

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

**PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT IN LOCAL CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN
SCHOOLS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS IN
THE ATEBUBU-AMANTIN MUNICIPALITY**



AYIMAYE KOFI SOLOMON

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A Thesis in the department of early childhood education,

**Faculty of applied behavioural sciences in education, submitted to the school of
graduate studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the**

award of the degree of master of philosophy

(Early Childhood Education)

in the University of Education, Winneba

FEBRUARY, 2025

DECLARATION

Student's Declaration

I, **AYIMAYE KOFI SOLOMON**, hereby declare that, this thesis with the quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and dully acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another Master's degree elsewhere.

Signature:

Date :



Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and supervision of this research work were done in accordance with the guidelines for the supervision of research work as laid down by the School of Graduate Studies, University of Education, Winneba

Supervisor: Dr. Salome Praise Otami

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife, children and parents



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I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the following individuals whose unwavering supports, guidance, and encouragement have been invaluable throughout the journey of completing this thesis. First and foremost, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Salome Praise Otami for her unwavering dedication and expertise. Her mentorship and insightful feedback have been instrumental in shaping the course of this research.

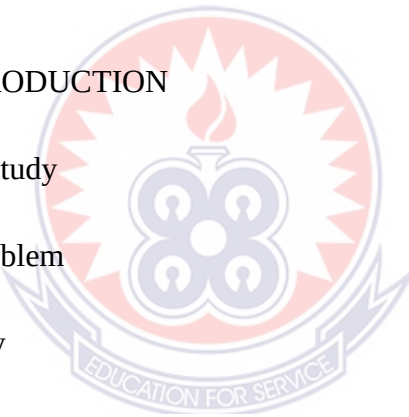
I extend my heartfelt appreciation to members of my family for their endless encouragement, love, and understanding. Their belief in my abilities has been my greatest motivation.

I want to acknowledge my friends and colleagues for their support, stimulating discussions, and for providing me with much-needed breaks during this demanding journey. This thesis is a culmination of the collective efforts and support of all those mentioned above.

While I have endeavored to list everyone, who has played a significant role, any omission is unintentional and in no way diminishes the significance of your contributions. Thank you all for being an integral part of this academic endeavor.

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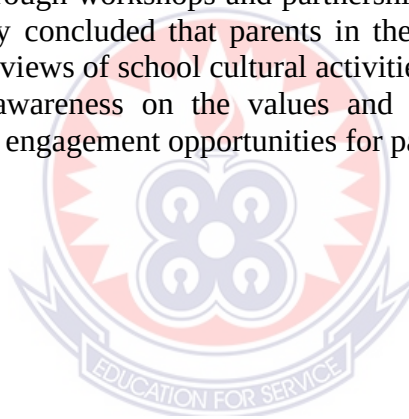
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to evaluate parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality. The study was guided by the Interpretivist paradigm. The research approach for the study was the qualitative approach. The design employed in this study was an exploratory case study design. Purposive sampling was used to select 6 educators for the interview and convenient sampling was used to select 6 parents for interview, semi-structured interview guide was adopted as the research instrument. The data was analysed using thematic approach. The study revealed that while parents in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality generally value school cultural activities as platforms for promoting cultural heritage and community cohesion, some view them as secondary to academics, that affect their involvement; parental engagement strengthens cultural knowledge, identity, and relationships within the school community, but challenges like time constraints, financial limitations, and cultural disconnection hindered participation; therefore, schools should improve communication, offer flexible participation options, design inclusive activities, and provide support through workshops and partnerships to encourage broader parental involvement. The study concluded that parents in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality generally hold positive views of school cultural activities. The study recommended that schools should raise awareness on the values and educational benefits of cultural activities, offer flexible engagement opportunities for parents.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.2 Background to the Study

Parental engagement in education has long been recognized as a crucial factor in children's academic and social development. Chatzidaki (2007) defined parental engagement as the various ways in which teaching staff create opportunities for parents to participate in their children's education and provide support within the school environment. Bonia et al. (2008) also emphasized that parental engagement extends beyond direct engagement in learning activities to include broader school support. Golby (1993) highlighted that this concept entails personal parental responsibility in fostering children's educational progress. Closely related is the term "parental participation," which refers to the broader systemic involvement of parents in school operations, recognizing that parents are not a homogeneous group and their engagement varies significantly (Larocque et al., 2011).

Several factors influence parental participation in school activities, particularly cultural and socio-economic differences. Cultural norms and perceptions about education shape the ways in which families engage with schools. Studies have highlighted significant disparities in parental involvement based on nationality, language, religion, and traditional beliefs, which dictate communication styles and behavioral expectations in different cultures (Spinthouraki et al., 1997). For instance, Asian parents may perceive physical gestures, such as touching a child's head, as disrespectful, whereas in Western

cultures, such actions symbolize affection. Similarly, communication norms vary across cultures, influencing how parents interact with teachers and school administrators.

Socioeconomic status is another critical determinant of parental engagement in school activities. Research indicates that parents with higher educational backgrounds and socioeconomic standing are more likely to actively participate in their children's education than those with limited education and financial resources (Baker & Stevenson, 1986). Families with lower socioeconomic status may experience challenges such as limited literacy, unfamiliarity with school systems, or apprehension in engaging with educators, thereby limiting their engagement in school cultural activities.

Parental engagement in schools manifests in multiple ways. Some parents engage by regularly communicating with teachers regarding their child's academic progress and school activities, while others support learning at home through supervision of homework and reinforcement of classroom lessons (Larocque et al., 2011). Additionally, some parents take on leadership roles in school governance, participate in decision-making, and contribute to extracurricular events, including cultural celebrations and community service initiatives (Gouvias & Foulidi, 2019). Research suggests that strong home-school collaboration significantly enhances children's educational experiences, fostering lifelong benefits (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014). When parents actively engage in school activities, children are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward learning and attain academic success.

There is compelling evidence that parental engagement positively influences children's academic and social outcomes. Henderson and Berla (1994) emphasized that when schools collaborate with families, students perform better not only in school but also in

other aspects of life. However, some parents face barriers to active participation, including language differences, cultural misunderstandings, and lack of awareness about school programs (Nguyen & Ashton, 2017). Additionally, educators and school staff may struggle to effectively communicate with parents or provide meaningful opportunities for engagement (Hill, 2015).

In Ghana, parental engagement in early childhood education is particularly important in shaping children's foundational learning experiences. Given the country's rich cultural heritage, school cultural activities provide a unique avenue for parental engagement. Understanding how Ghanaian parents perceive and participate in cultural events within early childhood education settings is essential for fostering inclusive and effective engagement strategies. By exploring the factors that facilitate or hinder parental participation, educators and policymakers can design culturally responsive approaches to enhance parental involvement.

Teachers play a central role in facilitating parental engagement. Developing context-specific strategies that align with Ghanaian and African cultural values can empower educators to create welcoming and inclusive school environments (Baker, 2013). Examining parental views on school cultural activities will provide insights into the motivations and challenges affecting their involvement. Strengthening parental engagement in school cultural activities can contribute to the holistic development of young children, ensuring a strong educational foundation and reinforcing cultural identity.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It is expected that schools would connect properly with communities and for that matter parents in order to ensure very solid teaching and learning environment towards a holistic development of learners right from Kindergarten level. This collaboration is an ideal situation where these groups could shape and mold the child to become the useful being that the community wants. The issue is that when this is not done right, learners would grow and lack experiences in life. This may go a long way to affect families, schools, the community and the country in general.

During the researcher's first degree internship practice at Atebubu Presby G.K school and currently serving as a teacher in the same school, he observed that cultural activities such as dancing, drumming, dressing, singing, etc. were not properly done like what is done in the community by some parents. The researcher also observed this problem among some schools in the same municipality during circuit based cultural activities. The researcher realized that even though parents are not employed by government as part of the teaching staff, if they were taking part during the performance of such activities, they could have been assisting teachers to get that done properly. This is an issue the researcher thought could be solved if there were collaboration between teachers and parents. The researcher, therefore, developed interest to research into it to find out what was actually the cause. .

Across cultures, parental engagement in early childhood education is widely acknowledged as a pivotal factor in a child's academic attainment and holistic development (Epstein, 2018; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). However, there exists a notable shortage of comprehensive understanding regarding the dynamics of parental

engagement in early childhood settings, especially in diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts (Fan & Chen, 2001; Ene, 2017).

While research has extensively explored the importance of parental engagement in early childhood education (Henderson & Berla, 1994; Epstein, 2001), there is a significant gap in understanding how to effectively engage parents from diverse backgrounds in school cultural activities, specifically in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality. Existing studies have primarily focused on parental engagement in academic activities, with limited attention to cultural activities (Hill, 2015; Nguyen & Ashton, 2017).

The researcher visited the Statistical department of the Municipal Assembly and the Ghana

Few studies have investigated the views and experiences of parents from diverse backgrounds regarding school cultural activities (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2000).

There is a lack of research on effective strategies and practices for early childhood educators and staff to promote parental engagement in school cultural activities, particularly for diverse families (Hall, 2017).

This gap in research and practice highlights the need for a study that explores the engagement of parents from diverse backgrounds in school cultural activities, and identifies effective strategies for early childhood settings to promote cultural awareness, community, and student learning.

Despite the recognized importance of parental engagement, there is a dearth of research that systematically compares and contrasts parental involvement in cultural activities in

early childhood settings globally, across the African continent, and within a specific country like Ghana.

A lot of studies have been conducted in Ghana with regards to parental engagement. Sakyi-Dawson (2015) has conducted research which focused on parental involvement in children's education in Ghana. Her work examines the various aspects of parental engagement and its impact on students' educational outcomes.

Moreover, Afriyie-Kudzawu (2016) delved into parental involvement in children's education, particularly in the context of primary schools in Accra, Ghana contributing to the fact that parental involvement in children's education is very paramount in Ghana.

Again, Asiedu-Akrofi (2016) also conducted research to investigate the relationships between parental involvement, children's academic achievement, and psychosocial functioning in the context of Ghana. These researchers have contributed valuable insights into the role of parental engagement in the educational experiences and outcomes of children in Ghana. Their studies shed light on various dimensions of this topic, including its effects on academic achievement. However, although their studies were geared towards a holistic development of children, there still remains some gaps with regards to parental engagement in school cultural activities of children at the early childhood settings.

It is in this direction that this study sought to evaluate the problem objectives taking into account the views of parents in School cultural activities, exploring the level of collaboration of parents in school cultural activities, factors that influence parents engagement in school cultural activities, effective strategies that educators can employ to encourage parental engagement in School cultural activities at the early childhood settings

in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality. This research would not only contribute to the academic discourse on parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools but would also provide practical insights for educators, policymakers, and parents to collaboratively enhance the educational experiences of young children.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality.

1.4 Research Objectives

The following are the research objectives that guided the study.

1. To examine the views of parents in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality.
2. To explore the collaboration that exist between parents and teachers in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu -Amantin municipality.
3. To find out factors that influence parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality.
4. To find out strategies that educators can employ to encourage parents to engage in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality.

1.5 Research Questions

This study was guided by these research questions:

1. What are the views of parents about local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality?
2. What is the collaboration between parents and teachers in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?
3. What factors influence parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?
4. What strategies can educators employ to encourage parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?

1.6 Significance of the Study

Findings from the study would contribute immensely in many dimensions not only in the municipality but also in the country and the world at large. Parental engagement in school cultural activities carries profound implications for educational policy formulation and implementation. By investigating the factors influencing parental engagement, policymakers can develop evidence-based strategies to promote better practices within schools. For instance, understanding the barriers faced by marginalized communities in participating in cultural events can inform the design of targeted initiatives aimed at reducing disparities in access. Moreover, research on parental engagement can advocate

for the integration of cultural competency standards into educational policies, ensuring that schools prioritize diversity and equity in their practices.

Consequently, this study would contribute to the creation of policy frameworks that foster collaborative partnerships between schools, families, and communities, ultimately enhancing educational equity and excellence.

From a theoretical standpoint, exploring parental engagement in school cultural activities advances our understanding of socioecological dynamics within educational contexts. By applying ecological systems theory, researchers can analyze the complex interactions between individuals, their social environments, and broader societal structures (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theoretical lens allows for the examination of how various factors, such as family dynamics, community resources, and cultural norms, shape parental engagement in school activities. Additionally, Epstein's model of overlapping spheres of influence provides a theoretical framework for understanding the reciprocal relationships between schools, families, and communities (Epstein, 2001). Through theoretical exploration, this study clarifies the many-sided nature of parental engagement and its implications for educational practice, contributing insights that can inform future research and theory development.

Understanding parental engagement in school cultural activities holds practical significance for educators and school leaders striving to create good learning environments. By identifying effective strategies for promoting family involvement, educators can enhance school-home partnerships and strengthen community connections. For example, organizing culturally relevant events and providing opportunities for parental participation can foster a sense of belonging and cultural pride among students

and families (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Furthermore, incorporating cultural competency training into teacher professional development programs equips educators with the skills and knowledge needed to support diverse student populations (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Through practical application, this study empowers educators to implement culturally responsive practices that celebrate diversity, promote equity, and improve student outcomes.

Investigating parental engagement in school cultural activities contributes to policy development, theoretical advancement, and practical implementation in education. By addressing policy gaps, advancing theoretical frameworks, and providing actionable insights, this study informs efforts to create good educational environments that value and celebrate the cultural diversity of students and families.

1.7 Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to Atebubu –Amantin Municipality within the Bono-East Region of Ghana. Findings and conclusions drawn from this research would not be directly applicable to other regions, municipalities or districts even though the study after completion would be of good use to the entire nation and the world at large. The study used exploratory case study design and the instruments selected for the study was semi-structured interview guide.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

According to (Patton, 2002), limitations are matters and occurrences that are out of the researcher's control and limit the outcome of a study and conclusions drawn.

Even though this study had some special features and findings that would add up to knowledge, it also attracted some limitations. Firstly, respondents' became reluctant to respond to some interview questions during the interview though they were initially informed about the process of the interview which delayed the process. But upon further consultation they finally accepted and the interview process continued. This may affect the outcome of the results because respondents may not provide the correct responds. Another issue was that three of the schools that permitted the researcher to use their school for the interview at their PTA meetings couldn't organize the PTA meeting. This consumed much time and more resources because the researcher had to go round to get another school for data collection. Again, an issue that emerged was related to the population of the study. Data was collected from only few parents as well as teachers from the early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality. This means the results of this study cannot be generalized directly to all early childhood parents and teachers in Ghana. The results can only feed us with insights and general views from the specific sample.

Irrespective of the problems uncounted, the researcher was able to gather enough data which ended the research work successfully.

1.9 Operational definition of terms

Parent: For the purpose of this study, the term parent can relate to any family member who plays a meaningful role in a child's life through discussion of the engagement of families.

Early childhood: This is the foundation of a child's life journey right from the womb to 8 years old.

Early childhood settings: These are recognized places with proper shelter where children are sent to obtain or acquire educational knowledge and experiences by experienced adults (teachers).

School culture: These are values, ethics, norms and traditions of the society/community that are transferred on to children by educators and families.

Parental engagement. This is support that parental units provide to their children in the school setting as well as at home.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one dealt with the general introduction of the study, background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study and research questions, the significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitation of the study, operational definition of terms, organization of the study. Chapter two presented on review of related literature. It provided theoretical and empirical evidence on parental engagement in local cultural activities. Chapter three presented the research methodology. It described the research design, population, sample and sampling technique, research instruments, and trustworthiness, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical consideration. Chapter four focused on presentation and discussion of the data that was collected from the field. Lastly, chapter five of the study presented the summary of the research findings, conclusions based on the findings, recommendations, and made suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Overview

This chapter presents the review of related literature on parental engagement in school cultural activities. The chapter, therefore, has been discussed under the following subheadings:

1. Theoretical Framework
2. The concept of Kindergarten Education
3. The Concept of Parental Engagement
4. The Concept of Culture in early Childhood Education
5. Views of Parents about local cultural activities in school
6. The collaboration between parents and schools (teachers).
7. Factors that influence parental engagement in local cultural activities
8. Strategies educators can employ to encourage parents to engage in local cultural activities in schools.

2.1 Theoretical Framework (Ecological systems theory and Cultural capital theory)

Theories connecting this study are the Ecological Systems Theory, proposed by developmental psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Cultural Capital Theory, developed by Pierre Bourdieu (1986). The researcher adopted these theories for the study because, Bronfenbrenner's theory highlights on the connectivity between schools, communities, organizations and how they relate with each other whilst Cultural Capital theory clearly consists of resources that can have a significant impact on social mobility

and success. These two theories have strong connectivity with the topic under study because they provide more evidence on the connectivity that exists among people in a community and what aspirations they share and uphold.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasized the dynamic interplay between individuals and their environments across multiple

levels of influence. This theory suggests that human development is shaped by interactions within and between various systems, including the microsystem (individual's immediate environment), mesosystem (connections between microsystems), exosystem (settings indirectly affecting the individual), macrosystem (cultural values and norms), and chronosystem (historical changes over time).

In the situation of parental engagement in school cultural activities, Ecological Systems Theory highlights the many-sided influences on parents' involvement, including their personal characteristics, family dynamics, school environment, community context, and broader cultural factors.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) proposed Ecological Systems Theory, which further emphasizes the dynamic interactions between individuals and their environments across multiple levels of influence. This framework suggests that parental engagement in school cultural activities is shaped by various factors operating at the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem levels. Understanding these interconnected influences is essential for promoting effective parental engagement in schools.

The microsystem comprises the immediate environments in which individuals interact directly. This includes family, peers, school, and community. According to

Bronfenbrenner (1979), the microsystem is where the most immediate and direct interactions occur, significantly influencing an individual's development.

The mesosystem involves the connections and interactions between components of the microsystem. It reflects the interplay between various settings such as the relationship between family and school or family and peer group. Bronfenbrenner (1994) highlighted the importance of understanding these connections for a comprehensive understanding of human development.

The exosystem consists of environments in which the individual may not directly participate but which still influence their development. This includes elements like the parent's workplace, community services, or extended family networks. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) emphasized the significance of these indirect influences on development.

The macrosystem covers the broader cultural, societal, and ideological context in which the individual lives. It includes cultural values, customs, laws, and social structures. Bronfenbrenner (1994) stressed the importance of considering the macrosystem in understanding human development, as it shapes the norms and beliefs that influence behavior.

The chronosystem involves the dimension of time in relation to development. It includes historical events, transitions over the lifespan, and changes in the individual's environment over time. Bronfenbrenner and Morris (2006) emphasized the dynamic nature of development and the importance of considering temporal factors.

These systems, as outlined by Bronfenbrenner, interact dynamically and collectively influence human development over time. Understanding these systems provides a comprehensive framework for studying human behavior and development.

The systems of Brufenbrenner show that, when there is strong collaboration between Prents and teachers children academic achievement also increases. According to Bronfenbrenner, all these systems work collaboratively to ensure the survival of children in life.

Cultural Capital Theory, developed by Pierre Bourdieu, explores how cultural resources, knowledge, and practices contribute to social stratification and educational outcomes. Within this framework, parental involvement in school cultural activities reflects the transmission of cultural capital from parents to children, influencing their educational experiences and achievements (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu (1986) argued that parental engagement in school cultural activities reflects the transmission of cultural capital, shaping children's educational directions and opportunities.

According to Creswell (2014), a theoretical framework provides a "scaffolding" for research, allowing researchers to situate their study within existing knowledge and theories. Furthermore, a theoretical framework often includes assumptions or propositions about the nature of the phenomenon being studied. These assumptions help guide the research process and shape the interpretation of findings.

Besides, a theoretical framework provides a roadmap for researchers, guiding them through the process of designing, conducting, and interpreting their study. By grounding

their research in established theory and concepts, researchers can build upon existing knowledge and contribute to the advancement of their field.

This theory made the researcher understand that cultural transmission is important in every community and that culture should be encouraged in school so that learners can have better insight of their traditional culture.

2.4 The concept of Kindergarten Education

Kindergarten education represents a foundational stage in a child's academic journey, providing essential opportunities for holistic development and readiness for formal schooling. Rooted in principles of early childhood education, Kindergarten programs typically cater to children aged five to six years old, focusing on nurturing cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical skills in a supportive and play-based learning environment (Bowman, et.al 2001).

With its emphasis on exploration, social interaction, and hands-on experiences, Kindergarten serves as a critical bridge between home and school, laying the groundwork for future academic success and lifelong learning. The concept of Kindergarten education is grounded in the educational philosophies of pioneers such as Friedrich Froebel, who envisioned early childhood as a period of discovery and self-expression (Johnson et.al 1999). Froebel's emphasis on play as the primary vehicle for learning continues to influence contemporary approaches to Kindergarten education, highlighting the importance of child-centered pedagogy and experiential learning. Drawing upon constructivist theories of learning, Kindergarten educators recognize children as active

participants in their own learning process, scaffolding their exploration of diverse subjects and fostering their natural curiosity (Piaget, 1952).

In Kindergarten education, curricular content is designed to encompass a broad range of developmental domains, including literacy, numeracy, social studies, science, and the arts. Through thematic units, hands-on activities, and project-based learning experiences, Kindergarten curricula aim to engage children in meaningful exploration and inquiry (Bredekamp & Copple, (1997). For example, literacy instruction may incorporate storytelling, phonemic awareness activities, and emergent writing experiences, while math instruction may involve manipulative-based exercises and games to develop early numeracy skills. Moreover, Kindergarten programs often integrate socio-emotional learning components to promote empathy, cooperation, and self-regulation among students (Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

As children progress through Kindergarten, educators play a crucial role in preparing them for the transition to formal schooling. By fostering foundational academic skills, social competencies, and a positive attitude towards learning, Kindergarten programs equip children with the tools they need to succeed in subsequent grade levels (Rimm-Kaufman & Pianta, 2000). Furthermore, partnerships between Kindergarten teachers, families, and community stakeholders facilitate continuity and support throughout the transition process, ensuring a seamless integration into the primary school environment (Pianta & Kraft-Sayre, 2003).

Again, Kindergarten education represents a crucial stage in children's development, characterized by a child-centered approach, experiential learning opportunities, and a focus on readiness for formal schooling. Grounded in educational theory and informed by

best practices, Kindergarten programs play a vital role in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and academic achievement.

2.5 The Concept of Parental Engagement

Parental engagement, defined as the engagement of parents in their children's education and overall development, is widely recognized as a crucial factor in determining children's academic success and well-being (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). This concept encompasses a range of activities and behaviors through which parents actively participate in their children's learning journey, including but not limited to attending school events, volunteering in classrooms, assisting with homework, and communicating with teachers (Epstein, 2001). Parental engagement is grounded in the belief that when parents are actively involved in their children's education, students are more likely to thrive academically, exhibit positive social behaviors, and develop a strong sense of self-efficacy (Fan & Chen, 2001).

Parental engagement takes various forms and operates across multiple dimensions, encompassing both home-based and school-based involvement (Desimone, 1999). Home-based engagement includes activities such as reading with children, discussing academic goals, and creating a supportive learning environment conducive to study habits (Desimone, 1999). School-based involvement, on the other hand, involves parents participating in school events, attending parent-teacher conferences, and volunteering in various capacities within the school community (Epstein, 2001). Additionally, parental engagement extends beyond the school setting to encompass community-based involvement, where parents collaborate with community organizations, advocate for

educational resources, and participate in advocacy efforts aimed at improving educational outcomes for all children (Desimone).

Research constantly demonstrates the positive impact of parental engagement on children's academic achievement, socio-emotional development, and overall well-being. Students with engaged parents tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation, self-confidence, and resilience, which are critical factors in academic success. Moreover, schools with strong parental engagement practices often experience improved school climate, higher levels of student attendance, and increased community support (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Through collaborative partnerships between parents, educators, and community stakeholders, parental engagement contributes to creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment where all children can thrive academically and socially (Epstein, 2001).

Despite its recognized benefits, parental engagement may encounter challenges related to cultural differences, language barriers, and socioeconomic disparities (Lareau, 2011). Addressing these challenges requires schools and educators to adopt proactive strategies that promote cultural sensitivity, provide language support, and create inclusive spaces for all families (McWayne et al., 2004). Effective strategies for enhancing parental engagement include building trusting relationships between schools and families, offering accessible communication channels, providing culturally responsive programming, and involving parents in decision-making processes (Fan & Chen, 2001; Epstein, 2001).

Epstein and Dauber (1991) outlined and validated five types of parent and family involvement: basic obligations of families, basic obligations of schools, engagement at school, involvement at home, and engagement in decision making. Epstein and Dauber

further explored connections between programs that promote the engagement of parents and families in both elementary and middle schools. They provided suggestions for schools to implement in order to encourage parent engagement. These suggested steps include establishing a beginning point for implementing parent involvement, setting goals for involving parents, assigning tasks and duties, evaluating progress, and establishing support for future actions and programs. They also illustrated that students are more successful in school when their parents are involved. The framework evident in these two studies formed the basis for this research. Unless otherwise indicated, the following studies listed in this section consist of a review of the literature.

The literature evidenced in this review is presented to support the framework described by Epstein (1986) and Epstein and Dauber (1991). In a more recent work by Epstein (2009), the framework described previously also includes community engagement as a practice that promotes family engagement for support of student achievement. In a more focused study, Voyles (2012) recommended that a school conduct a needs assessment to determine what families want rather than what educators perceive these families need when planning for parent involvement and community collaboration. Voyles further explained through the results of a case study that the perception of what is needed to build parent engagement is different from the perspective of educators as compared with the perceptions of parents through this needs assessment. Often, it seemed that parents do value education but their perception is that schools are more focused on more affluent and involved families. Voyles continued that schools often sent mixed messages about how parents should be involved. Use of community support can help to bridge these differences in the perceptions of both families and educators.

Considerable research exists to indicate that parent involvement is influential in regard to student achievement growth. Crosnoe (2009) analyzed the findings of the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), which indicated that when parents are involved and engaged in their child's learning, including sharing in activities within the school environment, joining in discussions with school personnel, and most importantly, by supporting their child's growth, development, and learning at home, students can show dramatic improvement in their academic skills growth. In the NELS, the random sample consisted of students from 1,052 schools beginning in 1988. Follow-up data were collected in 1990, 1992, 1994, and 2000 when the students in the initial study had been out of high school for 8 years. Crosnoe further explained from this longitudinal study that while students grow from this nurturing support, it is equally important for schools to collaborate with parents in order to learn more about students as individuals to teach them effectively. Crosnoe suggested that the connections between school and home are instrumental in maximizing student learning.

Moles and Fege (2011) maintained that throughout the evidence in literature, the engagement of the families of students in Title I schools promotes improved student achievement and more social success for students in the community. Engagement can denote a wide variety of activities, actions, and interventions both in the school environment and in the home setting. In addition, according to this report from the USDOE, schools receiving Title I funds must involve parents in developing a plan for increasing the parent engagement in the school. Within this parent engagement plan, schools have a responsibility to partner with parents to gain their support to improve student achievement. In addition, through a meta-analysis study Dervarics and O'Brien

(2011) suggested that a prevalent characteristic of effective parent involvement is that students gain higher achievement when their parents support their learning at home. In their study, Dervarics and O'Brien summarized information from the works of Epstein (2009) as well as government reports. Their finding indicated that educators often have a different interpretation of what parent involvement looks like. This research indicated that parents want to be involved in their child's education and that this engagement will positively impact their child's academic growth.

Bartel (2010) explained that the achievement gap actually was a separation of opportunities for learning. The author further suggested that academic skills of students are strengthened when their parents are involved in their education. Bartel concluded that parents in a higher socioeconomic level were more involved in the education of their children than those parents of lower socioeconomic status. Bartel emphasized that schools must understand the socioeconomic status of parents when developing activities to involve parents. Bartel further explained that by understanding the needs of students some potential barriers can be avoided that could possibly widen the achievement gap. Bartel indicated that when teachers solicit support from parents, their students improve academically. Further discussion of implementing purposeful strategies for parent engagement was revealed in Toldson and Lemmons (2013). They explained that by making small changes, parents may become more involved and educators can begin to understand their parents from a different perspective. Overall, through these examples, there was consensus for improved parent involvement within the school but a plan was needed to help the staff increase the involvement and engagement of parents and families.

Further, it was evident that it was necessary to develop an organized action plan to improve relationships with parents.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore the opinions of a variety of parents, not just those who are economically disadvantaged. Within the limits of this study, the researcher was unable to identify those parents who were economically disadvantaged. The researcher was able to determine that the participating school district served 80% of their students in poverty. It was probable that the majority of respondents would be economically disadvantaged to some degree. I was unable to determine which participants were living in poverty, so I decided to explore the perspective of all parents through qualitative measures. The focus of this study was to gain perspective on what parents' view as important in regard to parent engagement. Limited information was available to know if parents were indeed economically disadvantaged or not.

Furthermore, parental engagement is a many-sided concept that plays a vital role in supporting children's academic success, socio-emotional development, and overall well-being. By fostering collaborative partnerships between families, schools, and communities, parental engagement contributes to creating inclusive and supportive learning environments where all children can thrive. Embracing parental engagement as a fundamental aspect of education holds the potential to empower families, enrich school communities, and ultimately, enhance the educational outcomes of all children.

2.6 The concept of culture in early childhood education

Culture in early childhood education refers to the beliefs, values, customs, traditions, and ways of life shared by a particular group of people (Gonzalez-Mena, 2008; Rogoff, 2003)..

In the context of early childhood education, culture encompasses the diverse backgrounds, languages, ethnicities, religions, and family structures that shape children's identities and experiences. Recognizing and embracing cultural diversity is essential for creating inclusive and supportive learning environments that honor and celebrate the unique backgrounds of all children and families (Gonzalez-Mena, 2011).

Early childhood education serves as a critical foundation for fostering cultural diversity and inclusivity. By exposing young children to diverse cultures, languages, and traditions, educators promote acceptance, empathy, and respect for differences. Through multicultural education practices, educators create opportunities for children to explore and appreciate various cultural perspectives, artifacts, stories, and celebrations (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010).

Cultivating a sense of belonging and inclusion among children from different cultural backgrounds fosters positive social interactions, communication skills, and a broader understanding of the world around them. Cultural competence is an essential skill for early childhood educators, encompassing the knowledge, attitudes, and practices needed to effectively engage with diverse children and families. Culturally competent educators recognize and value the unique cultural backgrounds of each child, adapting their teaching approaches to accommodate diverse learning styles, communication preferences, and family dynamics (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Through culturally responsive pedagogy, educators create learning environments that reflect and affirm children's cultural identities, experiences, and interests. By incorporating children's home cultures into the curriculum and environment, educators promote meaningful connections between children's lived experiences and their learning experiences in the classroom.

Integrating cultural content into the curriculum and environment is essential for promoting cultural awareness and understanding among young children. Culturally relevant materials, resources, and activities provide opportunities for children to explore and engage with diverse perspectives, fostering curiosity, critical thinking, and social-emotional development (Nieto & Bode, 2012). By incorporating cultural elements such as music, art, literature, food, and traditions into the classroom, educators create inclusive and enriching learning experiences that reflect the diversity of the children they serve. Moreover, creating culturally responsive learning environments involves building partnerships with families and communities to ensure that children's cultural backgrounds are valued, respected, and integrated into all aspects of their educational experience.

Culture is a fundamental aspect of early childhood education, shaping children's identities, experiences, and interactions within educational settings. Embracing cultural diversity, fostering cultural competence, and integrating cultural perspectives into the curriculum and environment are essential for creating inclusive and responsive learning environments that promote respect, empathy, and understanding among children from diverse backgrounds.

2.7 Views of parents in school cultural activities

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in understanding the views of parents regarding their involvement in school cultural activities. Empirical studies across various regions of the world have shed light on this topic, revealing insights into the factors influencing parental engagement and its impact on students' cultural development.

Research conducted in the United States has highlighted the significance of parental involvement in school cultural activities for enhancing students' educational outcomes. Studies such as those by Henderson and Mapp (2002) emphasized that when parents actively participate in cultural events organized by schools, students demonstrate higher academic achievement, improved social skills, and greater cultural awareness. Moreover, these studies underscore the importance of fostering a collaborative relationship between parents and educators to promote a supportive school culture that values diversity and inclusivity.

In Europe, empirical investigations have examined the role of cultural activities in bridging the gap between home and school environments. Research by Jeynes (2005) indicates that parental involvement in cultural events not only contributes to students' academic success but also fosters a sense of belonging and community cohesion within schools. Moreover, findings suggest that schools with active parental engagement programs tend to have higher levels of cultural diversity and tolerance among students.

Studies conducted in Asian countries have revealed cultural nuances that influence parental perceptions of school engagement. Research by Chua and Tan (2016) in Singapore, for instance, suggests that parental attitudes toward school cultural activities are shaped by cultural values emphasizing academic excellence and discipline. Despite this, there is a growing recognition of the importance of integrating cultural enrichment activities into the curriculum to promote holistic development among students. Furthermore, findings emphasize the need for schools to provide support and resources to facilitate parental participation in cultural events.

Empirical research in African contexts has highlighted the role of parental involvement in preserving cultural heritage and promoting intergenerational transmission of traditions. Studies by Ogunsiji and Ogunsiji (2018) in Nigeria revealed that parents value school cultural activities as opportunities for their children to learn about their cultural identity and heritage. Furthermore, findings underscore the need for schools to incorporate culturally relevant content and practices into their programs to engage parents effectively and promote mutual respect and understanding.

Empirical research on the perception of parents in school cultural activities across different parts of the world underscores the importance of parental engagement in enhancing students' educational experiences and fostering a supportive school environment. These studies highlight the need for collaborative efforts between parents, educators, and policymakers to promote inclusive cultural practices in schools and address the diverse needs and perspectives of families from various cultural backgrounds.

The purpose of the study was to understand parents' perception of the value of education, and the level of parents' engagement in their children's education. The study was guided by preparing and using semi-structured, informal, and focus group interviews as well as documents (written reports, memoranda, meeting notes) that describe parental values of education; reviewing pertinent literature on parent values of education, identifying and summarizing concepts that help explain factors associated with parental support for their children attending school. Participants' (i.e. community elders, parents, teachers and school administrators) perspectives were examined for the purpose of developing a set of propositions. The study confirmed that norms, values, and beliefs held by a group influences behavior. It revealed that the dominant factor that inhibits parents' support for

their children's education in the community school was related to traditional culture. In sum, strong cultures may be rigid and thus be a liability when adaptation is essential. Understanding gained from this exploratory study will be relevant to the economically developing nations in Sub-Saharan Africa and even beyond.

Parents' perspectives on the efficacy of education and their relations with schools, particularly with regard to supporting their children's learning, has a powerful effect on the academic success of their children. According to a study by Wilson et. al (2004), teachers concur that they cannot do it alone, and for effective educational processes to occur in classrooms, parental help in partnership with educators is needed.

Epstein and Salinas (2004) stated that a school learning community includes educators, students, parents, and community partners who work together to improve the school and enhance students' learning opportunities. The home, school, and community connections make school subjects more meaningful for students. In addition, to learn at high levels, all students need the guidance and support of their teachers, families, and others in the community. Nonetheless, there are several inhibitions to parents' involvement in their children's education in many parts of the world. There is the need to identify and address those factors that pose as obstacles to parental engagement in their children's education. For instance, the government of Ghana introduced a new educational reform program dubbed "Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education" (FCUBE). However, despite this policy, some students in Ghana are still unable to attend school due to various reasons such as: Poverty and economic constraints (UNICEF, 2019), Lack of access to education in rural areas (World Bank, 2018}, Children with disabilities facing barriers to inclusive education (Ghana Education Service, 2020), Girls being denied education due to gender

stereotypes and societal norms (Plan International, 2019). Based on the information gathered from forums and conferences of heads of schools in the country, it is evident Some parents in Ghana do not provide basic necessities like textbooks, uniforms, and meals for their children, and the few children who attend schools do not have adequate parental support making it difficult for them to attend school regularly" (Conference of Heads of Basic Schools, 2019). "Lack of parental guidance and support is a significant factor contributing to indiscipline and poor behavior among students in Ghanaian schools" (Ghana National Association of Teachers, 2018).

"Many parents in Ghana are not involved in their children's education, leading to a lack of accountability and poor academic performance" (West African Examinations Council, 2017).

The study took place at a community school that was established as a local initiative, born out of the local value system and moral values of the village. It was set up to directly meet the immediate and compelling needs of the community. To care for and educate children of working parents. The school helped to improve the living conditions of the people of the community (with high illiteracy rate and low-income population) and surrounding areas by providing support and education for their children. Students of the school have little support from parents.

For example, a child may come to school with only one exercise book for lessons in about eight different subjects, as well as assigned homework. In addition, few students come to school with text books. During a reading class, more than six children often crowd over the one textbook owned by a single student.

The effect of the unfortunate lack of textbooks is compounded by the inability of students to practice reading at home, which inhibits the students' learning and achievement. This also makes things difficult for teachers and the school administration. Although parents are responsible for providing books and school supplies, they often blame teachers for their child's poor academic performance. Ironically, parents who claim to be too poor to afford school supplies and books often dress up in elegant clothes on special occasions, such as parties, and funerals. World Bank. (2008).

The objective of this exploratory qualitative study is to understand parents' view of the value of education, and the level of parents' involvement in their children's education. The essential characteristic of the Ghanaian social system is its accommodation of traditional cultures, customs, and practices with demands of contemporary life. Relationships within traditional society are based on family membership, inherited status, and ancestral beliefs. Contemporary society is grafted onto traditional roots, and although traditional social relationships have often been partially transformed to fit the needs of modern life, they continue to endure. Country Studies. (n.d.).

The questions that need to be addressed in this study are: If parents of the community school have priorities to allocate their resources, what are they? What are parents' family values or what is most important for their children? Kumari et.al (2024).

Moreover, several factors influence parents' views of school cultural activities, including their own cultural background, socio-economic status, and previous experiences with the education system. Cultural values and beliefs may shape parents' views on the relevance and importance of cultural activities in their children's education (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Moreover, parents' socio-economic status may affect their ability to participate due

to constraints such as time, transportation, and financial resources (Lareau, 2011). Previous interactions with the school, including the quality of communication and level of engagement encouraged, can also influence parents' perceptions of cultural activities (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Parents who hold positive perceptions of school cultural activities often view them as opportunities for their children to develop cultural awareness, appreciation, and identity. They recognize the value of exposing their children to diverse experiences and traditions, contributing to their overall educational and personal growth (Desimone, 1999). Positive views of cultural activities are associated with increased parental involvement, support for school initiatives, and strengthened family-school partnerships (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Additionally, parents may view cultural activities as platforms for community building and social cohesion, fostering a sense of belonging and pride within the school community (Epstein, 2001).

Despite the potential benefits, parents may face various challenges and barriers that influence their views and participation in school cultural activities. Language barriers, cultural differences, and lack of awareness or understanding about the purpose and significance of these activities can deter parental involvement (McWayne et al., 2004). Additionally, logistical challenges such as conflicting schedules, transportation issues, and competing priorities may hinder parents' ability to attend or engage fully in cultural events (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Addressing these challenges requires proactive efforts to promote cultural sensitivity, provide language support, and create inclusive spaces that accommodate diverse needs and preferences (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

Moreover, parents' views of school cultural activities significantly influences their level of engagement and support within the school community. Positive views can lead to increased involvement, enhanced family-school partnerships, and improved educational outcomes for children. However, addressing challenges and barriers requires collaborative efforts from schools, families, and communities to create inclusive environments that value and celebrate diversity.

2.8 Factors that influence parental participation

The main obstacles to parental involvement come from the parents themselves. These obstacles are related to the multiple obligations of the parents and to their cultural characteristics. Their tiring, manual, long and low-paid work in extremely difficult conditions, the rolling schedule, the serious living problems, the many family obligations, and the lack of free time are considered obstacles to parental engagement as they make it extremely difficult for parents to participate in school activities (Nova-Kaltsouni, 2004). These obstacles are increased due to the ignorance of the language of the host country (Moles, 1993), the ignorance of its educational system (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990), the lack of parents' education (Damanakis, 2005), and negative personal experiences with education (Lopez, 2001).

The research of Bonia et al. (2008) identified obstacles on the part of teachers, in a sample of 1,121 teachers from many cities in Greece, having the research topic of the parents' views of parental involvement and their attitude towards it. This research concludes that the attitude of teachers towards parental engagement was quite positive. Obstacles are related to the lack of training of teachers in matters of cooperation with parents and the lack of time on behalf of teachers. It emphatically argues for the informal, non-

institutionalized form of cooperation, which exists in parallel with the institutionally guaranteed parent-teacher communication and correlates it with the cultural capital of the participants. Finally, the role of teachers is highlighted in the research of Mylonakou-Keke (2017). Its innovation is that it correlates the obstacles of parental engagement with the years of service of teachers. This is because, due to many years of service, these teachers have reduced endurance and are not willing to be involved in either a crisis management or a difficult negative situation. After many years of service, they do not tolerate being challenged; they have not been trained in family-school cooperation to deal with such negative situations, when working with a foreign family.

2.9 The level of collaboration between parents and teachers

Collaboration between parents and teachers is widely recognized as a fundamental component of a child's academic success and overall development. Empirical studies have consistently shown that when parents and teachers work together, students perform better academically, demonstrate improved social skills, and exhibit positive behavioral outcomes. Epstein (1995) introduced a framework for school, family, and community partnerships, emphasizing the importance of parental involvement in education. Her research highlights that effective collaboration between parents and teachers fosters an environment where children receive consistent support at home and school, reinforcing their learning experiences. Similarly, Henderson and Mapp (2002) found that schools with active parental engagement reported higher student achievement and lower dropout rates, indicating the crucial role of strong parent-teacher relationships.

Despite its importance, the level of collaboration between parents and teachers varies significantly due to several factors. One of the primary barriers to effective collaboration

is socioeconomic status. Research by LaRocque et. al (2011), found that parents from low-income backgrounds often struggle to engage with schools due to financial constraints, demanding work schedules, and limited access to transportation. These challenges make it difficult for parents to attend school meetings, communicate regularly with teachers, or participate in school activities. Additionally, studies indicate that communication gaps between parents and teachers hinder collaboration. Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) discovered that some teachers lack the necessary training to engage effectively with parents, while some parents, particularly those with limited educational backgrounds, feel intimidated when interacting with teachers. This often results in passive parental engagement, where parents do not actively contribute to their children's learning process.

Cultural differences also influence the level of parent-teacher collaboration. Research by Goodall and Vorhaus (2011) suggested that in multicultural communities, language barriers, differing educational values, and variations in parental expectations can create obstacles to effective engagement. For example, in some cultures, parents may view teachers as the sole authority figures in education and may not see the need to be actively involved in their children's academic journey. This perception can lead to minimal communication between parents and teachers, ultimately affecting students' academic performance. Moreover, studies indicate that schools in rural areas often experience lower levels of parent-teacher collaboration due to logistical challenges, including limited access to technology and fewer opportunities for direct engagement. Okeke (2014), in a study conducted in South Africa, found that rural schools faced significant barriers in

involving parents due to the lack of structured engagement programs and inadequate school resources.

To enhance parent-teacher collaboration, several empirical studies have proposed effective strategies. One of the most widely recommended approaches is improving communication between parents and teachers. Graham-Clay (2005) found that schools that established multiple communication channels, such as newsletters, phone calls, and digital platforms, experienced higher levels of parental engagement. Consistent and positive communication encourages parents to take an active role in their children's education. Additionally, building trust between parents and teachers is essential for fostering collaboration. Bryk and Schneider (2002) emphasized that schools with high levels of trust among teachers, parents, and administrators were more likely to experience successful partnerships. Trust can be developed through transparency, active listening, and mutual respect between educators and parents.

Another effective strategy for improving collaboration is involving parents in school decision-making processes. Research by Fan and Chen (2001) revealed that when parents participate in school governance, volunteer activities, and academic programs, they develop a sense of belonging, making them more invested in their children's education. Epstein and Sanders (2006) argued that flexible meeting schedules and tailored engagement programs can accommodate working parents, allowing them to be more actively involved in school activities. Moreover, parent-teacher associations (PTAs) have been identified as a significant avenue for enhancing collaboration. A study by Essuman and Akyeampong (2011) in Ghana found that schools with well-structured PTAs experienced better discipline, increased student performance, and improved relationships

between parents and teachers. However, they also noted that some PTAs lack proper organizational structures, limiting their effectiveness.

Several case studies further demonstrate the positive impact of parent-teacher collaboration. A study conducted by Boonk et al. (2018) in the Netherlands found that students whose parents regularly communicated with teachers and participated in school activities performed better academically, particularly in subjects such as mathematics and reading. The study concluded that a strong home-school partnership creates a supportive learning environment that enhances student achievement. Similarly, research conducted in Ghana by Essuman and Akyeampong (2011) highlighted the role of community engagement in strengthening parent-teacher relationships. Their study found that rural schools that implemented home visits and community meetings were able to bridge the gap between parents and teachers, leading to improved student outcomes.

2.10 Strategies to Encouraging Parental Engagement in School Cultural Activities:

Educators play a crucial role in promoting parental engagement in school cultural activities by implementing strategies that recognize and address barriers to participation. By nurturing collaborative partnerships between schools and families, educators can create inclusive and welcoming environments that encourage active engagement and support parents' contributions to their children's educational experiences (Epstein, 2001).

One effective strategy for encouraging parental engagement in school cultural activities is to build trusting relationships with families. Establishing open lines of communication, demonstrating respect for parents' perspectives, and valuing their contributions are essential steps in cultivating trust and rapport (Hill & Tyson, 2009). By actively listening

to parents' concerns, addressing their needs, and acknowledging their expertise as partners in their children's education, educators can create a supportive and collaborative environment that encourages parents to participate in cultural events (Epstein, 2001).

Clear communication and information are essential for ensuring that parents are aware of and informed about school cultural activities. Educators can employ various communication channels, including newsletters, websites, social media, and mobile apps, to disseminate information about upcoming events, deadlines, and opportunities for involvement (Desimone, 1999). Providing information in multiple languages and formats, such as written materials, verbal announcements, and visual displays, ensures that all families can access and understand event details (Hill & Taylor, 2004). Additionally, offering personalized invitations and reminders can help reinforce the importance of parental participation and encourage families to attend cultural activities.

Recognizing the diverse needs and preferences of families, educators can offer flexibility and accommodations to facilitate parental engagement in school cultural activities. This may include scheduling events at different times of the day or week to accommodate parents' work schedules, providing transportation assistance or arranging carpools for families with limited mobility, and offering childcare services during events to support parents with young children (Epstein, 2001). By removing logistical barriers and making cultural activities accessible to all families, educators demonstrate their commitment to inclusivity and equity (McWayne et al., 2004).

Creating welcoming and inclusive environments is essential for fostering parental engagement in school cultural activities. Educators can design culturally responsive spaces that reflect and celebrate the diversity of the school community, incorporating

elements such as multicultural displays, artwork, literature, and music (Gonzalez-Mena, 2011). By valuing and affirming the cultural identities of all families, educators create environments where parents feel respected, valued, and empowered to participate in cultural events (Nieto & Bode, 2012). Additionally, involving parents in the planning and decision-making process for cultural activities promotes a sense of ownership and investment in the school community.

Innovative strategies to engage families emerged from a study conducted by Smith et al. (2011). Through their qualitative study, which included interviews with school leaders in 12 charter schools across six states, the authors noted that there are differing perceptions of what parent involvement means in each school. These charter schools all held policies requiring a parent involvement plan. Each school had a diverse student population with a significant number of students who were economically disadvantaged. School leaders were interviewed to determine which parent engagement practices are used in their schools. Among these strategies, the most influential finding was training programs to teach parents how to be involved and engaged in their children's education. Smith et al. also noted that overall parent involvement is increased when parents of minority students are included in the decision making of the school. Results indicated that schools were successful in increasing parent engagement when the task was a priority in every aspect of the school.

Developing relationships between parents and school staff can offset any negative associations that may impact the parents' perception of the school. Getting to know students and their families individually will provide teachers with knowledge of unique cultural differences in order to improve communication and to aid in planning for parental

involvement. These concepts were discussed by Murray (2009) who further elaborated that by building these relationships, a sense of trust could be developed between teachers and parents, which will strengthen communication efforts. This quantitative research investigated the correlation between the relationship between parents and students and parents and teachers of students who are economically disadvantaged. The study consisted of 129 youth in a large city in the Midwest. The majority of participants were Hispanic/Latino or African American of whom 99% of participants qualified for free or reduced priced meals. The students were in grades 6 - 8 and over half of the participants were female. Participants were administered the Research Assessment package for Schools (RAPS) that is used to determine the engagement of students in school. Findings from this research indicated that students who felt that they had little support from either parents or teachers had a lower perception of their abilities in school. From this research, it can be suggested that educators should receive training in how to communicate with parents to enlist their support.

A common thread in the literature in regard to parent involvement is that school personnel should be understanding and tolerant of the unique cultural differences of families to improve communication. Through an analysis of existing literature, Bang (2009) focused on the need for school personnel to be more aware of cultural differences, especially when parents originate from countries other than the United States. Additionally, Bang stressed that educators should ensure that parents know what to expect and there should be clear channels of communication, especially when communicating with parents of students from different cultures. It can be determined from the research that by becoming aware of differences of students, educators can better understand how to communicate with their

parents. In addition, communication efforts should also be part of the planning process in engaging families.

Furthermore, it is also necessary to consider parents of all students in the school environment when planning for effective engagement strategies. The difficult task of involving parents of students with disabilities was described by Staples and Diliberto (2010). Through a review of current and historical research, Staples and Diliberto examined fundamental elements of building a rapport with parents of students with disabilities for purposes of engaging them in the education of their children and building effective communication. The concept of collaboration and sharing in the educational decisions of students are the foundation of the federal legislation that governs students with disabilities. Although there is no federal law to require engagement of parents, we can learn from the experiences of parents of students with disabilities that students make much better progress when schools collaborate with parents and a plan of action is developed. From their research, it can be surmised that by involving parents of any students in collaboration, an impression is given to students who a team of educators and parents are working together to provide support.

Educators often use varying methods to reach students with diverse and unique needs in the classroom setting. Similarly, it may also be effective to examine the unique and diverse needs of parents to improve their involvement in the education of their children. This concept is illustrated in Weasmer and Woods (2010) who explored the attitude that educators may have toward students with unique needs. Suggestions were developed that included ways to interact and communicate with parents of students with disabilities that will encourage a positive working relationship. Weasmer and Woods suggested that

teachers should communicate with other professionals to determine best practices. They further stated that it is important to interact with parents to gain an understanding of their perspective in regard to their child's education. Teachers should also observe the student to form their own understanding and to set priorities and develop procedures to implement the most effective program for students. Weasmer and Woods further explained that continued professional development is also critical to stay current with new trends in the field of study. From their research it can be surmised that these practices can also be applied to involving and engaging families of students in the targeted subgroups and should be included in planning for family engagement.

Planning for technology and communication. Mitchell et.al (2009), explored technology options for enhanced communications and stressed that educators should search for multiple ways to communicate with all parents and families. Their research implied that communication should be a major component of any plan for parent engagement. To provide communication to families with limited access to internet use, the strategies suggested in their research indicated that school staff should continue to utilize traditional methods to communicate with parents, including hard copies. It was further indicated that care should be given to communicate with parents in their home languages as much as possible. They further emphasized that some parents may have limited access to technology so methods should be explored to develop communication with all parents and families. Like other skills, their research suggested that it may also be necessary to provide additional instruction to parents regarding how to use the technology available to them.

Planning for fostering positive relationships. When counselors and administrators foster positive relationships with parents of students that are at risk for failure, the academic success of these students greatly increases according to Williams et.al (2014). They utilized the role of counselors to create an environment of partnerships for families of students. Counselors linked parents with teachers to help offset any negative connotations of poverty and mistrust that may have developed within the school. This process helped connect student learning with real life experiences for students. According to Williams et al., the role of school counselors can expand to help staff learn how to collaborate effectively with parents of students who are less resilient or disadvantaged. According to this research, parents of students who are economically disadvantaged typically view communication with the school negatively due to the views of educators regarding their economic situation. Counselors can help to bridge the communication between parents and educators and these counselors should be involved in the planning for developing collaboration between parents and school staff.

Planning for the effects of poverty and diversity. The effects of poverty on students and their families are discussed in Jensen (2013) in that the engagement of parents and families of students living in poverty can be especially challenging for schools. Jensen outlined seven principles that impact achievement and performance of students living in poverty. Implementing strategies based on these seven principles will promote achievement growth for students living in poverty. These seven principles consist of building nutrition through physical activity, introducing and using vocabulary to build student knowledge, building respectful relationships with students and families, providing supportive learning by equipping students with task specific feedback and goal setting,

building students' cognitive capacity, monitoring progress and interventions to build academic skills, and developing organizational and functional tools. Jensen suggested that educators should take the initiative to communicate that they care about students in every communication with parents. Perhaps the greatest lesson to be gained from his review of principles is that educators should recognize the unique characteristics of families of students living in poverty and to plan for developing innovative strategies for engaging them in the learning environment.

According to Deverics and O'Brien (2011), an important component of building student achievement using a backward design method discussed by Wiggins and McTighe (2007) is that school staff should identify the academic areas where students are most deficient to focus on improvement. The report indicated that interactive homework is an important way to bring parents and students together in support of education. Their discussion of homework interaction can be simple but should include a portion of the students' homework to be completed with their parents.

2.11 Summary of the Literature

The literature above gives clear overview of parental engagement in solid cultural activities. From the literature review the engagement of parents is of value and should be encouraged in order to improve learners' performance. Parental engagement enables proper collaboration between parents and schools to ensure child development in schools. Views of parents with regards to culture in the schools should be of priority to teachers, opinion leaders as well as policy makers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Overview

This chapter discussed the methodology of the study. It discussed the research paradigm, research approach, design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, research instrument, data collection procedures, data analysis procedure and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Paradigm

The study was guided by the Interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism is a philosophical stance that guides qualitative research methods and emphasizes the importance of understanding the social and cultural context in which individuals and phenomena are situated. It assumes that reality is subjective and that people construct their own meanings and interpretations of the world. Interpretivism asserts that reality is subjective and varies from person to person. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have argued that "reality is not 'out there' to be discovered objectively, but rather, it is interpreted by individuals in unique ways." Hermeneutics is a key aspect of interpretive research, emphasizing the interpretation of texts, narratives, and symbols. Gadamer (1989) highlighted that "hermeneutics is the art of interpretation and understanding, especially of written texts."

Interpretivism values the understanding of social and cultural contexts. Geertz (1973) suggested that researchers should engage in "thick description," providing rich contextual details to understand phenomena deeply.

Interpretivism often emphasizes the emic perspective, which means understanding phenomena from the insider's point of view. Van Maanen (1979) advocated for "immersing oneself in the culture or context under study to gain an insider's perspective."

Interpretivism recognizes that social phenomena are inherently subjective and context-dependent, shaped by the interpretations and meanings individuals attribute to them (Schwandt, 1994). In qualitative research, understanding these subjective perspectives is crucial for uncovering the complexities of human behavior, attitudes, and interactions. Interpretivism encourages researchers to consider the cultural and contextual factors that influence individuals' interpretations and experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By situating research within its broader sociocultural context, interpretivist approaches enable researchers to explore how cultural norms, values, and social structures shape people's understanding of the world.

Interpretivism advocates for a holistic approach to understanding social phenomena, recognizing that they are multifaceted and interconnected (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In qualitative research, this perspective allows researchers to explore the intricate relationships and dynamics that characterize human behavior and social interactions, leading to rich and nuanced understandings of phenomena.

Interpretivism is compatible with a wide range of qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These methods allow researchers to capture the subjective experiences and perspectives of participants, facilitating in-depth exploration and interpretation of social phenomena.

For flexibility and subjectivity, Interpretivism encourages researchers to reflect on their own biases, assumptions, and interpretations throughout the research process (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). By acknowledging their own subjectivity, researchers can adopt a reflexive stance and engage in critical reflection, enhancing the rigor and validity of their interpretations.

Overall, interpretivism offers a valuable philosophical framework for qualitative research, enabling researchers to explore the complexities of human experiences and social phenomena in depth. By emphasizing subjective understanding, cultural context, and holistic perspectives, interpretivist approaches contribute to the generation of rich and nuanced insights into the social world.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach adopted for this study is qualitative approach. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is characterized by a focus on understanding the context and the meanings individuals attribute to their experiences.

It is used for this study because it is a methodology that focuses on exploring and understanding phenomena through non-numerical data, such as words, images, and narratives. This approach aims to gain insight into the depth and complexity of a subject by examining the underlying meanings, motivations, and experiences of individuals or groups involved. Qualitative research often involves methods such as interviews, observations, and thematic analysis to gather and analyze data

Qualitative research is an approach to inquiry that focuses on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of the individuals involved, exploring the richness,

depth, and complexity of human experiences, behaviors, and interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Unlike quantitative research, which emphasizes numerical data and statistical analysis, qualitative research seeks to uncover the meanings, interpretations, and subjective understandings that shape people's lives. Qualitative research is exploratory in nature, seeking to generate new insights and understandings rather than testing predefined hypotheses. It often employs inductive reasoning, where patterns and themes emerge from the data collected during the research process (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Qualitative research emphasizes the importance of understanding phenomena within their social, cultural, and historical contexts. Researchers strive to explore how context shapes individuals' experiences, behaviors, and interpretations, recognizing that meaning is often embedded in specific social settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Qualitative research acknowledges the subjectivity of human experiences and perspectives. It seeks to understand the world from the standpoint of the participants, recognizing that people interpret and make sense of their experiences in diverse ways (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Qualitative research is characterized by flexibility and adaptability. Researchers often use open-ended data collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, allowing for in-depth exploration of complex phenomena. The research process is iterative, with data collection and analysis informing each other in an ongoing dialogue (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Qualitative research aims to capture the complexity and richness of human experiences by examining multiple dimensions of phenomena. Researchers explore the interplay between individual, social, cultural, and structural factors, recognizing that phenomena are many-sided and interconnected (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

In addition, qualitative research is a versatile and nuanced approach to inquiry that seeks to understand social phenomena from the perspective of the individuals involved. By embracing subjectivity, conceptuality, and complexity, qualitative research offers valuable insights into the lived experiences and social dynamics that shape our world.

3.3 Research Design

The design employed in this study is an exploratory case study. The researcher chose this design because it provided the researcher with in-depth information on the study for a clearer understanding of complex phenomena, explore new topics, generate hypotheses, and uncover underlying patterns or relationships (Yin, 2018).

Exploratory case studies are particularly useful when researchers aim to explore topics or phenomena that have not been extensively studied in existing literature. By conducting in-depth investigations of specific cases, researchers can uncover new insights and contribute to the development of knowledge in the field (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

3.4 Study Area

The area of study for this research is Atebubu-Amantin Municipality in the Bono-East Region of Ghana. This area was chosen because it would help me obtain the necessary information needed for the research under study. Moreover, the researcher has lived in

this district for over a decade and I know places in the municipality and this granted the researcher a successful data collection.

Before it became a Municipal in March 2018, the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality had status of a District in the then Brong Ahafo Region now Bono-East region. Later, different Districts like Sene District which has now been decoupled into Sene-East and Sene-West districts, Pru District which is now Pru East and Pru West emanated from the then Atebubu –Amantin District. It was elevated to a Municipality in 2019 under the legislative instrument 1858. Even though there are few government workers and business men in the community, farmers in the area are predominantly peasant farmers who produce crops such as yam, maize, rice, garden egg etc. The area is also made up of different ethnic groups with different languages who understand each other and coexist peacefully.

3.5 Population of the study

The population for the study was all Kindergarten teachers and parents within the geographical area of the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality. This particular population was chosen for the study because a representative sample ensures that the results can be applied to the entire population (Creswell, 2014). Including both stakeholders enriched the understanding of the dynamics involved in parental engagement. As Epstein (2018) highlighted involving multiple stakeholders allows for a more comprehensive understanding of family-school partnerships.

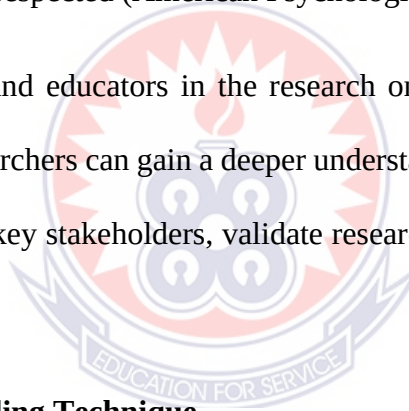
Involving parents and educators in the research process fosters collaboration between these two essential groups. By engaging in dialogue and problem-solving together, parents and educators can collectively identify barriers to parental engagement and

develop strategies to address them. Collaborative approaches have been shown to enhance the effectiveness of family-school partnerships (Izzo et al., 1999).

When both parents and educators participate in the research, findings are more likely to be perceived as valid and relevant by both groups. This enhances the credibility of the research outcomes and increases the likelihood of their acceptance and implementation in practice (Hoover et. al (1997).

Inclusive research practices that involve all stakeholders, including parents and educators, align with ethical principles of research, ensuring that the voices of those affected by the research are heard and respected (American Psychological Association, 2017).

By involving parents and educators in the research on parental engagement in school cultural activities, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, foster collaboration between key stakeholders, validate research findings, and adhere to ethical principles.



3.6 Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size and sampling technique were chosen to conform to the study's objectives to ensure proper and relevant data collection. For the purpose of this study, purposive sampling was used to select 6 educators to be interviewed based on their teaching experience, that is, teachers who have taught in the municipality for ten (10) years and above and convenient sampling was also used to select 6 parents for the interview during PTA meetings because they were readily available. This selection of the sample size was based on what Taherdoost (2016) explained that a study aimed at exploring a phenomenon is best achieved using a sample size of 5-20 participants. Again, Rallis and Rossman

(2014) were of the view that with qualitative research, a sample size as small as 5 and as large as 30 participants can be used. Purposive sampling involves selecting participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research question or objectives whilst Convenience sampling involves selecting participants based on their availability and accessibility to the researcher.

Researchers deliberately choose individuals who possess the characteristics or experiences that are most pertinent to the study. This approach allows researchers to target participants who can provide rich, in-depth insights into the phenomenon under investigation. In the context of studying parental engagement in school cultural activities, researchers might conveniently select parents who have actively participated in such activities with their children. Purposive sampling is particularly useful when the researcher seeks to explore diverse perspectives or experiences within a limited sample size (Palinkas et al., 2015).

This method is often employed due to its practicality and ease of implementation, especially when time and resources are limited. Researchers may recruit participants from locations or settings convenient to them, such as nearby schools or community centers. While convenience sampling may not ensure representativeness or generalizability, it can still provide valuable insights, particularly in exploratory or preliminary studies (Etikan et al., 2016).

3.7 Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument was selected based on the objectives of the research which lead to the selection of semi-structured interview. Questions were carefully set taking into

consideration the time frame of respondents. This instrument was adopted by the researcher based on these reasons:

In terms of flexibility, Semi-structured interviews offer a balance between flexibility and structure. Researchers have a set of predetermined questions or topics but can also explore new avenues based on participants' responses, allowing for a more in-depth exploration of the research topic (Smith, 2015).

These interviews allow researchers to gather rich and detailed data about participants' experiences, perspectives, and behaviors. Participants have the opportunity to express themselves in their own words, providing insights that may not be captured through other data collection methods (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In terms of understanding context, Semi-structured interviews are particularly useful for gaining a deeper understanding of the context in which participants' experiences occur. Researchers can probe for contextual factors, cultural norms, and social dynamics, providing valuable insights into the complexity of human behavior (Flick, 2018).

For Participant Engagement, these interviews encourage active participation from participants, leading to more authentic and insightful responses. By allowing participants to share their stories and perspectives, researchers can build rapport and trust, creating a conducive environment for open communication (Seidman, 2013).

Semi-structured interviews allow for an iterative exploration of the research topic. Researchers can adapt their questions based on initial findings, follow up on emerging themes, and explore new avenues of inquiry in subsequent interviews, leading to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Participants were asked questions as to whether what actually encourage them to participate in their children's school activities, whether they know the location of the school, how often teachers invite them to the school and what could possibly prevent them from participating in such activities. This actually helped the researcher understood their views more.

3.8 Trustworthiness Criteria

The purpose of this is to enable researchers convince themselves and readers that their study findings are worthy of attention. The criteria established were credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability.

Credibility refers to the confidence in the truth of the findings. It involves ensuring that the research accurately reflects the participants' perspectives and experiences. Techniques to enhance credibility include member checks, prolonged engagement, and triangulation of data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Establishing credibility is essential for building trust with stakeholders and ensuring that the findings are a true representation of the phenomena studied. By involving participants in verifying findings, researchers can refine interpretations and enhance the authenticity of their work (Morrow, 2005).

The researcher spent time with participants in order to build rapport and to gain their confidence. Again, the researcher shared interview transcripts or summaries with participants to confirm accuracy of the interpretations.

Dependability. Dependability is the stability of data over time and under different conditions. It emphasizes the need for a consistent and repeatable research process.

Strategies to enhance dependability include auditing, reflexivity, and detailed documentation of the research process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Dependability is vital as it allows other researchers to follow the research trail, which enhances the reliability of the study. By providing clear descriptions of the methodology, researchers facilitate the possibility of replication and comparison with other studies, thereby reinforcing the validity of the findings (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The researcher discuss methods and interpretations with research peers which helped identified potential biases of the data.

- Transferability involves the extent to which findings can be applied to other contexts or settings. It is the researcher's responsibility to provide rich descriptions of the research context to enable others to assess the applicability of the findings to their own contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Justification: Transferability is important for the generalization of qualitative research findings. By offering detailed contextual information, researchers help readers determine the relevance of the findings to different situations, contributing to broader theoretical and practical implications (Coyne, 1997). The researcher describe how cultural values, language diversity, and socio-economic factors influence engagement so that it can help readers judge relevance to their own contexts.

Confirmability refers to the degree to which findings are shaped by the participants and not researcher bias. Techniques to ensure conformability include reflexive journaling, triangulation, and audit trails (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Conformability is essential for demonstrating that the research findings are grounded in the data rather than in the researcher's subjective interpretations. This aspect helps to mitigate potential biases and enhances the objectivity of the research, thus improving the integrity of the study (Krefting, 1991) and dependability. The researcher therefore used direct quotes that is the exact words of participants which supported the interpretations and ensured transparency of the data. An independent researcher was invited by the researcher to review data and then confirm the interpretations.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

To start collecting data for the study, permission letter was obtained from the Head of Department at early childhood department at the University of Education, Winneba. Then again, permission was sorted from the Municipal Director of Education, Atebubu – Amantin who gave the researcher permission letter in order to be able to get access to the various schools. Upon reaching each school, each Head Teacher was also contacted for further permission. An agreement was made by the head teachers and the researcher so that during their PTA meetings the researcher would be present to conduct the interview. Parents and teachers were informed about the intention of the researcher and upon agreement by both parties the interview then began in the various schools at different times.

Standardizing data collection procedures ensures consistency across participants or data collection sites, allowing for valid comparisons and generalizability of findings. Standardization involves using uniform protocols, instruments, and instructions to minimize variation in data collection practices (Shadish et al., 2002)

Data collection procedures should be designed to minimize potential biases that could influence the results of the study. Bias can arise from various sources, such as researcher bias, participant bias, or measurement bias. Careful planning and implementation of data collection procedures can help mitigate these biases and enhance the credibility of the research findings (Babbie, 2016). Each interview session lasted between ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes. The researcher conducted the interview with an assistance who helped the in the arrangement of a classroom for the interview. Participants were allowed to sit on chairs in a queue starting with the participant in front followed by the rest and this arrangement was made known to them before the interview started. A Samsung mobile phone was used to record the interview. A participant was appreciated with a thank you after every interview for assisting in the interview.

3.10 Ethical issues

Ethical considerations are of utmost importance in research involving human participants. In this study, the researcher adhered to ethical principles and addressed the following ethical issues:

1. Ethical Clearance: The researcher obtained ethical clearance from the University of Education, Winneba, before commencing the data collection of the study. This

ensured that the study meets ethical standards and safeguarded the rights and well-being of the participants.

2. **Informed Consent:** Participants, in this case, the teachers and parents received detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risks, their rights and benefits. They were provided with an informed consent form, which they signed voluntarily, indicating their agreement to participate. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarifications before making their decision. This transparency promoted autonomy and allows individuals to make informed decisions about their participation (McKee & Porter, 2018).
3. **Anonymity and Pseudonymization:** To ensure confidentiality and protect participants' identities, pseudonyms were used for the names of schools or any identifying information. This approach ensured that participants' privacy is maintained, and their anonymity is preserved in all research outputs.
4. **Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw:** Participants were informed that their participation in the study was entirely voluntary. They have the right to choose whether or not to participate without facing any negative consequences. Additionally, participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences.
5. **Confidentiality and Data Protection:** Participants' confidentiality was strictly maintained. The audio recordings of interviews and any other collected data were securely stored and accessible only to the research team. All data were used solely for academic purposes and treated with the utmost confidentiality.

3.11 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis procedure for this study encompassed qualitative approach, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of parental engagement in school cultural activities in early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipal Assembly.

Qualitatively, the collected data from the interviews underwent thematic analysis, following the thematic analysis approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This qualitative analysis delved deeper into participants' responses, unraveling recurring themes and patterns that emerge from their narratives. Thematic analysis encompassed multiple stages, commencing with open coding, whereby responses dissected into smaller units and assigned descriptive codes, enabling a careful examination of the qualitative data set. Subsequently, these codes would be aggregated into broader themes, revealing the essence of participants' insights regarding parental engagement. These themes eventually underwent a thorough process, stressing key perspectives and insights. In cycle with these themes, individual narratives and illustrative quotes were extracted from the qualitative data set to provide rich exemplifications and context for the identified themes. These narratives added depth and tone to the analysis, facilitating a more profound understanding of parental engagement in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality.

Effectively utilizing qualitative data analysis method in this study was thoughtful and strategic. In this comprehensive approach, a qualitative aspects lighted the engagement of parents in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu- Amantin Municipal Assembly, enriching the study's findings with a genuine view.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Overview

The purpose of this chapter was to present data from the study to evaluate parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality.

4.1 Presentations of Analysis

Research question one: What are the views of parents in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu –Amantin Municipality?

This question aimed at finding out the views of parents in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality. Regarding the responses under the first research question, the following emerging themes were noted under which discussions were made on engagement of parents in school cultural activities.

Theme 1: Cultural teaches children greeting

One of the parents said:

Errrrmm, it is good they teach the children our culture in the schools because if a child comes from the farm or school he or she can greet the parents or elders at home. If they are like this and they learn the culture it

will be in their mind forever. I would be happy and motivated if they call me to come and take part in the cultural activities in the school. When we come we can also donate some gifts to the children and the school.

(Parent 1: Interview Data, 2024)

Another interviewee also said:

Ohhh! they need to teach them, it is good because as you see the children if they grow and go to SSS to write D.C. (meaning WASSCE) they can ask them to tell what...what you know about your culture. The law permits us to teach our children our culture so if we the parents teach the children at home and the teachers also teach them at school then they are helping us. Teaching them their culture will help them grow to become well behaved adults in future they will also learn how to greet. (Parent 2: Interview Data 2024)

Another parent also said:

Our culture will help prevent bad behavior and make the children live a good life, it will bring unity among

them. Our culture is about togetherness so this will help them when they grow.

(Parent 3: Interview Data 2024)

Theme 2: Preservation of local culture

One of the parents said:

Tee! if we don't help them teach the children in the schools they will end up learning foreign culture which will later destroy their lives. If they start learning at this age they will grow with it forever.
(Parent 4: Interview Data 2024).

We should help the teachers so that our children will learn the same thing we want them to know. If we don't help teachers our children will learn the America life. Our parents taught us our culture and we need to also give it to our children

(Parent 5: Interview Data, 2024)

Theme 3: School and Community Collaboration

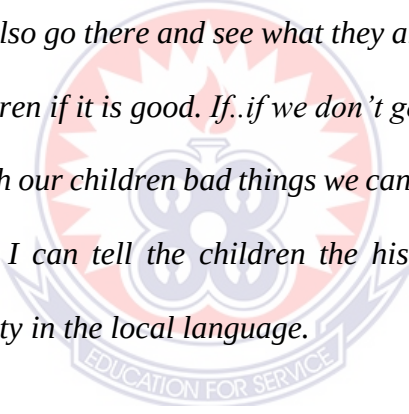
A parent stated that

I am not a teacher but if the teachers want me to come and help them in the school I can go. My child will be happy to see me telling them stories.

(Parent 6 : Interview 2024)

Correspondingly, a parent asserted that:

Teacher! The school is for the community so we have to also go there and see what they are teaching our children if it is good. If..if we don't go there and they teach our children bad things we cannot change it again. I can tell the children the history of the community in the local language.

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a cross-like design, surrounded by a wreath. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA' is written around the top inner edge of the circle, and 'EDUCATION FOR SERVICE' is written around the bottom inner edge. The logo is semi-transparent and serves as a background for the text.

(Parent 4: Interview Data 2024)

Parent 5 confirmed that:

We are not invited to school to witness or help in teaching our culture in the various school, I would be happy if they invite me. Because I will teach the children about my culture. Because I did not go to school but I can dance and sing in my language.

(Parent 5: Interview Data 2024).

Similarly, parent 6 responded that:

I....I cannot remember I went to the school but I remember that my five year old daughter told me that they are doing dancing competition so we should come and watch them and give them money. I went and watched her and I was happy to see her dancing. But it is not the teachers who invited me.

(Parent 6: Interview Data 2024)

The responses from the participants highlighted significant views regarding the engagement of parents in school cultural activities and the benefits of instilling cultural values in children. The parents expressed a strong belief that cultural education plays a vital role in shaping children's identities and moral values, suggesting a shared understanding of the need for cultural preservation within the educational system.

Discussions of Results on Research Question One:

Parental involvement in school cultural activities plays a crucial role in shaping children's educational experiences, social development, and cultural awareness. In early childhood settings, especially within the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality, parents' perceptions and participation in these activities significantly impact young learners' development. Studies conducted globally indicate that parental attitudes toward school cultural activities are influenced by various factors, including socio-economic status, cultural background, and previous experiences with education (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). Understanding parents'

views on cultural activities in early childhood education within this municipality provides insight into the level of engagement, challenges, and potential strategies for fostering meaningful participation.

Research suggests that parents who actively engage in school cultural events tend to perceive them as valuable opportunities for their children to develop a sense of identity, cultural appreciation, and social skills (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In many communities, including those in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality, schools serve as bridges between home and society, reinforcing cultural traditions while preparing children for a diverse world. Studies conducted in Africa, such as those by Ogunsiyi and Ogunsiyi (2018), emphasize that parents see cultural activities in schools as an avenue for their children to learn and preserve their heritage. For many Ghanaian parents, especially those in rural settings, these events provide reassurance that their children will remain connected to traditional values despite the increasing influence of globalization.

However, parental views on school cultural activities are also shaped by socio-economic conditions. Research by Lareau (2011) highlighted that financial constraints, lack of transportation, and time limitations often hinder parental participation in school programs. In the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality, where many parents engage in subsistence farming and small-scale trading, attending school cultural events may not be a priority due to competing economic demands. Some parents may view these activities as secondary to their children's academic progress and may prefer that schools focus on literacy and numeracy rather than cultural enrichment (Wilson et.al (2004). This perspective aligns with findings in other regions where parents from low-income backgrounds tend to

prioritize immediate economic survival over non-academic school activities (Chua & Tan, 2016).

Another factor influencing parents' perspectives on cultural activities is their level of formal education. Epstein and Salinas (2004) argued that parents with higher educational backgrounds are more likely to appreciate the role of cultural events in holistic education. In contrast, parents with limited formal schooling may not fully understand the benefits of these activities, leading to lower engagement levels. In rural Ghana, some parents may perceive cultural programs as entertainment rather than educational experiences, thereby minimizing their importance. This perception creates a gap in parental support, making it essential for schools to engage in sensitization efforts to highlight the value of cultural activities in early childhood development.

Despite these challenges, many parents recognize the role of school cultural activities in fostering a sense of community and belonging among children. Research by Jeynes (2005) in Europe indicates that when parents actively participate in cultural events, students develop stronger community ties and demonstrate higher levels of tolerance and respect for diversity. This is particularly relevant in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality, where schools bring together children from different ethnic and social backgrounds. Cultural activities serve as platforms for unity, promoting inclusivity and social cohesion among both children and their families. Parents who view these activities positively often encourage their children to take an active role, leading to better integration of cultural learning in school and home environments.

However, language barriers and lack of awareness about the significance of these activities can serve as obstacles to parental involvement (McWayne et al., 2004). In multilingual communities like Atebubu-Amantin, where various Ghanaian languages are spoken, some parents may feel disconnected from school events if they are not conducted in their preferred language. Additionally, schools that do not adequately communicate the purpose and benefits of cultural programs may experience lower parental engagement. Studies by Hill and Taylor (2004) suggested that addressing these issues requires schools to adopt inclusive strategies, such as translating communication materials into local languages and organizing community forums to discuss the importance of cultural activities.

Research Question 2: What is the collaboration between parents and teachers in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?

To evaluate the qualitative results of this research, the selected parents were to share their views on the level of collaboration that exist between parents and teachers in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality.

Theme: 1 Preservation and transmission of cultural values.

For instance, one parent said:

I would be happy to go to the school to see my child but the teachers don't have time for us so we find it hard to go there. The teachers won't give you a seat because they don't have more seats. I went there one day and I didn't like the

*way I was treated but if we work together we can
emmm..emm put our culture in them so that they
can also give it to their children.*

(Parent 1: Interview Data 2024)

Similarly, another parent said:

*I think we need to take part in cultural activities
because maybe the teachers don't know our
culture and they cannot teach the children our
local culture and the children will later not
practice it again but our culture must not die. .*

(Parent 2: Interview Data 2024)

Again a parent said:

*When we were young the Queen mother would
announce to our parents that those whose
children are grown to take part in the puberty
rite ceremony should bring their names. They
would take you through the processes to
completion. Elders and parents give out gifts to
children who took part in this ceremony. This
puberty rite is dying from the society and it is*

bad. Those days the teachers were the eyes of the communities. (Parent 3: Interview 2024).

The responses from the parents indicated strongly that the culture of the people must not be allowed to fade off. As stated by parent 1, parents should interact with teachers to ensure that the culture of the community can be transferred onto the children in order to help preserve the peoples culture. The parents elaborated the necessity of not allowing their culture to die away showing concern of parents working together with teachers to achieve that with parent 3 narrating how the puberty rite was done in the past and teachers taking parts in such ceremonies.

Theme 2: Lack of parental participation

A parent elaborated that:

We the parents do not go to the schools to see our children because they don't call us so if the teachers call us to come to the school we will know them well and we can make them our friends. The teacher can tell us about our children's performance and we can also give them information about the children at home. you...you see culture brings discipline in children

(Parent :1: Interview Data 2024).

Accordingly, another parent stated that:

When children learn something about their culture, it makes the work of the parents easy. Parents are to teach the children their culture but we are always busy and so we do not pay attention to things like that. Children become humble and obedient if they are thought about their culture because the culture will let them know how to behave properly. Children in your school have started learning how to greet elders because of what the Queen mother told them during the Youth and Students week celebration last year. (Parent 2: Interview Data 2024).

Theme 4: Socioeconomic Barriers to Collaboration

Economic challenges significantly affect the ability of parents to collaborate with teachers. Many parents work long hours and cannot regularly attend school programs, including cultural events.

One parent expressed this concern:

I want to attend cultural programs, but I sell at the market. If I leave my business for a day, I lose income, so I cannot always come.
(Parent 3: Interview Data 2024).

Another parent lamented:

Even when I want to attend, transport is a problem. The school is far from where I live, and I don't have money for transport every time they call for a meeting or an event. So, I just stay at home. (Parent 5: Interview Data 2024).

Additionally, some of the parents feel that cultural events often require contributions, which adds to their financial burden. As one parent explained:

Sometimes, they ask us to buy things for the cultural programs. If you don't have money, it makes you feel bad, so you just avoid going.
(Parent 1: Interview Data 2024).

The responses implies that socioeconomic barriers limit parental collaboration with teachers due to financial constraints, transport challenges, and required contributions for

school events. These hinder cultural transmission and engagement. Schools should adopt flexible meeting schedules, provide transport support, seek alternative funding, and integrate cultural education into curricula to ensure inclusive parental participation.

Theme 5: Desire for a Stronger Parent-Teacher Partnership

The parents expressed a willingness to collaborate with teachers if efforts were made to include them more actively. They believe that stronger cooperation would benefit both the children and the school community.

One parent noted:

If we work together, we can teach the children respect and discipline through our culture. But we need the teachers to involve us more. (Parent 4: Interview Data 2024).

Similarly, another parent shared:

The teachers should invite us more often, not only when there are problems. If they involve us in planning cultural events, we will feel valued and participate more. (Parent 6: Interview Data 2024).

Another parent shared:

We want to support our children's education, but sometimes we feel left out. If teachers communicate

with us regularly and make us feel welcome, we will gladly participate in school activities. (Parent 2: Interview Data 2024).

The responses imply that the parents are willing to collaborate with the teachers but feel excluded from school activities. They desire better communication, frequent invitations, and active involvement in cultural programs. Strengthening parent-teacher partnerships can enhance children's discipline, respect, and cultural awareness while fostering a supportive school environment for holistic child development.

Discussions of Results on Research Question Two:

Collaboration between parents and teachers plays a vital role in shaping a child's academic success and overall development. Research has shown that when parents and teachers work together, students perform better academically, develop stronger social skills, and exhibit positive behavioral outcomes (Epstein, 1995). However, findings from the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality indicate that the level of collaboration between parents and teachers remains relatively weak. Several factors contribute to this, including limited parental participation, socioeconomic barriers, poor communication, and cultural differences. These challenges reflect broader trends in parental engagement identified in educational research.

One of the significant findings of the study is that parents in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality believe that collaboration with teachers is essential for preserving and transmitting cultural values. Many parents expressed concerns that traditional cultural

practices, such as puberty rite ceremonies, are fading and emphasized the need for teachers to integrate cultural education into the school curriculum. This finding aligns with research by Goodall and Vorhaus (2011), which highlighted how cultural differences can influence parental involvement. When schools fail to incorporate local traditions into education, parents may feel disconnected from the learning process, leading to reduced engagement. Epstein and Sanders (2006) also argue that effective parent-teacher collaboration should include family traditions and values, as this fosters a sense of belonging for both students and parents.

Despite recognizing the importance of collaboration, the study revealed that many parents in the municipality do not actively participate in school activities. A common complaint among parents was that they only visit the school when they are specifically called, often due to disciplinary issues. This passive involvement is consistent with the findings of Hoover et al. (2005), who argued that poor communication between parents and teachers discourages active engagement. When teachers do not create structured opportunities for parental engagement, parents may feel unwelcome or unsure of their role in their children's education. Furthermore, Graham-Clay (2005) suggested that schools with multiple communication channels, such as newsletters, phone calls, and digital platforms, experience higher levels of parental engagement. However, the lack of these communication strategies in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality suggests that schools are not making adequate efforts to foster collaboration.

Another major barrier to effective parent-teacher collaboration in the municipality is socioeconomic challenges. Many parents work long hours and struggle to attend school

meetings or participate in cultural programs. Some parents also cited financial constraints, such as the cost of transportation, as a reason for their limited engagement. These findings align with the research of Larocque et.al (2011), who found that low-income parents often face difficulties engaging with schools due to work schedules and financial limitations. Moreover, some school activities require parental contributions, which further discourages participation. Fan and Chen (2001) argued that when financial limitations prevent parents from taking part in school events, they may feel excluded from their children's education, leading to weaker parent-teacher relationships. Addressing these barriers requires schools to develop flexible engagement programs and explore alternative funding sources to support parental involvement (Epstein & Sanders, 2006).

Despite these challenges, the study found that parents in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality are willing to collaborate more closely with teachers. Many parents emphasized the need for better communication and more frequent invitations to school events. This finding supports research by Bryk and Schneider (2002), who stressed that trust and transparency between parents and teachers are essential for fostering collaboration. When parents feel valued and included in school activities, they are more likely to engage actively in their children's education. Furthermore, Boonk et al. (2018) found that students whose parents maintain regular communication with teachers perform better academically, particularly in subjects such as mathematics and reading. Similarly, Essuman and Akyeampong (2011) argue that well-structured parent-teacher associations (PTAs) contribute to stronger school-community relationships, improved student performance, and better discipline. However, the study in the Atebubu-Amantin

Municipality found that many parents feel excluded from school decision-making processes, which limits their ability to collaborate effectively.

To improve parent-teacher collaboration in the municipality, several strategies should be considered. First, schools should enhance communication by implementing multiple channels such as mobile messaging apps, newsletters, and community meetings (Graham-Clay, 2005). Effective communication ensures that parents are informed about school activities and feel encouraged to participate. Second, schools should establish flexible meeting schedules to accommodate parents with demanding work commitments (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). This would allow more parents to attend school meetings and cultural events. Third, schools should explore financial support mechanisms to assist parents who struggle with transport costs or event contributions (Fan & Chen, 2001). Fourth, teachers should integrate cultural education into the curriculum, which would encourage parental involvement and strengthen students' connection to their heritage (Goodall & Vorhaus, 2011). Lastly, strengthening PTAs would provide a platform for parents to participate in school governance and decision-making processes, fostering a more inclusive school environment (Essuman & Akyeampong, 2011).

Research Question 3: What factors influence parental engagement in local cultural activities?

To have a complete and valuable result, the parents selected for the research gave some responses to ascertain the challenges parents face when engaged in school cultural activities.

Theme 1: Fear of Judgment and Social Discomfort

Some parents feel uncomfortable participating in school activities due to fear of making mistakes and being judged by teachers or other parents.

One parent expressed:

Ohh! We do encounter some challenges sometimes when we go to the schools. Even our dressing sometimes makes us feel shy because of the work some of us do. If you talk and make a mistake, maybe they will laugh at you, and the way they look at you will make you... become confused. (Parent 1: Interview 2024).

Similarly, another parent stated:

Children like mocking. If you do something and make a mistake, they can mock you. When that happens, the parent will not feel happy or comfortable to participate next time. (Parent 2 : Interview 2024).

The responses imply that fear of judgment and social discomfort discourage parental participation in school activities. Parents worry about their appearance, making mistakes, and being mocked by others, leading to reluctance in engaging. Addressing this issue through inclusive school environments and respectful interactions can enhance parental confidence and involvement.

Theme 2: Limited Opportunities for Parental Involvement

Many parents feel that schools do not actively invite them to participate in cultural activities, reducing their willingness to engage.

One parent shared:

The school does not invite parents to help in cultural activities, but we go to PTA meetings. Sometimes, we do not get enough time to say what we want, and that makes us unhappy to attend their meetings. This is not helping us and our children. (Parent 2: Interview Data 2024).

Similarly, another parent stated:

Hmm! 'Bra' (brother), if you talk to someone and the person is not paying attention to you, next time will you talk to him again? Some of them do not have time for parents, and it looks as if we do not matter at all in the school. (Parent 3: Interview Data 2024).

A parent shared:

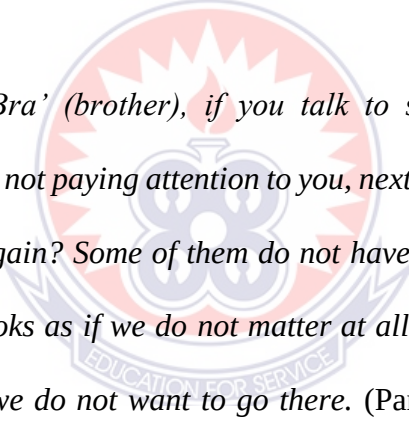
You see, if you go to the school, even getting a seat to sit on is a problem. But the teachers cannot use their money to buy seats for parents, so it is a problem we are all facing. (Parent 4 : Interviewed Data 2024).

The responses indicate that parents feel excluded from school activities due to a lack of invitations, limited speaking opportunities, and inadequate facilities. This discourages participation and weakens school-parent collaboration. Schools should create inclusive environments, improve communication, and provide necessary resources to enhance parental engagement in cultural and educational activities.

Theme 3: Lack of Teacher Engagement with Parents

The parents feel that some teachers do not show interest in engaging with them, making them feel unimportant in the school environment.

A parent remarked:



Hmm! 'Bra' (brother), if you talk to someone and the person is not paying attention to you, next time will you talk to him again? Some of them do not have time for parents, and it looks as if we do not matter at all in the school. So we too, we do not want to go there. (Parent 3 : Interview Data 2024).

A parent shared:

If teachers appreciated us when we took part in these activities, it would motivate us to always participate. But sometimes, they do not seem to care about what we say, so we feel left out. (Parent 5 : Interview Data 2024).

Similarly, another parent stated:

When we go to the school, some teachers do not even greet us. It makes us feel like strangers. If they welcomed us and involved us more, we would be happy to participate. (Parent 6 : Interview 2024).

The responses suggest that a lack of teacher engagement discourages parental participation in school activities. When parents feel ignored or unappreciated, their willingness to collaborate diminishes. Schools should foster positive relationships by encouraging open communication, recognizing parental contributions, and creating a welcoming atmosphere to strengthen parent-teacher partnerships.

Theme 4: Inadequate Facilities for Parents

Some of the parents mentioned the lack of basic amenities, such as seating, as a discouraging factor for participating in school events.

One parent shared:

If you go to the school, to even get a seat to sit on is a problem. But the teachers cannot also use their money to buy seats for parents, so it is a problem we are all facing. (Parent 3 : Interviewed Data 2024).

A parent shared:

When we come for meetings or events, there is no shade or proper seating. We stand for long hours, and it becomes uncomfortable. This makes some of us stop attending.

(Parent 4 : Interviewed Data 2024).

Similarly, another parent stated:

Sometimes, the environment is not welcoming. If parents are expected to attend, the school should make proper arrangements to accommodate us. (Parent 5: Interview Data 2024).

The lack of adequate facilities, such as seating and shade, makes school events uncomfortable for parents, discouraging their participation. This weakens school-parent collaboration and affects parental involvement in cultural and educational activities. Schools should improve infrastructure and create a welcoming environment to enhance parental engagement and strengthen community-school relationships.

Discussions of Results on Research Question Three:

One of the factors affecting parental engagement in school cultural activities is the multiple obligations and socio-economic constraints of parents. According to Nova-Kaltsouni (2004), parents' heavy workload, long working hours, and financial struggles often make it difficult for them to participate in school activities. Many parents, especially those engaged in manual or low-paid labor, find it challenging to allocate time for school events. This finding is reflected in the study, where some parents expressed that even

finding time to attend school meetings was difficult. Similarly, Delgado-Gaitan (1990) and Damanakis (2005) emphasized that parents with lower levels of education may lack awareness of the importance of school engagement, further limiting their participation. Addressing this issue requires schools to offer flexible engagement opportunities, such as weekend events, virtual meetings, and alternative participation methods that accommodate parents' work schedules.

Another significant factor influencing parental engagement is fear of judgment and social discomfort, particularly among parents with lower educational backgrounds or those unfamiliar with the school environment. Lopez (2001) highlighted that negative personal experiences with education can make parents hesitant to engage with schools. The study findings confirm this, as some parents reported feeling shy about their appearance or fearing ridicule from students or other parents. Additionally, Moles (1993) discussed how language barriers can prevent parents, especially those from immigrant backgrounds, from fully participating in school activities. Schools should address these concerns by creating a welcoming environment, providing translation services if needed, and fostering a culture of respect and inclusivity to ensure that all parents feel comfortable participating in school activities.

The study also found that limited opportunities for parental engagement discourage participation. Some parents felt that schools did not actively invite them to engage in cultural activities or provide them with enough time to express their opinions during meetings. This aligns with Bonia et al.'s (2008) research, which found that while teachers generally have a positive attitude toward parental engagement, schools often lack structured programs to encourage meaningful engagement. Furthermore, informal

communication between teachers and parents may not be sufficient to bridge the gap, as it is often influenced by social and cultural capital. Schools should therefore adopt more structured and institutionalized approaches to parental engagement, ensuring that parents are actively encouraged to participate in cultural and academic events.

Another critical factor is the lack of teacher engagement with parents, which discourages parental participation in school activities. Mylonakou-Keke (2017) highlighted that teachers with long years of service may become less tolerant of challenges related to parental engagement, especially in diverse school environments. This finding is reflected in the study, where parents expressed that some teachers seemed indifferent or unapproachable. Additionally, Bonia et al. (2008) found that teachers often lack training in parental engagement strategies, which limits their ability to foster strong parent-school relationships. Schools should prioritize professional development programs that equip teachers with skills to effectively engage with parents, making them feel valued and included in school activities.

Finally, inadequate facilities for parents emerged as a key challenge. Many parents in the study noted the lack of basic amenities such as seating and shade during school events, which made participation uncomfortable. This finding aligns with Sheldon (2005) argument that school infrastructure significantly impacts parental engagement. When parents feel that their presence is not accommodated, they may be discouraged from attending school activities. Schools should invest in improving infrastructure, ensuring that parents have access to comfortable seating, shaded areas, and other necessary facilities during events.

Research Question Four: What strategies can educators use to encourage parental engagement in school cultural activities?

This research would not be complete without the views of some teachers in the early childhood settings and as a matter of fact some of the teachers also shared their opinions. The views of these educators contributed immensely to obtain a wholesome result on strategies educators can employ to engage parents in school cultural activities at the early childhood settings.

Theme 1: Strengthening Communication between Teachers and Parents

The teachers highlighted that effective communication is key to increasing parental engagement in school cultural activities. They suggested using multiple communication channels such as phone calls, WhatsApp messages, newsletters, and school meetings to keep parents informed about upcoming events.

One teacher shared:



Sometimes parents do not attend school activities simply because they were not properly informed. If we communicate with them regularly and in advance, they will feel involved and make time to participate. (Teacher 1: Interview Data 2024).

Another teacher noted:

Using different communication methods, including home visits and group chats, can help us reach more parents and

remind them about the importance of participating in cultural events. (Teacher 2 : Interview Data 2024).

Similarly, another teacher said:

When parents feel that they are part of the school community, they are more likely to participate. We need to have open discussions with them, not just during PTA meetings, but informally as well, so they feel comfortable engaging in cultural activities. (Teacher 3: Interviewed Data 2024).

The responses imply that effective communication plays a crucial role in enhancing parental engagement in school cultural activities. Parents may fail to participate simply due to a lack of information. By using multiple communication channels such as WhatsApp, phone calls, newsletters, and home visits, teachers can keep parents informed and involved. Regular and informal discussions create a welcoming atmosphere, fostering stronger school-parent relationships. Strengthening communication ensures parents feel valued, increasing their willingness to actively engage in cultural events and support their children's education.

Theme 2: Flexible Scheduling of Cultural Activities.

The teachers emphasized that scheduling school cultural activities at convenient times for parents can enhance participation. Many of the parents have work and family commitments, making it difficult to attend events held during regular school hours.

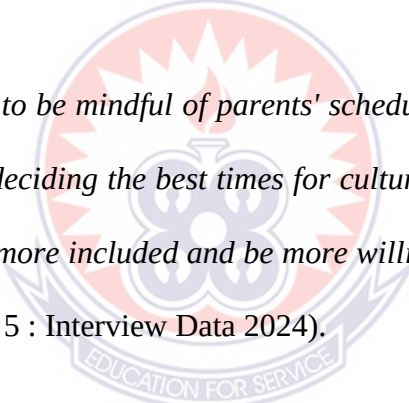
Offering flexible schedules, including evening or weekend programs, can help accommodate more parents.

One teacher shared:

Some parents want to participate but are unable to because events are scheduled during their working hours. If we organize activities on weekends or in the evenings, more parents will be able to attend. (Teacher 4 : Interview Data 2024).

Another teacher noted:

We need to be mindful of parents' schedules. If we involve them in deciding the best times for cultural activities, they will feel more included and be more willing to participate. (Teacher 5 : Interview Data 2024).

The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central shield with a sunburst at the top and a book at the bottom. The shield is surrounded by a wreath. The text 'UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION' is written in a circle around the top, and 'WINNEBA' is at the bottom. Below the shield, the motto 'EDUCATION FOR SERVICE' is inscribed on a banner.

Similarly, another teacher stated:

Parents will come when it is convenient for them. If we are flexible with timing, more parents will engage, and our events will be more successful. (Teacher 6 : Interview Data 2024).

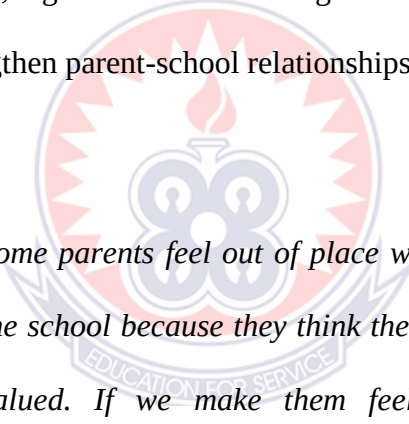
The responses suggest that rigid scheduling of cultural activities can limit parental participation. Many parents face time constraints due to work and family responsibilities, making it difficult to attend events during school hours. Offering flexible scheduling options, such as evening or weekend events, increases accessibility and encourages

greater involvement. Additionally, involving parents in scheduling decisions fosters a sense of inclusion and consideration. Implementing flexible scheduling strategies can strengthen parent-school collaboration and enhance engagement in school cultural activities.

Theme 3: Creating an Inclusive and Welcoming Environment

Teachers emphasized that fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment is essential for encouraging parental engagement in school cultural activities. Parents are more likely to participate when they feel valued, respected, and comfortable in the school setting. Ensuring that all parents, regardless of their background or literacy level, feel included in school events can strengthen parent-school relationships.

One teacher shared:



Some parents feel out of place when they come to the school because they think their presence is not valued. If we make them feel welcomed and appreciated, they will be more willing to participate. (Teacher 1 : Interview Data 2024).

Another teacher noted:

We should create an environment where every parent feels they belong. Simple gestures like greeting them warmly, providing translation services for those who do not understand English, and involving them in planning cultural activities

can make a big difference. (Teacher 3 : Interview Data 2024).

Similarly, another teacher stated:

Parents will be more engaged if they feel included.

We should encourage them to showcase their cultural heritage, share their experiences, and actively participate in school events. (Teacher 5: Interview Data 2024).

The responses highlight that an unwelcoming school environment can discourage parental participation. When parents feel excluded, they may hesitate to engage in cultural activities. Schools can promote collaboration by acknowledging and valuing parents' contributions, providing translation services for non-English speakers, and fostering a warm, respectful atmosphere. Encouraging parents to share their cultural knowledge and actively involving them in event planning can enhance their sense of belonging. A welcoming environment ultimately strengthens school-community relationships and increases parental engagement in school cultural activities.

Theme 4: Involving Parents in Planning and Decision-Making

The teachers emphasized that engaging parents in the planning and decision-making process for school cultural activities can significantly boost their participation. When parents feel that their opinions and contributions matter, they are more likely to take an

active role in school events. Involving them in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and encourages collaboration between parents and educators.

One teacher shared:

Parents are more likely to participate when they are part of the planning process. If we involve them in decision-making, they will feel a sense of responsibility and be motivated to contribute.
(Teacher 2: Interview Data 2024).

Another teacher noted:

Instead of just informing parents about activities, we should invite them to help in organizing and planning. When they have a say in what happens, they feel more engaged and valued.
(Teacher 4: Interview Data 2024).

Similarly, another teacher stated:

We can create committees where parents and teachers work together to plan cultural events. This will make them feel involved and committed to participating and ensuring the success of these activities. (Teacher 3: Interview Data 2024).

The responses suggest that when parents are actively involved in planning and decision-making, they develop a stronger connection to the school community and are more likely to participate in cultural activities. Providing opportunities for parents to contribute ideas, help with event organization, and join planning committees fosters a sense of ownership and commitment. Collaboration between educators and parents not only enhances engagement but also ensures that cultural activities are more inclusive and reflective of the diverse backgrounds within the school community.

Discussions of Results on Research Question Four:

Parental engagement in school cultural activities plays a crucial role in fostering a strong school-community relationship and enhancing students' educational experiences. The findings from the study revealed several key strategies for encouraging parental participation, including building trusting relationships, improving communication, offering flexibility, creating welcoming school environments, addressing barriers faced by disadvantaged families, and incorporating interactive learning activities. These results align with existing literature, which emphasizes the importance of inclusive, family-centered approaches to parental engagement.

One of the most significant findings of the study was that strong, trusting relationships between schools and parents lead to higher levels of engagement in cultural activities. Many parents expressed that they were more likely to participate when they felt valued and respected by school staff. This is consistent with research by Hill and Tyson (2009), who argue that trust is a fundamental element in fostering parental engagement. Similarly, Murray (2009) found that parents who view school staff as supportive are more likely to

engage in school-related activities. The study results suggest that schools should make intentional efforts to build rapport with parents through regular meetings, open-door policies, and personalized interactions. When parents believe that their contributions are acknowledged and appreciated, they develop a stronger sense of belonging within the school community.

Another key factor that emerged from the study was the importance of effective communication in promoting parental engagement. Many parents reported that they often missed school cultural events due to a lack of timely and accessible information. This finding supports Desimone's (1999) argument that schools must use multiple communication channels to reach parents effectively. Hill and Taylor (2004) further emphasized that communication should be adapted to accommodate diverse linguistic and literacy needs to ensure inclusivity. In the study, schools that used a combination of newsletters, text messages, mobile applications, and face-to-face interactions experienced higher levels of parental participation. Additionally, Mitchell (2009) highlighted the potential of digital platforms in improving communication between schools and parents, although they caution that some families may have limited access to technology. The study's findings reinforce the need for schools to diversify their communication strategies to ensure that all parents receive important information in a timely and accessible manner.

Flexibility and accommodations also emerged as critical factors influencing parental participation in school cultural activities. Many parents cited work schedules, transportation difficulties, and childcare responsibilities as major barriers to engagement. These challenges are consistent with Epstein's (2001) findings, which suggest that

offering flexible scheduling options, transportation assistance, and on-site childcare can significantly increase parental engagement. McWayne et al. (2004) also argue that equity-based strategies should be implemented to accommodate diverse family needs. In the study, schools that scheduled events at varying times, provided transport arrangements, or allowed for virtual participation saw an increase in parental engagement. These findings highlighted the importance of schools adopting family-friendly policies that acknowledge the unique circumstances of each household.

Creating a welcoming and culturally inclusive school environment was another major theme that emerged from the study. Parents indicated that they felt more comfortable engaging in school activities when their cultural identities were recognized and celebrated. This finding aligns with research by Gonzalez-Mena (2011), who emphasizes that schools should integrate multicultural elements into their learning spaces to foster collaboration. Nieto and Bode (2012) further assert that when schools actively celebrate diversity and involve parents in decision-making processes, parents develop a stronger connection to the school community. The study showed that schools that incorporated cultural events, multilingual materials, and opportunities for parents to share their cultural traditions experienced higher levels of engagement. These results suggest that schools should prioritize cultural responsiveness by creating programs that honor the diverse backgrounds of their students and families.

The study also highlighted the challenges faced by economically disadvantaged families in participating in school activities. Some parents expressed concerns about feeling excluded due to financial constraints or social stigma. This is consistent with Jensen's

(2013) research, which argues that poverty can be a significant barrier to parental involvement. William et.al (2014) suggested that schools can bridge this gap by providing targeted support, such as waiving participation fees, offering free meals at events, and appointing school counselors to facilitate communication between parents and educators. The study found that when schools implemented these support systems, more parents felt comfortable engaging in school cultural activities. These findings underscored the importance of equity-driven initiatives to ensure that all families, regardless of their socioeconomic status, have an opportunity to participate in school life.

Additionally, some of the study revealed that interactive learning activities, such as collaborative homework assignments, could serve as an effective strategy to strengthen parent-school connections. Some parents indicated that they felt disconnected from their children's education because they lacked opportunities to engage in school-related activities. Deverics and O'Brien (2011) found that interactive homework, which requires students to complete assignments with parental involvement, helps bridge this gap by encouraging parental participation at home. The study showed that when schools incorporated activities that required parental input—such as family storytelling assignments or take-home cultural projects—parents became more involved in other school events as well. This suggests that engaging parents in their children's learning at home can lead to increased participation in broader school activities.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter contains a summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions concerning parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality.

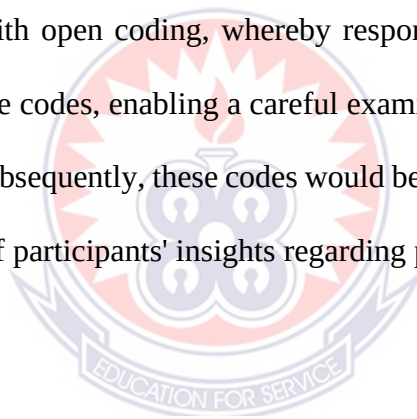
5.1 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality.

To achieve this purpose, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What are the views of parents in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality?
2. What is the collaboration between parents and teachers in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?
3. What factors influence parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?
4. What strategies can educators employ to encourage parental engagement in school cultural activities within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?

The sample size and sampling technique were chosen to conform to the study's objectives to ensure proper and relevant data collection. For the purpose of this study, purposive sampling was used to select 6 educators to be interviewed based on their teaching experience, that is, teachers who have taught in the municipality for ten (10) years and above and convenient sampling was also used to select 6 parents for the interview during PTA meetings because they were readily available. The data collection instrument was selected based on the objectives of the research which lead to the selection of semi-structured interview. The collected data from the interviews underwent thematic analysis, following the thematic analysis approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Multiple stages, commencing with open coding, whereby responses dissected into smaller units and assigned descriptive codes, enabling a careful examination of the qualitative data set were carefully done. Subsequently, these codes would be aggregated into broader themes, revealing the essence of participants' insights regarding parental engagement.



5.2 Key findings

1. The study found that parents hold varying views on school cultural activities. While some parents recognized the importance of these activities in fostering cultural identity, social development, and community cohesion, others perceive them as secondary to academic subjects such as literacy and numeracy. Parents who valued cultural activities highlighted their role in preserving traditional values and promoting a sense of belonging among children. However, some parents,

especially those with lower educational backgrounds, viewed cultural programs as mere entertainment rather than an essential part of early childhood education.

2. The study identified a moderate collaboration between parents and teachers in organizing and participating in school cultural activities. Although some parents actively engaged in planning and supporting cultural programs, others demonstrated minimal engagement due to time constraints, lack of awareness, or limited understanding of the importance of these activities. Teachers, on the other hand, acknowledged that parental support was crucial in ensuring the success of cultural programs.
3. The study highlighted several factors influencing parental engagement in school cultural activities. These factors included socio-economic conditions, educational background, cultural beliefs, work schedules, and logistical challenges such as transportation difficulties. Parents from lower-income households were less likely to attend or support cultural activities due to financial constraints and competing responsibilities.
4. Lastly, the study identified various strategies that educators could employ to encourage parental engagement in local cultural activities. These strategies included increasing awareness through community outreach programs, organizing sensitization workshops to highlight the benefits of cultural activities, providing flexible scheduling for events, and incorporating parental input in cultural program planning. The study also emphasized the importance of using multiple communication channels, such as local radio broadcasts and translated materials, to reach parents with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

5.3 Conclusions

It was concluded that parental engagement in school cultural activities at the early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality is influenced by multiple interrelated factors. While many parents acknowledge the significance of cultural programs in promoting traditional values and enhancing social skills among young learners, their level of participation varies significantly. Some parents actively support and participated in these activities, whereas others remain disengaged due to competing priorities, financial constraints, or limited awareness of the benefits of cultural education.

The study further concluded that the collaboration between parents and teachers in organizing school cultural activities remains moderate. While some schools make efforts to involve parents in cultural events, the level of participation is not uniform across all families. Factors such as work commitments, educational background, and socio-economic status play a significant role in determining whether parents take an active interest in school cultural programs. Teachers also expressed concerns about inconsistent parental engagement, which sometimes affects the effectiveness and impact of these activities.

Additionally, the study established that socio-economic and logistical factors significantly hinder parental participation in cultural activities. Parents from economically disadvantaged backgrounds face challenges such as the cost of transportation and the need to prioritize work over school events. Moreover, some parents do not fully appreciate the educational value of cultural activities, leading to a lack of motivation to engage with these programs. The perception that cultural activities are less important than academic subjects further contributes to lower levels of participation.

Finally, the study concluded that improving parental engagement in school cultural activities requires a strategic and inclusive approach. Schools and educators must adopt targeted strategies to raise awareness, provide flexible scheduling, and incorporate parental input into cultural event planning. Effective communication using diverse platforms such as community meetings, radio broadcasts, and translated materials can help bridge the gap between schools and parents, ensuring that all families, regardless of their socio-economic or educational background, are encouraged to participate. Addressing these challenges will create a more supportive and culturally enriched learning environment for young children.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations have been made to improve parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality. These recommendations focus on fostering stronger collaboration between parents and teachers, addressing barriers to participation, and implementing effective strategies to increase parental engagement in cultural education.

Firstly, school authorities should implement targeted awareness campaigns to educate parents on the significance of cultural activities in early childhood education. These campaigns can take the form of community meetings, workshops, and sensitization programs that highlight how cultural activities contribute to children's holistic development. By demonstrating the link between cultural programs and academic, social, and emotional growth, schools can help parents recognize the value of such initiatives.

Secondly, District Directorate of the schools should enhance communication strategies to improve parent-school engagement. A variety of communication channels should be utilized, including printed materials, social media, local radio broadcasts, and direct engagement with community leaders. Providing information in multiple languages will ensure that parents from diverse linguistic backgrounds understand the importance of cultural activities and feel encouraged to participate.

Thirdly, flexible scheduling of school cultural activities should be adopted to accommodate parents with demanding work schedules. Events can be organized during weekends or in the evenings to enable more parents to attend. Additionally, school authorities should explore virtual participation options, where possible, to allow parents who are unable to be physically present to engage with cultural programs through online platforms.

Furthermore, financial and logistical barriers to parental participation should be addressed. Schools and local authorities should adopt initiatives such as transportation support for parents from distant communities, fundraising programs to assist low-income families, and partnerships with local organizations to sponsor cultural activities. Providing financial relief and logistical support would remove significant obstacles that prevent parents from participating in these events.

5.5 Suggestions

The researcher therefore made some suggestions that should be looked at in future by other researchers. First of all there should be analysis on how school policies, leadership styles, and government education frameworks influence parental engagement in cultural

activities. Again, there should be a study on how social media, messaging apps, and virtual meetings can be used to enhance communication and engagement for parents who cannot attend school cultural activities physically. Finally, comparative studies should be conducted between different cultural or ethnic communities to examine variations in parental engagement patterns.



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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Dear respondents,

Thank you for participating in this interview. The purpose of this study is to explore parental engagement in school cultural activities within the context of early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality. Your insights and experience as teachers are valuable to this study and your personality and responses is highly confidential.

The interview guide consists of series of questions that will delve into exploring parental engagement in school cultural activities within the context of early childhood settings. Your honest and open responses will help gain in-depth information regarding parental engagement in school cultural activities. Your contribution towards completion of this interview will be highly appreciated and the information provided will be used for only academic purposes only and will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Thank you.

Interview questions

Objective one 1.What are the views of parents about school cultural activities in early childhood settings in the Atebubu-Amantin Municipality?:

1. Describe your involvement in school cultural activities, such as events, performances, or cultural heritage celebrations?

2. What motivated you to participate in these cultural activities at your child's school?
3. Share any memorable experiences or moments you've had while participating in school cultural activities?
4. How do you view the impact of school cultural activities on your child's overall educational experience and personal development?

Objective two 2.What is the level of collaboration between parents and teachers in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?

1. Why do you believe it's important for parents to be actively involved in their child's school cultural activities?
2. Do you think without your involvement culture cannot be properly transmitted to your children?
3. How do you think parental engagement in school cultural activities contributes to the overall educational experience of children?
4. In your opinion, what benefits do children derive from school cultural activities?

Objective three: 3.What factors influence parental engagement in school cultural activities in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?

1. What are some of the main challenges you have encountered in engaging in local in schools cultural activities?
2. What things can prevent you from taking part in local cultural activities in schools?
3. How do these challenges stop you from participating in local cultural activities in schools?

4. How does economic constraints affect your engagement in local cultural activities in schools?

Objective four: 4.What strategies can educators employs to encourage parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools within the context of early childhood setttings in the Atebubu-Amantin municipality?

1. Describe your experiences with encouraging parental engagement in local cultural activities in schools as an educator?
2. What are some effective strategies you have used or observed to engage parents in local cultural activities in schools?
3. Share any specific instances or examples of successful initiatives or programs you adopted aimed at promoting parental participation in cultural events or initiatives in schools?
4. Have you been inviting parents to attend cultural activities in the school?
5. How do you collaborate with other educators, administrators, or community members to promote parental engagement in local cultural activities in the school?
6. Looking ahead, what new approaches or initiatives do you plan to implement to further enhance parental engagement in local cultural activities in the school?

APPENDIX B



UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA
FACULTY OF APPLIED BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCES IN EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT
P.O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana

FABSE/DECE/T/1

7TH MAY, 2024

The Director
Ghana Education Service
Atebubu-Amantin Municipal
P.O Box 10
Atebubu -Amantin

Dear Sir/ Madam,

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

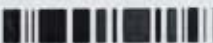
I kindly write to introduce to you **Mr. Solomon Kofi Ayimaye** with index number **8231900024** who is an M.Phil. student at the Department of Early Childhood Care and Development, University of Education, Winneba. He is in his final year and has to embark on his thesis on the topic *"Parental Engagement in School Cultural Activities"*.

Mr. Solomon Kofi Ayimaye is to collect data for his thesis, and I would be most grateful if he could be given the needed assistance.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


DR. MICHAEL SUBBEY
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

www.uew.edu.gh



In case of reply the ref Number and date of this letter should be quoted

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE
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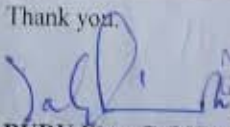
ALL HEADTEACHERS OF BASIC SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

The bearer of this letter, Mr. Osei Konadu Abraham, is an M.Phil. Student at the Department of Early Childhood Care and Development, University of Education, Winneba who is embarking on thesis writing on the topic: Teacher Factors in the Implementation of the Standard Based Curriculum Learning Outcomes in Public Early Childhood Centres in the Sunyani Municipality.

Please give him all the assistance he would need in the collection of data to ensure the success of the exercise.

Thank you.


BUDU ISAAC (MR)
MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR
ATEBUBU-AMANTIN

MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR
GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE
ATEBUBU - AMANTIN
ATEBUBU - BONO EAST