

**THE PERCEIVED EFFECT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND
ANXIETY ON BEHAVIOURAL ADJUSTMENTS OF SENIOR
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE.**

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ABSTRACT

The research work examined the perceived effect of parental involvement and anxiety on behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State. Three research questions guided the study. The survey research design was adopted for this study. Three hundred fifty (350) Senior Secondary School students were randomly selected for this study. The instrument for the study was a researcher designed questionnaire titled “Perceived Effect of Parental Involvement and Anxiety on Student’s Behavioural Adjustments Questionnaire (PEPIASBAQ)” which was on a 4-point Likert scale of SA - Strongly agree; A- Agree; D – Disagree; SD - Strongly disagree. The instrument was validated by three experts from faculty of Education Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State. The instrument was tested and gave an overall reliability index of 0.83 which was obtained using the Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Data collected were analysed using the arithmetic mean. The findings of the study revealed that Parental involvement have a positive effect on student’s behavioural of senior secondary school students in Anambra State. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Schools in Anambra State should develop and implement parental involvement programs, fostering regular communication, progress updates, and collaborative problem-solving.

Keywords: Parental involvement, Students, Anxiety, Behavioural adjustment.

Introduction

Education is a potent force that brings about change in the attitudes, thoughts, behaviours, skills, values and interest of individuals. It is these changes in cognitive, psychomotor and affective orientation that are required for overall development and psychological wellbeing of an individual (Okeagui, 2019). These changes could be learnt formally in school and are very crucial to members of a society for growth and development. Aduba (2019), posited that school is an institution where teaching and learning takes place. School is therefore an agency established by the society to ensure that people in the society gain suitable knowledge for all round development.

In Nigeria, the formal education system consists of three levels, which are Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary. The secondary education level is a crucial stage in the education hierarchy in Nigeria, serving as the bridge between primary and tertiary schools or institutions. Secondary education is vital as it helps in preparing students for their future professions, while also laying the foundation for discovering and classifying specific fields of study. At this stage of education, students' behavioural adjustments can be influenced by certain psychological and social factors such as anxiety, motivation, parental involvement and school environment. Therefore, it's essential to address these factors and provide students with the necessary support to ensure that students behaviour are properly in check as it will be vital to their academic success and the development.

Behavioral adjustment of students is the ability of the students to adapt or the ability to control or manage emotions so as to withstand their effects. According to Lazarus and Folkman (2019), Behavioural adjustments refer to the changes individuals make in their actions, attitudes, and emotions to adapt to their environment, cope with stressors, and meet expectations. For Barrette and Russell (2021), emotional adjustment relates to whether or not someone has the tendency to feel negative emotions or have irrational thoughts as the control of their impulses when facing a stressful situation. Emotional adjustment is a key aspect

of behavioral adjustment as it is the maintenance of emotional equilibrium in face of internal and external stressors. Operationally, emotional adjustment is the ability of an individual to manage or control emotions in their environment so as to cope with or conquer the negative effect of unpleasant emotions, anxiety or feelings in their immediate environment (Theeb *et al.*, 2016). These adjustments can be conscious or unconscious and are influenced by various factors, including parental involvement and anxiety. For instance, students may adjust their behaviour to meet parental expectations, such as changing their study habits or social interactions.

Parental involvement has a significant effect on secondary school student's achievement level and plays a vital role in their children's other goal-oriented outcomes. According to Centre for Child Well-Being (2010), parental involvement in children's learning not only improves a child's morale, attitude, and academic achievement across all subject areas, but also promotes better behaviour and social adjustment. Similarly, Hart and Risley (2018), opined that emotional support refers to the extent to which parents provide a nurturing and supportive environment, characterized by warmth, sensitivity, and responsiveness to their child's emotional needs.

Anxiety is a mental health condition characterised by excessive and persistent feelings of fear, worry, and apprehension. It can affect various aspects of an individual's life, including their academic performance. Students with anxiety may experience difficulty concentrating, memory problems, and trouble completing assignments or tests. Additionally, they may struggle with social interaction, leading to feelings of isolation or low self-esteem. These factors can lead to poor behavioural adjustment, which can, in turn, exacerbate anxiety symptoms and create a vicious cycle of stress and struggles in both personal and academic life (Famakinwa, *et al.* 2016; Akinade, 2015).

It is believed that interplay between parental involvement and anxiety can have complex effects on students' behavioural adjustments. While some level of

parental involvement is beneficial, excessive involvement can exacerbate anxiety, leading to negative outcomes. Tran *et al.* (2020) in his study, found that parents' involvement in their children's education, such as attending parent-teacher conferences and school events can have a lasting effect on student's behavioural adjustment in school. While Jeynes, (2017) observed that anxiety also affects students' social interactions, causing them to avoid peer relationships and extracurricular activities. Therefore, supportive parental involvement can mitigate the effects of anxiety, promoting healthy behavioural adjustments. It is against this backdrop, that this study seeks to investigate the perceived effect of parental involvement and anxiety on behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The recent poor performance of students in the senior secondary school examination in the state has raised concerns among academicians and teachers about possible factors that may be contributing to this trend. But one critical factor that has been overlooked is the lack of parental involvement, which can lead to increased anxiety and poor behavioural adjustments among students. Parental involvement is a crucial determinant of students' academic success, but excessive parental pressure and anxiety can have detrimental effects on students' motivation, self-esteem, and overall performance.

The recent examination results of senior secondary school students have showed a significant decline in student performance may be attributed in part to the lack of parental support and increased anxiety levels among students. Many students reported feeling overwhelmed by parental expectations, leading to decreased motivation, poor time management, and inadequate preparation for exams. Furthermore, inflation and economic recession in the country has exacerbated the issue, with many parents experiencing increased stress and anxiety, which has trickled down to their children. Hence, the present study

examines the perceived effect of parental involvement and anxiety on student's behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived effect of parental involvement and anxiety on behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. To determine the perceived effect of parental involvement on behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.
2. To determine the perceived effect of anxiety on behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.
3. To ascertain the strategies that can promote parental involvement and mitigate the effects of anxiety on behavioural adjustment of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following questions were put forward for this study:

1. What is the perceived effect of parental involvement on behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State?
2. What is the perceived effect of anxiety on behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State?
3. What are the strategies that can promote parental involvement and mitigate the effects of anxiety on behavioural adjustment of senior secondary school students in Anambra State?

Methods

The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research method. This type of research allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data, and utilize various methods of instrumentation. The study was carried out in Anambra State. Specifically, the researchers choose Awka South Local Government Area as the area for the study because it captured both rural and urban environmental settings as well have large population of secondary school

students in Anambra State. The population of this study comprises 6281 students in the 19 public secondary schools located in Awka South Local Government Area (Post-Primary Secondary School Service Commission, 2024). The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique, the first stage the researchers used a simple random sampling technique to select 10 schools out of the 19 public secondary schools in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra state, then followed another simple random sampling technique to select 35 students from each of the selected schools given a total of 350 students. The research instrument for data collection was researchers self-developed questionnaire titled “Perceived Effect of Parental Involvement and Anxiety on Student’s Behavioural Adjustments Questionnaire (PEPIASBAQ).” The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by three experts in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State. Suggestions of the experts were effected in the final copies of the instrument that was reproduced for answering the researchh questions. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, a trial test was carried out among 20 senior secondary school students in Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State, outside the study area. The data collected was tested using Cronbach Alpha coefficients to obtain reliability estimate above 0.83, making it to be judged reliable for the study. The researchers administered copies of the questionnaires to the students through the direct delivery method and back the instrument immediately. The data were analyzed using weighted mean. The decision rule was drawn on the criterion mean for agreeing or disagreeing on the item used for the analysis. The criterion means score is 2.50. Therefore, weighted mean score of 2.50 and above for any item indicated that the respondents agree on the items whereas a weighted means score below 2.50 revealed that the respondents disagreed on the items.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the perceived effects of parental involvement on student's behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State?

Table 1: Mean rating of respondents on the perceived effect of parental involvement on student's behavioural adjustments

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
1.	Parental involvement has the most significant impact on students' behavioural adjustments	2.94	.49835	Agreed
2.	Parental involvement lessens the negative effects of bullying on students' behavioural adjustments	2.92	.49824	Agreed
3.	Parental involvement helps students develop resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity	3.65	.49986	Agreed
4.	Students whose parents are involved in their academic life have better emotional regulation and self-awareness	3.17	.49923	Agreed
5.	Parental involvement reduces students' aggressive behaviour and conflicts	3.34	.49958	Agreed
6.	Parental involvement impacts students' motivation and engagement in academic activities	3.51	.49977	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.32		Agreed

Data in Table 1 show that items 1 and 6 obtained mean scores above 2.50. With a grand mean score of 3.32, the result shows that parental involvement have a positive effect on student's behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.

Research Question 2: What are the perceived effect of anxiety on student's behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State?

Table 2: Mean rating of respondents on the perceived effect of anxiety on student's behavioural adjustments

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
7.	Slows down students' behavioural motivation to learn	2.81	.49752	Agreed
8.	Affects students' self-esteem and confidence	3.67	.49987	Agreed
9.	Affects students' ability to develop behavioural adjustment such as a growth mind set and embrace challenges	3.22	.49935	Agreed
10.	Increased likelihood of academic dishonesty among students	3.40	.49966	Agreed
11.	Anxiety can create a feeling of guilt, shame, and inadequacy which affects students' behavioural adjustment	3.66	.49987	Agreed
12.	Low behavioural adjustments is caused by fear of the unknown	3.26	.49944	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.33		Agreed

Data in Table 2 show that items 7 - 12 obtained mean scores above 2.50. With a grand mean score of 3.33, the result shows that anxiety has a negative effect on student's behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.

Research Question 3: What are the strategies that can promote parental involvement and mitigate the effects of anxiety on students' behavioural adjustment of senior secondary school students in Anambra State?

Table 3: Mean rating of respondents on the strategies that can promote parental involvement and mitigate the effects of anxiety on students' behavioural adjustment

S/N	Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Remark
13.	Open communication between students, parents and teachers	3.64	.49986	Agreed
14.	Provision of emotional and social support for students	2.51	.49396	Agreed
15.	Positive reinforcement and encouragement to students	2.72	.49673	Agreed
16.	Through Parent-teacher conferences, students' progress can be discussed and strategies to handle them brought forward	3.22	.49935	Agreed
17.	Adoption of Stress management techniques by parents such as active listening and open dialogue	3.97	.49996	Agreed
Grand Mean		3.21		Agreed

Data in Table 3 show that items 13 - 17 obtained mean scores above 2.50. With a grand mean score of 3.21, the result shows that the strategies if adopted can promote parental involvement and mitigate the effects of anxiety on students' behavioural adjustment of senior secondary school students in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The study first of all examined the perceived effect of parental involvement on student's behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State which concluded that parental involvement can positively impact students behavioural adjustment through helping students develop resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity and also constant involvement in their academic life which can promote better emotional regulation and self-awareness. This finding aligns with Tran, *et al.* (2020) which stated that parents' involvement in their children's education, such as attending parent-teacher conferences and

school events can have a lasting effect on student's behavioural adjustment in school.

Secondly, the study examined the perceived effect of anxiety on student's behavioural adjustments of senior secondary school students in Anambra State which concluded that anxiety has negative effect on student's behavioural adjustments as it can slow down student's behavioural motivation to learn and affects students' self-esteem and confidence. This finding aligns with Jeynes, (2017) which states that anxiety also affects students' social interactions, causing them to avoid peer relationships and extracurricular activities.

Lastly, the study ascertained the strategies that can promote parental involvement and mitigate the effects of anxiety on students' behavioural adjustment of senior secondary school students in Anambra State with emphasis on open communication between students, parents and teachers and provision of emotional and social support for students are one of the strategies

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that parental involvement plays a vital role in the behavioural adjustment of secondary school students in Awka South LGA. When parents get involved in their wards' academic nurturing, they provide appropriate supervision and monitoring. Also, getting involved equips them with feedback from the teachers and school management, making it possible for them to monitor their children and offer support. It was also concluded that anxiety has a negative effect on students' behavioural adjustment. However, with proper support, encouragement and stress management, parents can help their wards overcome the deleterious effects of anxiety on behavioural adjustment.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proffered:

1. Schools in Anambra State should develop and implement parental involvement programs, fostering regular communication, progress updates, and collaborative problem-solving.
2. Organize workshops for parents, teachers, and students to equip them with anxiety management strategies, recognition, and support.
3. Provide teachers with training on anxiety recognition, support, and strategies to create a conducive learning environment.
4. Educators and policymakers should develop and implement policies promoting parental involvement, student mental health, and well-being in secondary schools in Anambra state.

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