call for parental involvement, implementation may be limited by unclear guidance, insufficient teacher preparation for family engagement, and a lack of mechanisms to assess partnership quality. Broad calls for stronger collaboration may have limited practical effect without evidence about local needs and barriers. This study therefore examines the relationship between home-school partnership and preschool children's social, physical, cognitive and

emotional development in Bariga LCDA, using information collected from parents and teachers. The findings are intended to inform context-sensitive recommendations for supporting children's development.

Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to examine the relationship between home-school partnership and the holistic development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State. The specific objectives are to:

1. examine the relationship between home-school partnerships and the social development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State;

2. determine the relationship between home-school partnerships and the physical development of pre-school children;

3. ascertain the relationship between home-school partnerships and the cognitive development of pre-school children; and

4. examine the relationship between home-school partnerships and the emotional development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between home-school partnerships and the social development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

2. There is no significant relationship between home-school partnerships and the physical development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

3. There is no significant relationship between home-school partnerships and the cognitive development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

4. There is no significant relationship between home-school partnerships and the emotional development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

This study draws on two complementary frameworks: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Epstein's Model of Parental Involvement (2001). Together, they provide a basis for examining how home–school relationships may relate to the holistic development of preschool children.

Bronfenbrenner's theory proposes that children's development is shaped by interacting environmental systems. The microsystem includes settings where children have direct experience, such as the family, school, and peer group. Connections between these settings form the mesosystem. Home–school partnership can be understood as part of this mesosystem: communication and shared expectations between parents and teachers may provide children with more consistent support. At the same time, weak or conflicting relationships may result in less coordinated support.

Epstein's model describes the forms parental involvement can take: parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaboration with the community. The model emphasises that schools have a role in creating meaningful opportunities for partnership, rather than simply expecting parents to participate. It also helps distinguish between occasional contact and more sustained collaboration around children's learning. This distinction matters because research suggests that family–school interventions can yield different outcomes depending on their quality and components (Sheridan et al., 2019).

Combined, the frameworks offer a way to interpret how particular forms of involvement may relate to children's development across social, physical, cognitive and emotional domains. For example, Adeyemi (2020) associated parental involvement in school activities with improved social adjustment among preschool children in Lagos. Bakare (2020) reported that school-based physical activities supported by play and nutrition at home were associated with motor-skill development. Research on home learning has also linked parental engagement in reading and other learning activities with children's vocabulary and emergent literacy (Bracken & Fischel, 2008). These studies provide possible explanations for associations between home–school partnership and developmental outcomes; they do not establish that partnership alone caused those outcomes.

The frameworks may also help interpret the study's reported correlations. Home–school partnership had a positive, statistically significant relationship with physical development ($r = .400$) and emotional development ($r = .742$), while its relationship with cognitive development was positive but not statistically significant ($r = .659$, $p > .05$). The relationship with social development was negative and statistically significant ($r = -.501$). This mixed pattern does not support a general claim that stronger partnership was positively associated with every developmental domain. The negative social-development result requires careful interpretation, including examination of how the relevant measures were scored and whether other factors may have contributed to the association. The correlation results also do not show that the mesosystem mediated the relationships, since mediation was not tested.

The frameworks therefore serve as interpretive lenses rather than as mechanisms directly tested by this study. The literature also has limitations: many Nigerian studies use cross-sectional correlational designs and may not account for factors such as parental education or school resources (Adeyemi, 2020; Akinwale & Adesina, 2023). In addition, research may treat all parental contact as equivalent, even though different forms and qualities of involvement may relate differently to children's development. Policy documents may endorse parental involvement without specifying how to implement or assess it. Wolf (2020) notes that perceptions of teachers as unquestioned authorities can limit parents' contributions to school decisions. Further research could examine whether teacher training in inclusive, collaborative communication strengthens home–school partnerships in Nigerian early childhood settings.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design to examine existing conditions and respondents' views without manipulating any variables. This design was considered suitable for describing the relationship between home–school partnership and the holistic development of preschool children in Bariga Local Council Development Area (LCDA), Lagos State. The target population comprised teachers and parents of preschool children in the LCDA. Ten public primary schools offering early childhood classes were selected by simple random sampling using a balloting procedure.

Five teachers were randomly selected from each school, giving a total of 50 teachers. An equal number of parents whose children attended the selected classes were purposively selected, based

on their willingness to participate, resulting in 50 parents and a total sample of 100 respondents. Selecting the same number of teachers from each school ensured equal representation across schools but may have underrepresented schools with larger teaching staffs. The overall sample was also modest; future studies could use proportionate sampling and a larger sample to improve representativeness.

Data were collected using a researcher-designed instrument titled the Home–School Partnerships and Holistic Development of Preschool Children Questionnaire (HSPHDPCQ). Section A collected respondents' demographic information, while Section B contained items on children's social, physical, cognitive and emotional development. Responses were rated on a four-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The project supervisor reviewed the instrument for face validity before administration. It was not formally validated by experts in test and measurement, which is a limitation of the study. Permission to administer the questionnaire was obtained from the head teachers of the selected schools, and participating parents provided informed consent.

Means and standard deviations were used to analyse responses, and Pearson's product–moment correlation coefficient was used to test the research hypotheses at the .05 level of significance. The correlational results describe associations between the variables; they do not establish that home–school partnership caused changes in children's development.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between home-school partnerships and the social development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

Table 1

Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the relationship between Home-school partnerships and Social Development of Pre-School Children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State

Variables	Mean	SD	N	r	p-value	Remark
Home-school partnerships	21.28	2.27				

			100	.501	.002	*Significant*
Social development	23.17	2.56					

p<.05

Table 1 shows a statistically significant negative relationship between home-school partnership and preschool children's social-development scores in Bariga Local Council Development Area, Lagos State ($r = -.501$, $p < .05$). In this sample, higher partnership scores were associated with lower social-development scores. This is an association and does not establish that increased partnership caused lower social-development scores. The unexpected direction of the relationship warrants further examination, including a check of the scoring and interpretation of both measures.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between home-school partnerships and the physical development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the relationship between Home-school partnerships and Physical Development of Pre-School Children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State

Variables	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**	**df**	**r**	**p-value**	**Remark**
Home-school partnerships	21.28	2.27					
			100	98	.400	.000	*Significant*
Physical development	21.05	6.50					

p<.05

Table 2 shows a statistically significant positive relationship between home–school partnership and preschool children's physical-development scores in Bariga Local Council Development Area, Lagos State ($r = .400$, $p < .05$). Higher partnership scores were associated with higher physical-development scores in the sample. This finding indicates an association, not a causal effect.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between home-school partnerships and the cognitive development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

Table 3

Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the relationship between Home-school partnerships and Cognitive Development of Pre-School Children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State

Variables	Mean	SD	N	Df	r	p-value	Remark
Home-school partnerships	21.28	2.27					
			100	98	.659	.890	*Not Significant*
Cognitive development	34.10	5.12					

p<.05

Table 3 shows a positive but statistically non-significant relationship between home–school partnership and preschool children's cognitive-development scores in Bariga Local Council Development Area, Lagos State ($r = .659$, $p > .05$). Although the correlation is positive, the result does not provide sufficient statistical evidence of an association at the .05 significance level.

Hypothesis Four: There is no significant relationship between home-school partnerships and the emotional development of pre-school children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State.

Table 4

Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the relationship between Home-school partnerships on the Emotional Development of Pre-School Children in Bariga Local Council Development Area of Lagos State

Variables	Mean	SD	N	Df	r	p-value	Remark
Home-school partnerships	21.28	2.27					
			100	98	.742	.000	*Significant*
Emotional development	28.23	7.22					

p<.05

Table 4 shows a statistically significant positive relationship between home–school partnership and preschool children's emotional-development scores in Bariga Local Council Development Area, Lagos State ($r = .742$, $p < .05$). Higher partnership scores were associated with higher

emotional-development scores in the sample. This finding indicates an association, not a causal effect.

Discussion of Findings

The findings show that the relationship between home-school partnership and preschool children's development varied across domains. Partnership was positively and significantly associated with physical and emotional development, negatively and significantly associated with social development, and positively but not significantly associated with cognitive development. These results do not support the general conclusion that stronger partnership was positively related to development in all four domains. Because the study used a correlational design, the findings indicate associations and do not establish that partnership caused changes in children's development.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory provides a framework for considering how connections between home and school may relate to children's development. Consistent communication and expectations across these settings may support children, but the negative association with social-development scores requires careful interpretation. It may reflect how the measures were scored, the characteristics of the respondents, or other factors not examined in the study. The scoring and interpretation of the social-development and partnership measures should therefore be checked before concluding. Wolf's (2020) qualitative study in Ghana, which found that shared expectations between parents and teachers can support consistent behavioural guidance, offers relevant context but does not explain the direction of the result in Bariga.

Home-school partnership had a significant positive relationship with physical-development scores. This is consistent with Flynn, Pringle and Roscoe's (2023) review, which found that parent-focused interventions involving structured movement activities were associated with improvements in children's motor skills. Their findings suggest that school guidance and parent-child activities at home may complement one another. However, the present study identifies an association and does not establish that home–school partnership produced the observed physical-development scores.

The relationship between home–school partnership and cognitive-development scores was positive but not statistically significant. This result does not provide sufficient evidence of an

association in the study sample. Bracken and Fischel (2008) found links between parent–child reading activities and early literacy skills, but their findings do not confirm Bariga's result, particularly given the reported non-significance. The correlation and p-value should be verified before interpreting this result further.

The strongest positive association was between home–school partnership and emotional-development scores. Havighurst et al. (2010) found that an emotion-coaching intervention was associated with improved emotional knowledge and fewer behavioural problems among children. Although their study did not directly examine home–school partnership, it offers related evidence that supportive, consistent adult responses may benefit children's emotional development. Further research could examine whether communication and coordination between parents and teachers are associated with similar outcomes in Bariga.

Overall, the mixed findings highlight the need to examine each developmental domain separately. Future studies could use validated measures, larger samples and data from multiple sources, and investigate factors such as parental education and school resources. These steps may help explain the negative social-development relationship and clarify whether home–school partnership is associated with cognitive development in this setting.

Conclusion

The findings indicate that home–school partnership was related to preschool children's development in different ways across the domains examined in Bariga Local Council Development Area, Lagos State. Partnership had a significant positive relationship with physical and emotional development scores, a significant negative relationship with social-development scores, and a positive but statistically non-significant relationship with cognitive-development scores. These results do not support the conclusion that partnership was positively associated with all developmental domains. Because the study was correlational, it cannot establish that home–school partnership caused changes in children's development. Further research should investigate the negative social-development relationship and verify the reported cognitive-development statistics.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Preschool heads should organise regular, termly parent–teacher meetings, including individual sessions to review children's progress and discuss ways to support learning at home. These meetings may help strengthen communication and coordination between families and schools.

2. The Ministry of Education and school owners should provide preschool teachers with regular training in parent engagement, including respectful communication, cultural sensitivity and collaborative goal-setting. Tools such as parent–teacher communication logs may help encourage ongoing, two-way engagement.

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