



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ALTERNATIVE BASIC EDUCATION CENTERS AND REGULAR PRIMARY FIRST CYCLE SCHOOL OF HAMER WOREDA, SOUTH OMO ZONE, ETHIOPIA

<sup>1,\*</sup>Yohannes Bisa Bereket Merkinie and <sup>2</sup>Bereket Merkinie

Department of Psychology, Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship established between parental involvement in children schooling and children's academic achievement at alternative basic education and regular primary first cycle schools in Hamer Woreda. This study also investigated differences on the degree of involvement of parents and academic achievement of children in ABE and RPFC schools. To this end, parental involvement having two categories (high and low) was made based on the response of parents using the measure of parental involvement. Additionally, teacher made achievement tests were used to determine the academic achievement of children. The study followed quantitative approach to see the relationship and difference between variables. A sample of 60 children and their parents (totally 120) were selected using stratified and systematic random sampling techniques from the schools. Data were gathered using structured interview. A structured interview was made with parents/guardians. In an attempt to look for the degree of parental involvement in education of children, the study revealed that there is high (50%) and low (50%) parental involvement in children's schooling both in ABE and RPFC schools. Accordingly, the result of analysis showed that there is a positive relationship between parental involvement and children's academic achievement. It was also found significant difference between parental involvement and children's academic achievement ( $t= 2.224, p< 0.05$ ). Also there exists a significant differences in the parental involvement of ABE and RPFC school children ( $t= -5.784, p<0.05$ ). RPFC school children enjoy more parental involvement than their counterparts in the ABE centers. Besides, there exists a significant difference in the academic achievement of ABE and RPFC schools children ( $t= -3.604, p<0.05$ ). RPFC children scored better than their ABE center counterparts in academic achievement. Finally, based on the findings, it is recommended that a comprehensive and more targeted intervention programs has to be designed and implemented quickly.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is commonly referred as the process of imparting and acquiring knowledge through teaching and learning at school or similar institution, in a form of formal education. However, the process of education does not only start when a child first attend school. Children can learn and receive knowledge from a parent, family member and home environment. Thus the home, the child and the school form a tripartite that creates a special climate that is desirable for effective education (Ngwenya, 1996, cited in Narain, 2005:4). In fact, parents represent a considerable role in child's education. There are strong evidences on the significance of parental involvement for the educational attainment of children

at school level education. For instance, Majoribank (1986) stated that the family is a powerful determinant of children's learning and when the school and home have divergent approaches to life and learning, children are likely to suffer in their school learning. The more the parent becomes involved and learns about the school, the more their children can be helped. This type of situation can produce a positive spiral of success for the parent, school and student. Henderson & Mapp's (2002) also, in their study, shown that the more families support their children's learning and educational progress, the more their children tend to do well in school and pursue higher education. Yet other researcher argue that high achieving students came from families in which parents set high standards for their children's academic activities and maintain learning-supportive home environment (Clark,1993). Generally, Parental involvement in children's schooling can improve their children's learning and thereby contribute to the

\*Corresponding author: Yohannes Bisa Biramo ,  
Department of Psychology, Wolaita Sodo University, Ethiopia.

development of their children as skilled and productive members of society (The World Health Organizations (WHO, n.d.).

## Statement of the Problem

The students academic achievement in school is not mostly related with income or social status, but with the extent to which their family is able to create a home environment that encourages learning, expresses high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers and become involved in their children's education at school and in the community (Henderson, 1994). Mohan (cited in Admassu, 2004:1) described that children's school performance at any educational level can be deterred or fostered by non- cognitive factors such as home and family variables, school variables, socio- economic variables, study habits, interest and motivation. More specifically, parental reactions to academic achievement, such as low involvement, negative control, provision of extrinsic rewards and over and under controlling family styles, are related to lower academic performance. Thus, besides the problems which arise from student's ability to understand concepts, organize and express ideas and comprehend what has been learned in the class, the academic performance of children is affected by the above non-cognitive factors. For most part, these problems may emanate from the low level of parental involvement in their children's schooling, lack of interest to learn and lack of favorable school environment and facilities (Ginsburg and Bronstein cited in Admassu, 2004:2). Eccles, Jacobs & Harold (1990) have proposed that parent's positive expectations for their children's success in schooling is related with their level of satisfaction in their children's performance in school. That is, when parents see that their children are enthusiastic about their learning, they are far more likely to view their children's schooling in a positive light, and be more receptive to their learning. To this end, parents should be seen as vital partners in a child's education. In light of this provocative idea, Philips (1987), in his research, found that among highly competent third grade children, parent's expectation of their children's academic competence were more related with children's academic achievement than were actual indicators such as grades and test scores.

Furthermore, the degree of importance parents assign to their children academic performance may influence children's academic achievement. For example, evidence suggests that children have greater confidence in their overall academic abilities when their parents place a great deal of importance on academic success (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caparara & Pastorelli cited in Repetti and Mc Grath, 2000). Hence, parents' high expectation and the importance they place on students academic performance is desirable for children's academic achievement. Even though there is a betterment of children's academic achievement as parents involve on their schooling, in some cases parental involvement towards schooling might be influenced by a multitude of factors, only a few of which can be; their perception of the effect of education on character development, status in the community, the continuity of traditional roles, and other social factors. That means, parents may believe that schooling enhances a child's status in the community, but fear that children who go to school will not learn to be better to help their parents. Thus, parents who believe that educated children have better life

chances than other children may be less likely influenced by culturally-based objections to schooling. In contrast, parents who see education as having neutral or harmful effect on productivity may be more likely to hold positive view, on the cultural objections of schooling (Weir, 2000).

In the Ethiopian context, the effects of parental involvement on children's school achievement have been studied (Admassu, 2004; Habtamu, 1999; Birhanu, 1996). An attempt (Asaminew, 2006) has been made to see if parental involvement relate to classroom environment. However, there is no study in Ethiopian context, even at the local level, that explored parental involvement and children's academic achievement together. The present research was intended to examine parental involvement in their children's schooling and the academic achievement of children in the selected centers (school). The researcher, in fact, knows that there are other variables that can be related with academic achievement of children. The motivation for this study originates from the present researchers observation, as an educator, of ABE centers and RPFC school in Hamer wereda South Omo Zone. The researcher's interest also deepened when the researcher interviewed some of teachers/facilitators there. As to the interviewees response there is an obvious variation in parental involvement in children's education in most of the ABE centers and RPFC school of Hamer woreda. Thus, it is important to the researcher, as an educator, and now as a researcher, to put this problem in to perspective and to attempt to understand parent's involvement in their children's schooling and children's academic achievement in ABE centers and RPFC school of South Omo Zone Hamer wereda.

## Research Questions

On the ground of the above stated problems, this research is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the degree of parental involvement in children's schooling in Hamer Woreda?
2. Is there significant relationship between parental involvement and children's academic achievement
3. Is there significant difference between the involvement of parents of children in ABE centers and RPFC school?
4. Is there significant difference between the academic achievement of children in ABE centers and RPFC school?

## Definition of Terms

**1.Parental Involvement:** refers the communication made between parent and child about school (children report to their parents about their school activities); parent and school personnel (teacher) about child's progress. It also refers the participation of parents at home (mentoring the child's activities at home e.g. play and home work) and in school-related activities (in parent's meeting, consultations with the teacher and in school activities).

**2.Academic Achievement:** refers the children result on Mathematics and English achievement tests developed by the researcher based on information and material offered by both ABE and RPFC school teachers.

## METHODS

### Design

The major intent of this study was to investigate the relationship between parental involvement in children schooling and children academic achievement. To this end, quantitative approach was employed so as to validate and to get insight in to the different points (relationship and difference) of non- manipulative variables. Thus, this study largely followed quantitative approach to see the relationship and difference among variables.

### Data Sources

The study was conducted in Hamer woreda i.e. is one of the six woredas of South Omo Zone. It is located in southwestern Ethiopia, nearly 770 km from Addis Ababa and 540 km from Awassa, the capital of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region. The woreda is estimated to cover 731, 565 hectares of land. There are around 43, 000 people living in the woreda. From these number of population around 82 % belongs to the Hamer ethnic group and the rest is for Erbare and Karo ethnic group (Assefa, n.d.). Among seven ABE center woredas, Hamer woreda is the one with well organized alternative basic education centers (ABE's) that helps to access basic education for pastoral community of South Omo Zone.

The researcher's reason for selecting the setting i.e. Hamer is the fact that the researcher has been working with the facilitators/teachers of ABE and RPFC schools (in giving training) of the woreda, the availability of organized documents and information in relation to the variables stated in the research topic, the presence of supplementary information from non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and accessibility of transportation service than other ABE centers of the zone.

### Population

The target population of the study were alternative basic education (ABE) and regular primary first cycle (RPFC) students in Hamer woreda.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

Among the 35 ABE centers found in the woreda, Tsiya, Delmi, Zegola, Keysa, Woro and Gune centers were selected using simple random sampling particularly lottery method. In the selected centers, there were 284 (226 male and 58 female) students. From this total number 30 (24 male and 6 female) were selected as a participants using stratified and systematic random sampling techniques. Additionally the only one RPFC school found in the town of the woreda i.e. Demeka was also selected using availability sampling technique. In this school there were 214(170 male and 44 female) students. From this total number, 30(24 male and 6 female) students were selected as participants using stratified and systematic random sampling techniques. In the selection process of the participants from the selected ABE centers, the population was divided in to two strata based on their sex: male and female and then in to three strata based on their grade level: level one, two and three students. In order to select the required sample of students from each stratum, systematic random sampling was employed. Accordingly, the students name list was prepared based on alphabetical order from "A" to "Z" for each stratum

in each cluster. Then, with regard to ABE centers, the total number of students (284) was divided by the sample size (30). Then, by lottery method one student's name in each class of each stratum was taken to be included in the sample of students. In doing so, 13(10 male and 3 female) students from level one out of 126, 11(9 male and 2 female) students from level two out of 99 and 6(5 male and 1 female) students from level three out of 59 were selected. Thus, stratified and systematic random sampling techniques were employed to select the participants from ABE centers.

On the other hand, while selecting participants from regular primary first cycle school, the population was divided in to two strata based on their sex: male and female and then into four strata based on their grade level: grade one, two, three and four students. To select the required sample of students from each stratum, systematic random sampling was employed. Accordingly, the students name list was prepared based on alphabetical order from "A" to "Z" for each stratum in each cluster. Then the total number of students (214) was divided by the sample size (30). Then, by lottery method one student's name in each class of each stratum was taken to be included in the sample of students. Consequently, 10(8 male and 2 female) students from grade one out of 67, 8 (6male and 2 female) students from grade two out of 58, 6 (5 male and 1 female) students from grade three out of 45 and 6(5 male and 1 female) students from grade four out of 44 were selected. Moreover, parents/guardians of the respective children were also involved. For each of the selected child, one of the parents (available) was contacted for interview.

In general, stratified and systematic random sampling technique was employed to select a total of 60 children from ABE centers and RPFC school; parents/guardians of these respective children were also participated. Therefore, the total number of people included in the study became 120.

### Instruments

In this study three types of instruments were used to collect data.

- a. Different forms of structured interview were used with children and their parents. The items were presented in interview form due to the fact that participants are children (aged five and six years), who might be incapable of thinking highly or hypothetically, may have attention deficit and unable to comprehend what is being asked. And most of the parents are also non-educated, who might be incapable of reading and writing. The children's interview consists of items measuring their perception about their physical school environment. And parents' interview includes items assessing their involvement in their children's education.
- b. Data on academic achievement were also collected using teacher made tests so as to compare the academic achievement of students of selected ABE centers and RPFC. And this in turn helped the researcher to know whether there is relationship among the studied variables. These measures are explained in detail in the following parts.

### Parents Involvement Measures

Structured interview was used to measure the involvement of parents in their children's schooling. To this end, a five- point

scale ranging from never to always was constructed by the researcher through a careful adaptation of items from the parent involvement in children's education measure used by Peters, Seeds, Goldstein, and Coleman (2007). The structured interview for parents contained two parts: the first part contained space for background information i.e. current living place and the second part contained scale that measured the involvement of parents in their children's schooling. The section of structured interview for parents has two subscales and contains 19 items. The first subscale contained items (item 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 & 14) that measure the involvement of parents in home-based activities. The second sub-scale contained items (item 3, 5, 9, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, & 19) that measure the involvement of parents in school-based activities that help their children's academic progress. During scoring process, the responses of parents for each item were filled in excel in the same order as in the quantitative interview, then the items were aggregated based on the scale they measured and sum computed.

### Academic Achievement Measures

The children academic achievement measures were based on student achievement tests (Mathematics and English achievement). The children's Mathematics and English achievement is measured by means of curriculum-based objective item tests developed by the researcher based on due support from both ABE and RPFC school teachers. Each test comprises 20 questions. In developing the tests, the researcher was adhered to the following procedures (Baek, 2001) a) Define the purpose of the test, b) Analyze teaching and learning conditions, c) Define contents to be assessed, d) Design test method, e) Develop initial test items. And then the researcher implemented a pilot test, analyzed pilot test data and selected final test items. During scoring, children scores for each test were filled in excel according to their school (ABE and RPFC) then their scores on each test were aggregated on the basis of their school and the sum is computed. Thus, to lessen the communication or language barrier of respondents all measuring items, except achievement test items, in this study were translated in to Amharic. The items were translated by the researcher and commented by Amharic instructor in Arbaminch College of Teacher Education. Finally after smoothening minor mismatches in translation, the items were made ready for pilot study. However, the achievement test items were not translated due to the fact that the media of instruction is Amharic for Mathematics subject and English for English subject.

### Pilot Study

Prior to conducting the main study, a pilot study was administered to pretest the reliability of the scales. Accordingly, the reliability of structured interview, for parents, was checked using Cronbach alpha coefficient. To do this, 14 parents (7 fathers and 7 mothers) who were not part of the main study, were involved. As a result, the reliability of the instrument was found to be  $r = 0.89$ . Similarly, in order to check the reliability of structured interview, for children, Kuder – Recharadson (KR20) was used due to the presence of items scored on yes or no options. To do these 16 children (10 boys and 6 girls) who were not part of the main study group were involved. As a result, the reliability of the instrument was found to be  $r = 0.72$ . Though this reliability is not highly maximum; it is sufficient for study groups such as children and

for research type which is not aimed at designing policy and theory (Yalew, 2009). Furthermore, the pilot was also carried out on Mathematics and English achievement tests developed for children. To check the reliability of these achievement tests, Spearman-Brown split half method was used. And it was checked on 14 children (8 male and 6 female) who were not part of the main study group. As a result the reliability was found to be  $r = 0.86$  for Mathematics test and  $r = 0.91$  for English test. After computing the reliability of measuring instruments final correction was made on confusing terms and statements.

### Data Gathering Procedure

Before getting into data gathering, permission was got from the head of Woreda education bureau through an official letter brought from where the researcher works, Arbaminch College of Teacher Education. Training was also given for seven assistant interviewers and proctors who were facilitators/teachers of the selected centers/school. The training was based on the content of items, procedures of interviewing, administering the exam and interacting with children and their parents. Facilitators/teachers were oriented to orally translate structured interview items into the interviewees' mother tongue i.e. Amharic especially for children in ABE centers and their parents. For interviewing, children were appointed during their free time after lunch. Then, the interview was conducted in face-to-face manner with the selected children. Finally these children were told to bring one of their parents/guardians (father, mother or other) in another day assigned by the researcher. In this way face-to-face interview was also conducted with parents of children. Achievement tests were administered for children in their respective school; in a similar day and time based on the schedule arranged by the researcher.

### Data Analysis

The data gathered through structured interview were analyzed using statistics such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlations and independent sample t-test. In doing so, percentage was used to state the degree of parental involvement in children schooling. Mean, standard deviation and independent sample t-test were used to see whether there is significant difference between parental involvement and children's academic achievement. They are also used to compare the academic achievement scores among students of ABE and RPFC or to see if there is significant difference. Moreover, Pearson Correlation Coefficients were used to see the relationship between parental involvement and children's academic achievement.

## RESULTS

In this part the data collected through quantitative interview were analyzed and presented. The findings are presented according to the sequence of research questions.

### The Degree of Parental Involvement in Children Schooling

The following steps were put into practice to form the degree of parental involvement in children's schooling:

- The 19 questions, stated on structured interview, were coded in to "Always, Usually, Sometimes, Rarely and Never" responses.

- The researcher added responses and calculated in to percentage form.
- A range of 50-90% or parents involvement scored above the mean (57) was categorized as high parental involvement. Whereas below 50% or parents involvement scored below the mean (57) was categorized as low parental involvement. This categorization was done at the discretion of the researcher.

**Table 1. The Degree of Parental Involvement in Children's Schooling**

Degree of parental Involvement	Range	No of Parents	Percent
High parental involvement	50- 90%	30	50%
Low parental involvement	Below 50%	30	50%
Total		60	100%

As depicted in the above Table 1, the degree of parental involvement differs. The degree of involvement can be categorized in to high and low parental involvement. 30 or 50% of parents had high involvement in their children's schooling as between 50 - 90% and the rest 30 or below 50% of parents had low involvement in their children's schooling. Of the sixty parents, the data showed that not one parent was 100% involved in his/her child education.

**Table 2. The Marks of Children with High Parental Involvement**

No of Students	Range of Marks	
Fig	%	%
14	47	70-79
8	27	60-69
6	20	50-59
2	7	Below 50

Of all the students (30) whose parental involvement are rated high, as displayed in the above Table 2, 14(47%) scored between 70- 79%, 8 (27%) scored between 60-69%, 6(20%) scored between 50- 59%, while the remaining 2(7%) scored below 50% in achievement tests.

**Table 3. The Marks of Children with Low Parental Involvement**

No of Students	Range of Marks	
Fig	%	%
2	7	70-79
5	16	60-69
6	20	50-59
17	57	Below 50

30(50 %) children come from parents whose involvements in their children's schooling have been rated as low (that is, below 50%). Of these, as depicted in the above Table 3, 30 children: 2(7%) scored between 70-79%, 5(16%) scored between 60-69%, 6(20%) scored between 50-59% and the remaining 17(57%) scored below 50% in achievement tests.

**Parental Involvement and Children's Academic Achievement**

**The Relationship between Parental Involvement in their Children's Schooling and Children's Academic Achievement**

The relationship between parental involvement in children's schooling and children's academic achievement were

computed using Pearson correlation coefficient. The result showed that the relationship was significant at  $\alpha = 0.05$  (two – tailed).

**Table 4. The Correlation between Parental Involvement in Children's Schooling and Children's Academic Achievement**

Variables	Parental Involvement	Academic Achievement
Parental Involvement	1.000	.689*
Academic Achievement	.689*	1.000

\* Significant at  $P < 0.05$  (two – tailed)

As displayed in Table 4, the scores on parental involvement were positively and significantly correlated with the scores on academic achievement ( $r = 0.689$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). The correlation coefficient indicated that parental involvement in their children's schooling and children's academic achievement have strong and direct relationship. Moreover, the coefficient of determination ( $r^2 = 0.475$ ) between these two variable scores indicated that the involvement of parents accounted for 49.5% of the variance in their children's academic achievement.

**Difference between the Parental involvement of Children in ABE centers and RPFC school**

The research question dealt in this section is examining parental involvement difference of children in ABE and RPFC schools. Thus, independent samples test was conducted using SPSS version 19. The results are displayed in the following table.

**Table 5. Comparison of ABE and RPFC School Children's parental involvement**

School Type	N	Mean	SD	df	t	sig.
ABE	30	60.70	8.539	29	-5.784	.000*
RPFC	30	73.57	6.740			

\* The difference is significant at 0.05 alpha level

The result in the above Table 6, revealed that there exists a significant difference in parental involvement of ABE and RPFC school children ( $t = -5.784$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) with a mean for parents from ABE center children ( $M = 60.70$ ,  $SD = 8.539$ ) and from RPFC school children ( $M = 73.57$ ,  $SD = 6.740$ ). This suggests that RPFC school children enjoy more parental involvement than their counterparts' in the ABE centers.

**Difference between the Academic Achievement of ABE centers and RPFC school Children**

The research question addressed in this section is examining academic achievement difference between ABE and RPFC school children. To compute this independent sample t-test was used. The mean, standard deviation and t-test results are displayed in the following table.

**Table 6. Comparison of ABE and RPFC schools children on Academic Achievement**

School type	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	sig
ABE	30	24.27	4.354	29	-3.604	0.001*
RPFC	30	27.33	3.772			

\* The difference is significant at 0.05 alpha level

The result in the above Table 7, revealed that there exists a significant difference in the academic achievement of ABE and RPFC schools children ( $t = -3.604$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) with mean for children from ABE center ( $M = 24.27$ ,  $SD = 4.354$ ) and from RPFC school ( $M = 27.33$ ,  $SD = 3.772$ ). So, RPFC children scored better than their ABE center counterparts in academic achievement.

## DISCUSSION

### The Degree of Parental Involvement in Children Schooling

The finding of the current study shows that from all parents (100%) participated in the study, 50% of parents were reported their involvement as high and the rest 50% of parents reported their involvement as low. This shows that there were parents of children, from ABE centers, who are highly and lowly involved in their children's schooling and also there were parents of children from RPFC, who are highly and lowly involved in their children's schooling. As it has been stated well in the literature review section there is difference in the degree of parents' involvement in their children's education. This might be explained by the difference in the perception on the concept 'parental involvement' among different parents of different study cities, the difference in sense of responsibility for involvement, level of education, socio-economic status hold by parents. For instance, in the study conducted in England parents (Williams and Ullman, 2002), found that 2% of parents felt, responsibility for education is belonged to school and 58% felt that they had equal responsibility with the school and the remaining 40% were felt something between these values. Additionally the difference in the population where the study focus or difference in the nature of instruments, procedures of administration used might also create gaps in the result of various studies showing the degree of parental involvement. In the present study, though there were no parents involved 100% in their children's schooling, parents in the range of 50-90% were show high involvement in their children's schooling as per the categorization made by the researcher. In turn this shows that the degree of parental involvement in their children's schooling is equal i.e. high and low among the parents of children in ABE centers and RPFC school in Hamer Woreda.

### Relationship Between Parental Involvement in their Children Schooling and Academic Achievement

Cotton and Wiklund (1989) found that the more active forms of parents' involvement produce greater achievement benefits than the mere passive ones, that is, if parents receive information, read written communications from the school and perhaps attend and listen during parent teacher conferences, greater achievement benefits accrue than would be the case with no parent involvement at all. They continued that considerably greater achievement benefits are noted when parent involvement is active, when parents work with their children at home, attend and actively support school activities or even help out in classroom or field trips and so on. The findings in this study agree with Cotton and Wiklund that parental involvement and children's academic achievement are positively and significantly correlated. This means that parental involvement is one of the variables that can make differences among children in relation to academic achievement. However, the current result found to be

inconsistent with earlier works of (Balli et al, 1998) who suggested that the level of family involvement with home work is not significantly related with student achievement. But still the previous results of some scholars found to support the current result. For instance, Henderson (1994) found that children do better in school and go farther in school when their parents involve in their education at home and school. Previous researches (Henderson and Berla, 1997; Driessen et al. 2005) which emphasized on investigating relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement, however found even more controversial the reason behind this discrepancy might be the different use of definition of the term parental involvement, measures of parental involvement and variables or components of parental involvement. Moreover the current finding enables us to realize the view parental involvement and academic achievement are positively and significantly correlated.

### Differences between Parental Involvement of Children in ABE centers and RPFC School

As it has been shown in the analysis section, an independent sample t-test was calculated and the result indicated that statistically there is a mean difference between the involvement of parents of children in ABE centers and RPFC school. This is to mean that parental involvement in ABE and RPFC schools varies and parents of children in RPFC are more involved than parents of children in ABE centers. Being consistent with the present result Berkeley Parent Network (2009) asserted that schools vary widely and level of parental involvement varies from one school to the other (cited in Ademola and Olajumoke, 2009: 459). The reason for parents from ABE centers involve less in children schooling could be, initially these parents may not consider the value of education to have vision or confidence or competence in supporting their child and comfort in communicating with teachers. Furthermore, the type of involvement the parents undergo may not be more than telling to go to school and return back timely. And parents may not fully consider the benefits of educating children (why they send their child to school, what would they get from sending their child to the school?). As a result their role on their children schooling could not bring significant change. On the other hand, the reason for parents from RPFC school involve more in children's schooling could be the parent may consider the value of education and may have better socio economic status, confidence, experience with the school so as to have a discussion with teachers and their child concerning their schooling. Parents may get involved to the extent that they see it as part of their role or job. Furthermore, they may believe that children can do better academically when their support at home and school is added.

Although it is not indicated in the previous research, parents of children in RPFC school would have opportunities to get information on how to offer support for children at home; and they would also have close contact with teacher so as to get immediate information about their child. And this may lead parents of children in RPFC School to view educating their child as the way to the betterment of their living standard than parents of children in ABE centers. Thus, the difference between ABE and RPFC children parents' involvement in their children's schooling presumably happened from the afore mentioned factors.

## Difference between Academic Achievement of Children in ABE centers and RPFC School

The analysis of result indicated that there exists a significant difference in the academic achievement of ABE and RPFC children. This is to mean that children in RPFC School were found more likely to achieve higher academic results than children from ABE centers. In other word ABE centers children were lagging behind in academic achievement when they were compared with those in RPFC School.

Although it was not specifically indicated by previous research findings, the poor achievement in school subject, as indicated by various empirical studies, have been identified and regarded as a result of factors such as school and teacher related characteristics, home and family background, parental involvement and host of others (Gianzero, 2001; Olatoye, 2002; Olatoye and Ogunkola, 2008, cited in Ademola and Olajumoke, 2009). With respect to the present study, this indicated that the poor academic achievement of children in ABE centers might be resulted from parental and environmental related factors. In relation to parent related factors, children may not get consistent moral and material support from their parents because of their parents condescending attitude towards education. Besides children may not spend their time at home in doing school (subject) related activities. Thus these could be the major instances for the low academic achievement of children in ABE as compared with children in RPFC School. In fact this idea was confirmed by the research made on 1,400 Southeast Asia refugee families. The study revealed that family values and home environments that support learning facilitate academic success (Henderson and Berla, 1995).

Environmental related factors might have their own role in diminishing the students' academic achievement. As the observation data indicates in most of the places where ABE centers found the degree of temperature accounted most of the time is very high. The nature of temperature within the school environment (ABE) is also too hot. There is no vegetation so as to control it. As a result of this, majority of students were seen sleeping in the class while teaching and unable to concentrate on the learning facts. In addition to the intense nature of temperature, the presence of various openings through the walls of the classroom caused sunlight penetration into the classroom and exposure of students for extraneous occurrences that hinder their attention towards learning. Consequently these factors may lead children in ABE centers to score low in academic achievement as compared to children in RPFC School. Previous research that confirm these aspects found that students will perform mental tasks best in rooms kept at moderate humidity levels (40 to 70 percent) and moderate temperature in the range of sixty-eight to seventy-four degrees Fahrenheit (Harner, 1974; Wyon et al. 1979, cited in Schneider, 2002). And the finding of Fisher (2000) verify that desirable classroom designs such as friendly and agreeable entrance areas, supervised places for students significantly affects student achievement.

## Summary

The researcher was more concerned in exploring the relationship among parental involvement in their children school and children's academic achievement and in ABE centers and Regular Primary First cycle school of Hamer Woreda. The study investigated:

1. The degree of parental involvement in children schooling
2. The relationship between parental involvement and children academic achievement.
3. The difference between the involvement of parents of children in ABE and RPFC schools.
4. The difference between the academic achievement of children in ABE and RPFC school.

Accordingly, a total of 120 representative samples were taken from the population of the study (with their one of available parents/guardians) i.e. alternative basic education (ABE) and regular primary first cycle school (RPFC) students in Hamer woreda, through stratified and systematic random sampling techniques. Thus data were collected from these representative samples using structured interview for children and their parents and observation to describe the existing nature of physical school environment of ABE and RPFC schools. Before getting in to data gathering, training was given for seven assistant interviewers regarding the content of items, procedures of interviewing, administering the exam and interacting with children and their parents. The data collected were analyzed using a series of statistical tools such as percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson correlation coefficient for quantitative data and narration (description) for qualitative data that supplement the result obtained through quantitative analysis. The result of percentage analysis on the degree of parental involvement in children's schooling indicated that from all parents involved in the study 30 or 50% are highly involved and the rest 30 or 50% are lowly involved. The result of the correlation coefficient indicated that there were strong and direct relationship between parental involvement in their children's schooling and academic achievement. The correlations were significant at  $= 0.05$ . The t- test values confirmed that the mean difference in parental involvement and academic achievement were significant. Similarly there exist significant mean difference in parental involvement of children in ABE centers and RPFC School. Moreover, the t- test value revealed that there exists a significant difference in the academic achievement of children were significant in ABE centers and RPFC School. The t-test values were significant at  $= 0.05$ .

## Conclusion

The present study has got several limitations that indicate caution in interpretation and generalization of the findings. One limitation is its relatively small size (in each center or school) compared to other quantitative studies on the same relative aspects. Also the present study focused on the parental involvement and academic achievement differences of children in ABE and RPFC School rather than sex and age differences on parental involvement and academic achievement. The findings of this study were also applicable only to the population that has been defined by the researcher in the methodology section. Another limitation is methodological limitation, in that the degree of involvement, in this study, realized as a result of parent interview data which may limit the measurement of parental involvement to individual perception or which may result in bias in telling one's involvement in child's schooling, hence other way of realization would have been available i.e. children- response (suggestion). The findings of this study are also limited to the nature of variable as measured using instruments preferred by the researcher, there were several other types of instruments

but the accuracy of findings depends on the objectives of the study as stated earlier. Regardless of the above limitations, the following conclusions are made based on the analysis and discussion of data collected from sample ABE center and RPFC school i.e. Hamer Woreda:

1. The current study found that there is equal i.e. high and low degree of parental involvement in their children's schooling among the parents of children in ABE centers and RPFC school in Hamer Woreda.
2. The present study considered the positive relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement among children in ABE and RPFC schools. Results reflect that children who are from highly involved parents (in children schooling) were found more likely to have better academic achievement. On the other hand, children who are from lowly involved parents (in children schooling) were found more likely to have poor academic achievement.
3. In an attempt made to see parental involvement and academic achievement difference, the study found significant difference in the mean of children and their parents' involvement. Children from highly involved parents scored significantly higher mean than children from lowly involved parents. Therefore, highly involved parents found better in scaffolding their child (in education), to score better academic results than lowly involved parents.
4. With regards to differences in parental involvement of children in ABE centers and RPFC School, the current study found significant difference. This suggests that RPFC school children got more or better parental involvement than children in ABE center.
5. The present study attempted to see academic achievement differences among children in ABE centers and RPFC School. The result indicted that significant difference in which RPFC children performed better than their ABE centers counterparts in academic achievement.

## Recommendations

The review of literature proves that parental involvement is necessary and effective in helping children achieve more academically. And it further proves that physical elements (temperature, are quality and acoustics) in the school environment have discernible effect on student's academic achievement. Viewing these as important for children's academic achievement, the following considerations are intended for parents and school personnel so that their contribution for children's academic achievement might be more effective.

### Parents

Parents are in the position to put their children on the right course, especially at the early stage of development. The parental roles continue to impact on children's lifestyle, perhaps throughout life. So Parents should seize and harness the influence of their involvement to set their child in motion in order to facilitate better and higher achievement in their school subjects. No one is more than parents in sending signals to their child on the importance of reading and education through their own examples, assistance and involvement. They should not send their child to school as a way of getting them

free from their aprons, rather they should see going to school as a way of building the lives of the children and their future too. Additionally parents need to know their role in the education of their children so that they do not put the blame entirely on teachers when their children do not perform well in school. Furthermore, parents should devise means by which they would be involved in the academic activities of their children. To supply the needs to keep their children in school, parents should visit schools, involve themselves with schools, (as much as they can afford).

### School principals

It is recommended that the school principals should try to create awareness in parents on the importance of their involvement on their children's academic achievement. Additionally they should organize orientation and training programs for parents as such could open their eyes and minds as to how they can be involved. An array of programs should be offered so that parents no matter their degree of willingness, available time, ability and social economic status will be able to participate in academic activities of their children. Furthermore the school principals should pinpoint areas of needs, weakness or strength of their students to the parents so that they can work on it as a way of getting them acquainted to how to help the child. And it should inform parents that they can contribute to the education of their children through encouragement, provision of learning facilities, and active assistance among other strategies. This suggests that parents and school, especially teachers have to work in collaboration in order to bring the best out of every pupil as much as possible.

### Furthermore, the school principals:

- Should invite non-governmental organizations in order to held Seminars and workshops in the residential areas of parents to help them understand the concept of parental involvement, its importance, and the different ways in which they can assist their children in their education.
- Should prepare a room specifically designed for the parents that may encourage visits. This room can have reading materials appropriate to the age group of the students, information about upcoming activities, and other announcements of interest to the parents
- Should train teachers general and specific techniques to invite parents to participate in their children' education when necessary.

In general parents, teachers and the school at large should pay every effort for the betterment of children's academic achievement.

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