

The Link between Social Capital and Learning Outcomes: A literature review

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Abstract

There is comprehensive body of evidence linking social capital to academic success and other learning outcomes. The array of evidence discovered in various studies suggests that social capital impinges positively on student learning outcomes. The literature review was carried out to identify research needs of the social capital theory. The review sought to identify key issues that if well addressed would aid educationists to unravel the full benefits of the social capital concept. To that end, a number of empirical studies that have been conducted in different countries across the globe were reviewed. On the grounds of the evidence of the review, it could be concluded that social capital positively and significantly influences student educational outcomes. Nonetheless, the studies have shown only adequate quantitative evidence on the benefits of social capital on student learning outcomes without much qualitative evidence. It is, therefore, recommended that studies be done to ascertain the impact of social capital on children learning outcomes using the qualitative and mixed method paradigms.

Key words: Parental involvement, social capital, learning outcomes, pro-social behaviour.

1.0 Introduction

The resources embedded in social relationships and interactions have been examined severally to ascertain the extent to which they inure to the benefits of the actors, especially the child. It is averred that the determinants of children learning outcomes encompass visible and invisible factors both at home and in school. The non-physical variables, one of which is the fruit of social relationship between people have caught the attention of educationists. Coleman's study in 1987 popularized the social capital theory and since then many studies have been conducted to interrogate it further to underscore its veracity. For close to three decades, researchers all over the globe have endeavoured to examine the influence of social capital on the learning outcomes. This provoked the need to chronicle the studies to identify the convergence and divergence of results of those studies.

The presentation of the review is structured into five sections, which are: Introduction, Theoretical Perspective of Social Capital, Empirical Review of Social Capital, Conclusion and Outstanding Issues.

1.1 Purpose of the Review

1. Evidently, innumerable studies have been conducted to assess the influence of social capital on students' learning outcomes. Nonetheless, some pertinent questions needed to be posed for appropriate answers.
2. Has research assessed the influence of social capital on all aspects of learning outcomes?
3. Have various methodologies been used to assess the influence of social capital on students' learning outcomes?

4. What issues need to be addressed to unravel more benefits of social capital on students' education?
5. Consequently, the review sought to achieve the following objectives:
6. To unearth the aspects of student learning outcomes, which have not been assessed using the social capital concept.
7. To identify the kinds of social capital which influence on student learning outcomes have not been extensively exploited.
8. To ascertain the categories of population that studies have not used much in assessing the influence of social capital on student learning outcomes.
9. To discover the methodologies that have not been utilised much in assessing the influence of social capital on student learning outcomes.

1.2 Methods Used

The empirical studies were retrieved from manual and electronic sources. Admittedly, over eighty percent (80%) of the studies reviewed were retrieved from electronic source using the Google Scholar search engine.

2.0 Theoretical Perspective of Social Capital

2.1 The Concept of Social Capital

The concept social capital is used to denote the resources embedded in social relationships among people. The concept is conceived of as an "intangible social resources based on social relationships that one can draw upon to facilitate action and achieve goals" (Coleman, 1990b). Lin (2001) contends that social capital is the investment and use of inherent resources in social relations for expected returns. Evidence demonstrates that parental involvement in children's education can bring about social development and academic achievement as they progress through the stages of development from high school to tertiary education (Jeynes, 2007). It is realised that social capital emanates from interactions with family members, colleagues, school personnel and community members. Consequently, the benefits that children derive from these interactions are termed as family social capital, peer social capital, school social and community social capital respectively.

Family social capital emanates from the interactions that parents have with their children, which inures to the benefits of the actors. Under the social capital theory, parental involvement can broadly be grouped into three main areas of social relationships, namely parent-child, parent-school and parent-community interactions (Wang, 2004, Kao & Rutherford, 2007). For instance, parents discussing school activities with children, eliciting the problems they have with their studies and sharing children's aspirations are considered as home-based involvement, whereas parents' involvement at school activities and functions is seen as school-based involvement. It is asserted that parents can also contribute to their children and wards' educational progress via their interaction with other parents and community members, which is termed as community social capital. The interaction with the other community members could be to share information and support and also enhance values that are congenial to the success of their children's education (Kao & Rutherford, 2007). It is unequivocal that the social capital theory offers understanding to the extent that families, communities and schools can work to provide a conducive learning environment for children's education to flourish (Epstein, 1996).

2.2 The Concept of Parental Involvement

An issue worth considering when discussing support for children learning activities is what constitutes parental participation in children's education, which produces social capital. Parental involvement in children's education is multi-dimensional and multi-faceted, which includes a wide different parental behaviour models and parenting styles, which inure to the benefits of children (Hong & Ho, 2005). It is also considered a multi-dimensional construct (Anderson & Minke, 2007), which work collectively and individually to shape the character and behaviour of children. The elements of parental involvement are numerous and varied, which include parents' assisting children to read, supporting and monitoring that children do their homework and assignments, tutoring them, discussing their aspirations and future plans with them, parent-school contacts, parent-child communication, parent-teacher communication, parents participating in school activities, monitoring children's progress at school, among others.

Parental activities can conveniently be categorized into at-home activities that support and enhance children's learning and in-school activities that also promote student learning. Shumow and Miller (2001) posit that the contact between parents and children that is related to the latter's academic work as at-home academic involvement. Parental involvement at home activities may include providing help with home work, discussing the child's school work and experiences at school and structuring home activities conducive to learning (Lee & Bowen, 2006). In-school involvement, on the other hand, concerns parent and teacher interactions that support children's education. Parents' involvement in in-school activities that benefit children's educational outcomes are to communicate with teachers and school, discuss children's progress with teachers and monitor children's activities at school (Kimberly, 2011). Both in-school and at-school activities entail a lot that if parents take them seriously would contribute immensely to the academic strides of children.

Do both at-home and in-school activities have the same magnitude of effects on children's learning outcomes? There is actually no consensus on whether school-based activities of parents impact more positively on student learning outcomes as do home-based activities. Some have argued that the at-home activities performed to support the learning activities of children are more strongly correlated with academic performance than the activities that family members do at school for the children and the institutions. Fan and Chen (2001) seem to share that idea and contend that home-based involvement is more beneficial for students' academic success than the school-based involvement. The activities that parents execute at home to promote children learning tends to benefit them more than those that parents do at school for the same intention.

3.0 Empirical Review of Social Capital

3.1 Influence of Social Capital on Academic Achievement

The interest in the effect of parents' interaction with children on the latter's academic achievements has garnered much research attention. Interestingly, most of the studies have proven that the fruitful interaction that parents have with their children inure to the benefits of children. Social capital in its various forms has been described as very essential for children's academic development. Coleman (1987) contends that it is through positive relationship between parents and children that the effects of parents' human capital can be transmitted to their children and wards. Hence, parents with high levels of human capital who interact frequently with their children and wards have more opportunities to make their children and wards benefit from their human capital. Transmission of human capital to children and wards is done via fruitful and positive interactions between parents and children. Essentially, the transmission of human capital from parents to children depends largely on the levels of social capital available within the family. Therefore, children's benefit of parents' human capital development is contingent on the degree of

relationship that parents have with them. A study has found that the combined effects of human and social capital variables make substantial differences in predicted dropout rate (Smith, Beaulieu & Israel, 1992). Parents' human capital and interaction with children collectively work for children to remain in school till completion. Suggestively, students need both human and social capital to be able to have continuous and uninterrupted education till completion.

Social capital is an important factor for comprehending differences in youths' well-being. Both theoretical and empirical evidence has demonstrated that parents' participation in their children's education has a link to high academic achievement and pro-social behaviour (Bassani, 2008). Students with parents who provide high levels of social capital tend to excel in their academic endeavour. Hence, unbalance access to parental social capital may result in variation in academic achievement of children along with respect to race, social origin and gender (Grodsly, Warren & Felts, 2008). Brown (2012) indicates that parental involvement in children's education enhances latter's esteem, helps them develop positive attitudes toward school, improves parent-child relationship and improves children's academic achievement. Children who receive positive interactions with community members, family members, peers and staff in school tend to excel in their academic endeavour while those who receive little or no social capital from those significant others tend to perform below their capability. Implicitly, irrespective of one's social status and gender, enjoying social capital leads to improved academic performance.

Positive parent-child discussion and parental involvement has proven to be positively related to children's educational attainment and academic achievement (Dika & Singh, 2002). Findings of a research conducted by Boal (2004) show that when parents are involved in the education of their children, there is massive progress in student achievement, attendance, health and discipline. A meta-analysis of 25 studies also found a positive correlation between parents' involvement and students' academic performance in school (Fan & Chen, 2001). The meta-analysis also revealed that the aspirations that parents had for their children's education correlated with higher grades, test scores and passing rates. The results of the meta-analysis by Fan and Chen (2001) corroborated Hender and Berla (1998) earlier review of 66 studies on parental involvement in their children's education. Their review disclosed that the most accurate predictor of students' academic performance in school is not income or social status, but the interaction parents have with the children. The kind of home environment created to support learning; expectations that parents set for their children's performance and how well parents assist children with their studies have profound influence on student learning outcomes than parents' social standing in the society.

Israel, Bealieu and Hartless (1998) conducted a study to determine the influence of family and community social capital on educational achievement. The study was done on the belief that families and communities are important in helping youth to develop knowledge and skills needed to obtain technologically sophisticated jobs in an emerging global economy. It adopted social capital as a framework for examining the influence of community and family social capital on promoting educational achievement of public school students. National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) data on 24,599 students from 1,052 schools were used. They researchers found that both process and structural attributes of community and family social capital were key factors affecting high school students' educational achievement. Parents' socio-economic status shaped their children's educational performance, and community social capital helped students to excel. The study concluded and recommended that policies designed to promote educational achievement must go beyond school and must seek to strengthen social capital in the family and the community.

The United States Department of Education (1999) cited in Donkor (2010) concludes that thirty years of research has disclosed that parents and families are pivotal to children's academic achievement. The study

shows empirical researches that have linked parental involvement with good academic performance of children. A comprehensive review of literature on relationship between parent involvement and student learning outcomes also showed a positive association. The review disclosed that the scale of the impact was evident across social brackets and ethnic groups. It was also found that parenting had its influence indirectly through shaping the child's self-concept as a learner and through setting high aspiration (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). In the reviews, social capital, which children derive from their interaction with their parents plays very critical role for the actors to benefit immensely from that endeavour.

Clark (1993) conducted a study about low-income African-American families and their high school children. The survey study explored the role of parents in the education of their children. It emerged from the study that the high achievers had parents who meticulously monitored and supervised their studies and behaviours at home. Those parents also set higher expectations for their children's education. Clearly, parents of students who did very well in academic work provided social capital at home and that had a meaningful impact on their children's learning.

In a similar study, Singh, Bickley, Trivette, Keith, Keith, and Anderson (1995) examined the extent to which social capital influences students' academic achievements. The authors aimed at finding out factors that influenced students' academic achievement. Parental aspirations on achievement were found to have the strongest effect on students' academic performance. The study also further identified a "spiral effect" on parental expectations. It emanated from the study that parents whose children performed creditably well in the past tended to set higher aspirations for them. Their findings underscore the important role of parents' early involvement in their children's education. It is expected that parents who set high aspirations for their children's education would have more and frequent communication with the school than those with low aspirations.

Feinstein and Symons (1999) also purported to assess the impact of parental involvement, peer influence and school inputs on the achievement of students. It emerged that those three kinds of social capitals had positive influence on students' learning outcomes. Similarly, Meier (1999) carried out a study to understand the link between social capital and school achievement among adolescents. The study sought to find out the influence of family social capital on academic achievement and school dropout. The study used two datasets that have been gathered by the National Longitudinal Study (NLS) of Adolescent Health to test Coleman's work on social capital. The results indicated that forms, quality and assistance constituted social capital after Great Point Average (GPA), supervision of school and out of school activities. Quality of social relationships and assistance given to students explained the efforts of these relationships on academic achievement among the adolescents and their retention in school. These findings lend credence to the relevance of both home and school activities on the academic achievement of children.

In a study carried out by Shumow and Miller (2001), at-home involvement was realised to have significant relationship with students' positive attitudes toward school and achievements. The study categorised the respondents into parents of struggling students and those of successful students. Results show that parents whose children were not doing well provided more assistance to the students than those whose children were excelling in school. Also, Gonzalez-Pienda et al (2002) in a study of 261 Spanish adolescents found that parental involvement was a major causal factor of the high students' achievement. Results indicated that parental involvement in school activities positively influenced the development of students. The authors concluded that parental involvement and attitude positively affected students' progress in school.

Redding, Langdon, Meyer and Sheley (2004) also conducted a study to ascertain the influence of parental involvement on student learning achievement. The study sought to examine the characteristics of successful schools. It became evident that learning can be enhanced by school-based activities and also influences student behaviours. This finding lends credence to the fact that in-school activities are important in students' learning and when they become evident students tend to benefit.

In an attempt to discover whether living in foreign lands changes parents' social capital investment, Wang (2004) conducted a study on utilization of parent social capital by Chinese parents living in the United States of America. The study disclosed that involvement of the Chinese parents while they were domicile in the US was very low even though the parents possessed social capital that they could have mobilized to benefit their children, which have contributed to improved academic performance. Factors that contributed to the lowering of Chinese parental commitment to networking included time, job, language and cultural barriers.

In a related study, Neri and Ville (2008) investigated the influence of social capital on the academic success of students pursuing education in Australia. The study sought to investigate how and the degree to which international students renewed their social capital, network and the kind of investments that had a link with academic performance of students. The study unveiled that there was wide differences in social capital investment across the students. The study, however, did not find a link between investment in social capital and respondents' academic performance. Rather, there was an association between investments and the well-being of children. The variability in the social capital investment may have accounted for the no correlation relationship between social capital investment and learning outcomes as the study unveiled.

Another research, which results did not show positive link between social capital and academic success is the one carried out by Samiei (2001) in Tehren. The study specifically purported to investigate the effects of family economic, cultural and social capitals on children's academic and occupational success. The study revealed, among others, that the children's social capital was low and that the relationship between social capital and academic achievement was not high and significant. Otter and Stenberg (2005) also set out to examine the influence of social capital on students' educational outcomes. The study sought to evaluate the relationship between social capital and educational attainment during mid-school years in respect of human capital of parents. The study examined the influence of social capital resources on children's change in school grades between the 6th grade and the final year of compulsory school. It emerged from the study that highly educated parents sought to involve more in their children's education. However, the parents' level of education did not influence the quality of their relationship with their children. Also, it came out that the function of social capital in the form of parental involvement was contingent upon the quality of the relationship between the parents and the children. This supports the assertion that parents need to provide social capital at home to help children derive immense benefits from their human capital. Parents' human capital may not be relevant to the child if parents fail to provide social capital at home.

Jeynes (2007) examined the relationship between family involvement and urban secondary school students' academic achievement. The results showed that overall family involvement has a positive influence on children's academic success. Children whose parents regularly communicated with them, checked their home work and had high expectations for them had positive academic outcomes. In addition, Englund, Luckner, Whaley and Egeland (2004) did a longitudinal study on the relationship between parent behaviour and expectation and children's achievement. The study found that both parent behaviour and expectations had effect on children's education.

Nyarko (2007) also sought to find out parental influence on educational achievement of children in some Ghanaian senior high schools. The study disclosed positive and significant relationship between home involvement and academic achievement of the students. It also unveiled a positive and significant relationship between parents' authoritativeness and their children's academic performance. The study suggested that parents should provide a liberal environment at home, which could provide opportunity for children to share their ideas on vital issues to promote their learning.

Huang (2008) also examined the extent to which social capital influenced school achievement in Norwegian secondary school. The study explored the concept and measurement of social capital in the school by applying the factor analysis theory. The results showed that social capital that emanated from students' relations with parents, teachers and peers had positive influence on student performance. It was concluded that at-home activities played a vital role in building student social capital, which influenced students' school achievement. Similarly, Haghghatian (2010) sought to examine the influence of parental involvement on students' academic achievements in Isfahan high schools. It came to light that social capital has positive and significant influence on academic performance of students. In all the studies, it emerged that children whose parents had time to show much concern in their education had good academic performance.

Ly-yun (2009) also tested the Coleman's social capital theory on students' learning outcomes. The study focused on network closure among children's parents and the parents of the children's friends in school and its effects on learning. Parental closure and school characteristics were found to have a positive influence on students' ability scores and yielded advantage on learning growth. Goldie (2010) also examined the influence of social capital on academic attainment of mobile students using the mixed method approach. The results show that the changing of schools is detrimental to the academic attainment of students. The findings suggest that students who were successful, regardless of socio-economic status, race or gender have tapped the resources around them to create a social capital bundle, some from financial resources, some from strong parental support and some from church and community. Hence, it is realised that social capital is the foundation of individual student success.

The foregoing researches tended to ascertain the relationship between social capital and students' overall performance. It is worthy of note that while some researches focused on global academic achievement like GPA and grades in all subjects as measures of student performance, others relied solely on learning outcomes of specific subjects.

Santos (2005), for instance, assessed the influence of social capital on students' Mathematics achievement. The study utilised data from the National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) of 1988 – 2000. Results showed that the parent-child interactions on school issues, and parents' involvement in school activities were able to predict students' score in Mathematics. The study concluded that parent-child interaction and discussion of academic issues, parents' involvement in their children's academic activities and parents' discussion of children's personal issues contributed to making difference in students' performance in Mathematics achievement. The results connote a high influence of both home and school parental involvement on student achievement in Mathematics.

Similarly, Kodzi, Oketch, Ngware, Mustiga and Nderu (2008) studied social relations as predictors of Mathematics achievement in Kenya primary schools. The study examined factors that explained 6th grade Mathematics achievement. It assessed how the differences in key aspects of social relations among teachers, students, and parents influenced students' achievement in Mathematics. The key actors of social relation were the focus of the study. It was realised that teacher absenteeism, lack of interest in teaching and lack of parental involvement had negative effects on grade. However, social engagement, good

interpersonal interactions with parents, among others, positively influenced student achievement in Mathematics. Positive social relationship helped the schools to maintain an atmosphere where learning was enhanced. Hence, social capital played a role in students' achievement in Mathematics.

Fan and Williams (2010) also carried out a study to assess eight aspects of parental involvement in 10th grade students' motivation towards Mathematics and English. Data from the Educational Longitudinal Study of 2002 was analysed and used. The outcome of the data analysis demonstrated that both aspirations of parents for their children's education and parental contacts on educational issues had strong positive effects on all five motivational outcomes used in the study. However, parent-school contact relating students' problems did not have positive relationship with the five motivational outcomes investigated. The study also revealed that parental advice for television watching related positively with students' engagement and intrinsic motivation towards both student attainment in English and Mathematics.

Another study that sought to ascertain the influence of social capital on specific subject area is the one conducted by Bassani (2008). The study examined the influence that the in-class parent reading component of the Partner in Education (PIE) programme had on parents and children. The study revealed that parent-child interactions helped students in their reading ability. Further, Miedel and Reynolds (1999) carried out a research and found that the number of parental engagement activities was significantly correlated with reading achievement. It became evident that parental social capital helped in students' confidence building, which in turn enabled students to improve on their academic achievement.

Fasang, Margino and Bruker (2010) assessed the effects of the resources that are embedded in the relationship between parents and children on academic achievement. The study data came from a Longitudinal Study of Adolescents' Health (Add Health). The results show that low poverty schools tended to benefit more from informal and school-related closure. In the high poverty schools, informal closure positively affected educational attainments. The paper concluded that social closure basically functioned as a multiplier of beneficial resources in parents' interaction in socially disadvantage areas. Parental social capital during childhood was found to modestly affect students' academic performance. Informal and school related closure consistently affected high graduation and their impact depended on social context.

3.2 Social capital and enrolment, absenteeism and dropout

Researches have also been conducted to assess the relationship between social capital and other non-academic gains like regular attendance to class and retention in school till completion. Laura and Marvin (2005) examined relationship between parental involvement and students' college enrolment. The study sought to ascertain the means by which parental involvement affected college enrolment of African American and Hispanics. The study drew on the work of Bourdieu (1986), Coleman (1988) and Lin (2001a, 2001b) to conceptualise parental involvement as a form of social capital that provides individuals access to resources that may facilitate college enrolment. Results show that parental involvement as a form of social capital was positively related to college enrolment irrespective of the level of individual and school resources. This suggests that apportioning resources to enhance parental involvement is an effective way to increasing college enrolment of deprived groups.

A study found that students whose parents monitored and regulated their activities, provided emotional support, encouraged individual decision, and were generally more involved in their schooling were unlikely to drop out of school. It became evident that higher levels of parental involvement related lower school dropout (Rumberger, 1995). A longitudinal study also unveiled that school and home partnership predicted increased in daily attendance and reduction on chronic absenteeism (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Again, in a study to find out the effects of social capital on students' decision to quit school or remain till

completion, Drewry (2007) recorded and analysed high school students in Virginia. The study was conducted within the social capital framework. Phenomenological approach was utilised and triangulation of data sources was done. The study disclosed that social capital had effect on students' decision to drop out of school. It came out that none of the students who dropped out of school had relationship with the family or community members who were capable of assisting in their endeavour to complete school. The findings suggest that social capital has association with drop out.

Hao and Matsuade (2000) examined mothers' life course changes and parent-child interactions in modeling children behaviour problems. Integrated framework that uses social capital theories to conceptualize parents' investment in their children's life course perspective and child development research was used in the study. It emerged that child behaviour problems were influenced by poverty and relatives during childhood as well as use of physical punishment. The results, however, did not provide evidence to support the predicted effects of family social capital on children behaviour problems.

Vesely (2006) studied how parental social capital was transmitted to children in the Czech Republic. The study analysed the extent of the transmission of social capital from parents to their children. Social trust, participation in social activities and useful social connections were used to assess social capital investment. The data from the Longitudinal Survey Extension of the PISA collected in the Czech Republic in 2003 were used for the study. It emerged that different indicators of social capital were only slightly related among themselves and the channel through which social capital was transmitted depended on the type of social capital in question.

With the idea that social capital investment may be the same in all ethnic groups, Anguiano (2004) carried out a comparative study to that effect. The researcher examined European Americans, Latinos, Asian American and Native Americans' parental involvement and their children's high school completion. It examined how different structures had influence on a student's education. Social capital theory and family ecological approach were used as theoretical foundations of the study. The data utilised in the study were received from National Education Longitudinal Survey (NELS) collected by the National Center of Educational Statistics. The finding of the study showed that different levels of parental involvement were important in a high school completion depending on ethnicity. School involvement was significant in influencing the level of parental involvement and the relation to high school completion.

A qualitative study was also done by Senovia (2011) to find out if the education of minority Latino parents were met by an Urban Saturday programme. The study utilised three focus groups to measure attendance of the students to the programme and completion of home work. It emerged that parental involvement helped the students to meet their academic and social needs. Children whose parents were involved in the programme were more successful than their counterparts whose parents were not involved in the programme. Implicitly, the involvement of parents in the programme provided impetus and motivation to the children to complete the programme.

4. Conclusion

The review has disclosed that investment in social capital is not a waste of precious time, energy and efforts but really helps improve academic success, reduce dropout rates, improve completion rates, and encourage college attendance. The review has provided ample empirical-based evidence to prove that investment in social capital significantly influences student academic and other gains. An overwhelming majority of the studies have shown a positive and significant link between social capital and student learning outcomes. It is only a negligible number of studies that showed little or no effect of social capital on academic success.

The review has also drawn attention to the fact that in spite of the huge array of literature on the benefits of social capital on children's learning outcomes, there are some research needs that ought to be addressed to unfurl other benefits to be derived from the invaluable resources inherent in social relationships.

5. Outstanding issues

The literature review points out grey areas that need the attention of educational researchers. First, the studies have not assessed the effects of social capital on some other learning outcomes. Most of the studies have examined the influence of social capital on student academic success, enrolment, drop out and absenteeism. It is clear that adequate studies have not been executed to examine the influence of social capital on other aspects of learning outcomes such as social competence and social skills. The influence of social capital on the non-academic gains of students needs to be explored extensively as much as it has been done on the academic success. It is important to note that the educators' pre-occupation is for students to derive both academic and non-academic gains from their education while under their tutelage. It is, therefore, imperative for research evidence to demonstrate how social capital contributes to children's gaining of social competence and social skills.

Second, the studies reviewed undoubtedly demonstrate positive effects of social capital on student learning outcomes. Most of the studies have indicated a correlation between social capital and learning outcomes. Unfortunately, however, a relatively little research has been conducted to ascertain the role of the school social capital, peer social capital and community social capital on students' learning outcomes. There is clearly a research need in this area. Educational researchers ought to show interest in finding out the extent to which these kinds of social capital impact on children's learning outcomes. This call stems from the fact that factors that influence children learning outcomes are multi-faceted that all need to be explored extensively.

Third, most of the studies on social capital influence on student learning outcomes have been on adolescents in basic and secondary schools, which have revealed a positive relationship. A critical analysis of the studies shows that a disproportionate chunk of the studies largely used adolescents; only a few used adults as population. The studies have used only adolescents as population neglecting students in the tertiary educational institutions, who are adults. Is the influence of social capital theory better assessed using only adolescents? If social capital influence is vital to students, then do university students also experience this resource? This is a question that can only be answered if enough studies are carried out using the various categories of learners.

Finally, it is methodologically right to study issues from three main angles, which are quantitative, qualitative and mixed approach. A quantitative approach to studies entails the use of large numbers of sample to warrant statistical analysis of data that would be generated from the exercise, while the qualitative approach concerns the use of small sample size to enable in-depth interrogation of issues. It is revealing to observe that most social capital studies have tended to be quantitative in nature. There is apparent lack of using the qualitative approach in studying the concept. Only a few studies were carried out qualitatively. Consequently, the studies have shown immense quantitative evidence of the benefits of social capital on children' academic attainment without much qualitative evidence. Moreover, there seems to be no study on the social capital concept that employed the mixed method approach. Using the mixed method approach to study social issues helps to find equivalences of responses. Undisputedly, there is a research need for studying the issue using the qualitative and mixed approaches paradigms.

Instructively, the issues raised need to engage the attention of educationists such as educational sociologists, social psychologists and other researchers. Thorough research would help us have a full and comprehensive understanding of the effects of social capital on student learning outcomes.

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