

Economic Status of Parents, a Determinant on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary Schools Students in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research was carried out to examine if economic status of parents is a determinant to the academic performance of senior Secondary school Students in Ibadan, Nigeria. The Questionnaire was used for the collection of data, administered to five hundred and twelve students selected randomly in two local government areas. A hypothesis that "there is no significant relationship between economic status of parents and the academic performance of their children was formulated". This was tested using correlation analysis and the result shows that there is significant relationship between economic status and academic performance of students. Those from lower income groups scored significantly lower than children from higher income households. It is recommended that the government can help to erase this imbalance by subsidizing the educational expenses of the low income group.

Key Words: Economic Status, low income and academic performance.

1. Introduction

Academic performance (most especially of senior secondary school students) has been largely associated with many factors. Most students in senior secondary schools in Nigeria are daily confronted with challenges of coping with academic under serious emotional strains occasioned by long walk to school, poor school environment, and being taught by unmotivated teachers. Couple with this, is an uncooperative-to-study attitude of parents who more often toil to provide for the needs of the family. These would definitely not augur well for academic success.

Academic performance is undoubtedly a research after the heart of educators, teachers, psychologists, policy makers, parents and guardians, social workers, etc. In their attempts to investigate what determines academic outcomes of learners, they have come with more questions than answer. In recent, prior literature has shown that learning outcomes (academic achievement and academic performance) have been determined by such variables as; family, schools, society and motivation factors (Aremu and Jekan, 2003; Aremu and Oluwole, 2001; Aremu, 2000). In the same vein, Parker, Creque, Harris, Majek, Wool and Hogan (2003) noted that much of the previous studies have focused on the impact of demographic and socio-psychological variables on academic performance is government factor (Aremu and Sokan, 2003; Aremu, 2004). In spite of the seeming exhaustiveness of literature on the determinant of academic performance of learners, there seems to be more area of interest to be investigated. This becomes obvious in view of the continuous interest of researchers; and continuous attention of government and policy makers and planners

It has been observed that the falling academics standard and the influencing factors include the economic status of the parent. Owing to the present economic situation in the country, many poor

parents are forced by circumstance to saddle the young ones with chores like hawking wares, clearing the house and doing other menial jobs around the house before going to school and after school hours. Domestic chores like these no doubt help to train the children and make them realize that they can and should contribute their own quota to the general upkeep of the family. However, when parents and guardians burden their children with work excessively, leaving little or no study time for the children their school work is bound to suffer (Akanle, 2007).

Danesty and Otediran (2002) lamented that street hawking among young school students have psychologically imposed other problems like sex networking behaviour, juvenile delinquent behaviour, which takes much of the student school time that necessitated the poor academic performance and drop out syndrome noticed among young school students. Nevertheless, they also lamented that the maternal and paternal deprivation of the essential needs of the young students have prompted their poor performance in public examination, such as Junior Secondary School Certificate (JSSC), West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO).

Ipaye (1996) in the same vein reiterated the effects of economic status of parents on the Nigerian child. According to him, poverty syndrome imposed by economic crunch, maladministration, corruption and emergency closure of firms, has imposed hardship among parents/workers. They in turn have not been able to provide adequately for the basic fundamental, social and academic needs of the students. Many students have abandoned school to engage in commercial sex or child labour to make ends meet to support self and others. By this, they spend much time on these acts than schooling; this has terrible effect on their academic performance in their school work and public examination.

School sector (public or private) and class size are two important structural components of schools which the economic status of parent would determine the one they could afford. Private schools tend to have both better funding and smaller class sizes than public schools. The additional funding of private schools leads to better academic performance and more access to resources such as computer which have shown to enhance academic achievement (Crosnoe, Johnson, Elder, 2004; and Eamon, 2005). Smaller class sizes create more intimate settings and therefore can increase teacher-student bonding which has also been shown to have a positive effect on students success. Student from low economic background who attend poorly funded schools do not perform as well as students from higher economic classes (Crosnoe *et al.*, 2004, Eamon, 2005). This trend is posing huge problems to parents, government, political parties and stakeholders in education.

The poor academic performance of students is posing a problem to educators and a serious concern to parents. It is revealed that the quality of parents and home background of a student goes a long way to predict the quality and regularity of the satisfaction and provision of a child's functional survival and academic needs. Poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child, usually yield poor academic performance of the child.

The specific objective of the study is to find out the effect of economic status of parents on the academic performance of senior secondary school students.

2. Literature Review

Poor academic performance according to Aremu and Sokan (2003) is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other significant as falling below an expected standard. Poor academic performance has been observed in school subjects especially Mathematics and English language among secondary school students (Adesemowo, 2005). Aremu (2000) stresses that academic failure is not only frustrating to the students and the parents, its effect are equally grave on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics.

Education of secondary school level is supposed to be the bedrock and the foundation towards higher knowledge in tertiary institutions. It is an investment as well as an instrument that can be used to achieve a more rapid economic, social, political, technological, scientific and cultural development in the country. The National Policy on Education (2004) stipulated that secondary education is an

instrument for national development that fosters the worth and development of the individual for further education and development, general development of the society and equality of educational opportunities to all Nigerian children, irrespective of any real or marginal disabilities.

In most African countries and western world, economic status of a family is usually linked with the family's income, parents' educational level, parents' occupation and social status among the kiths and kin and even at the global level. Ford and Harris (1997) followed this logic while examining parental influences on African American students' school environment by focusing on specific socio-demographic factors, including parents' level of education, marital status, and family income.

It is generally believed that children from high and middle economic status parents are better exposed to a learning environment at home because of provision and availability of extra learning facilities. The use of data about family possessions may be thought to be connected to economic status, students who used a computer both at home and at school achieved a significantly higher science score than those who only used a computer at school (Thompson and Fleming, 2003). Children from low socio-economic status parent do not have access to extra learning facilities; hence, the opportunity to get to the top of their educational ladder may not be very easy.

Drummond and Stipek (2004) while discussing the "low-income parents" beliefs about their role in children's academic learning mentioned that a few of these parents indicated that a few of these parents indicated that their responsibilities were limited to meeting children's basic and social/emotional needs, such as providing clothing, emotional support and socializing manners. So these parent's shortsightedness towards their responsibilities in the educational processes of their children and scarcity of fund to intensity such processes could be a challenge to their children's success. In and of themselves such socio-demographic variables do not fully account for the academic successes or failure of minority students (Smith, Schneider and Ruck, 2005).

Low economic status children are often left home to fend for themselves and their younger siblings, while their caregiver work long hours; compared with their well-off peers, they spend less time playing outdoors and more time watching television and are less likely to participate in after-school activities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). Unfortunately, children would not get the model for how to develop proper emotions or respond appropriately to others from watching cartoons; they need warm, person-to-person interactions. The failure to form positive relationships with peers inflicts long term socioemotional consequences (Szewczyk-Sokolowski, Bost and Wainwright, 2005).

Previous studies in the same field have established that other factors in spite of socio-economic status (SES) can boost academic successes among students. Studies which examined African American parents recorded that parents who maintained positive views about the value of education and who hold high academic expectations have children who often experience higher levels of academic achievement (Ford and Harris, 1997, Steinberg, 1992; Stevenson, 1990).

Children and families living in poverty are at greater risk of hunger, homelessness, sickness, physical and mental disabilities, violence, teen parenthood, family stress, and educational failure. These environmental factors are contributors to children that live in poverty being four times more likely to have learning disabilities than non-poverty students (Apple and Zenk, 1996). According to Casanova, Garcia-Linares, Torre and Carpio (2005), it is a combination of these environmental factors as well as family influence that contributes to students academic success. If a student has not eaten for days and has clothes that don't fit, however, he/she be expected to maintain focus in a classroom? Children coming from poverty are not provided the same tools as the wealthy; they are entering schools already behind those not living in similar conditions. According to Li-Grining (2007), research suggests that the problem starts with the parents and their lack of education and understanding of the needs of children.

Many individuals who might have done this nation proud in different fields have been forced into uninspired careers due to unavailability of finance resources. Such individuals are forced out of school and made to engage in hawking, selling packaged drinking water and the likes so as to save money for their school expenses. Most of the time, they cannot afford instructional materials, and are always at the mercy of examiners during examination period. The persistence of this in life of an individual student may spell doom for his academic success. Tracy and Walter (1998) corroborate

this when they submit that individuals at the lowest economic level are often the least well-served by the school system.

A considerable number of researches repeatedly have shown that low socio-economic status is linked to a range of indicators of child and adolescent well-being, including students' academic achievement (Beauvais and Jensen, 2003). Birch and Gussow (1979) claimed that poverty contributes towards educational failure, simply because poor children are all "culturally disadvantaged", but because their health and nutritional status is inadequate to allow for the maximum mental development and for the realization of their educational potential. The likelihood that the poor children would end up being at risk in terms of deficient development is a reality that could begin even before birth. In that regard, Birch and Gussow (1979) emphasized that society should concern itself more with the full range of factors contributing to the educational failure, among which the health of the child is a variable of potential primary importance.

Other factors according to Dantesy (2004), complementing environmental and socio-economic factors to produce high academic achievement and performance include good teaching, counseling, good administration, good seating arrangement and good building. Dilapidating buildings, lacking mental stimulating facilities that are characterized with low or no seating arrangement will also be destructive. Dantesy (2004) however lamented that the innovative environment do stimulate head start learning and mental perception, not only that, it has also been proved that students that come from simulative environment with laboratory equipments or those that are taught with rich instructional aids, pictures, and allowed to demonstrate using their functional peripheral nerves like eyes, hands, and sense of taste performed better than those trained under theoretical and canopy of abstraction. Thus, teaching and learning should be done under organized, planned, and fortified environment with learning instructional aids to stimulate students' sense of conception, perception and concentration to facilitate systematic understanding and acquisition of knowledge in them. In sum, a combination of a healthy family background, living in a good environment plus the child being educated in a conclusive environment with fortified learning or instructional aids or motivational incentives will prompt academic performance and lack of it will retard academic performance.

3. Theoretical Framework

Progressive social theory:

Bradshaw (2005) has classified theories of poverty into five notably:

- (i) Poverty caused by individual deficiencies
- (ii) Poverty caused by cultural belief system that support sub-cultures of poverty.
- (iii) Poverty caused by economic, political and social distortions or discrimination
- (iv) Poverty caused by geographical disparities
- (v) Poverty caused by cumulative and cyclical interdependencies.

It is based on the third classification (poverty caused by economic, political and social distortions or discrimination) that the effect of economic status on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Ibadan can be mirrored at Bradshaw (2005) has defined poverty in a most general sense as "lack of necessities". Basic food, shelter, medical cure, and safety are generally though necessary based on shared values of human dignity. According to the Progressive social theory, individual is not looked at as a source of poverty but to the economic, political and social system which causes people to have limited opportunities and resources with which to achieve income and well-being. In the 19th century, social intellectuals like Karl Max and Emile Durkheim explored how social and economic systems overrode and created individual poverty situations.

Marx showed how the economic system of capitalism created the "reserve army of the unemployed" as a conscientious strategy to keep wage low. Durkheim in his part argued that "even the most personal of actions (suicide) was infact mediated by social systems. According to him, discrimination was separated from skill in one after another area, defining opportunity as socially mediated.

Bradshaw (2005) has therefore observed that much of the literature on poverty now suggests that the economic system is structured in such a way that the poor people fall behind regardless of how competent they may be. This is concord by Jencks (1996) who noted that the minimum wages do not allow single mothers or their families to be economically self sufficient. The problem of the working poor is increasingly seen as a wage problem linked to structural barriers preventing poor families from getting better jobs, complicated by limited numbers of jobs near workers and lack of growth in sectors supporting lower skilled jobs (Tobin, 2004). Wages workers expect from jobs have continue to fall, fringe benefits including health care and promotions have also become scarce for low skilled workers. These and related economic changes documented by Blank (1997) and Quigley (2003) show the way the system has created increasingly difficult problems for those who want to work. Chubb and Moe (1990) have observed that elimination of structural barriers to better jobs through education and training have been the focus of extensive manpower training and other programs, generating substantial numbers of successes but also perceived failures. However, in spite of perceived importance of education, funding per student in less advantaged areas lays that which is spent on richer students, teachers are less adequately trained, books are often out of date or in limited supply, amenities are few, and the culture of learning is under siege. This systemic failure of the schools is thus thought to be the reason poor people have low achievement, poor rates of graduation, and few who pursue higher education.

The political system does not afford the interest of the poor to be protected, and participation is very low for this class. Poor people are less involved in political discussions, their interest are more vulnerable in the political process and they are excluded at many levels. Coupled with racial discrimination, poor people lack influence in the political system that they might use to mobilize economic benefits and justice. To an extent, some groups of people are given social stigma because of race, gender disability, religion, or other groupings, leading them to have limited opportunities regardless of personal capabilities.

The above scene is typical of the Nigerian situation. Majority of the people are living below poverty level. The political and social system do not favour the poor who cannot satisfy the basic necessities of life as pointed out by this theory. This poor find it difficult to eat and the education of their children suffers and hence the poor performance at schools.

4. Methodology

The study employed the use of descriptive research design. The population of study consist of male and female. Students in senior secondary classes (SS1 – SS3) in Ibadan. Simple random sampling technique was used to select Ibadan South-West and Ibadan North Local Government Areas, out of the eleven Local Government Areas in Ibadan metropolis. From each of the two local governments selected, random sampling was further used to select three senior secondary schools from each to give a total of six secondary schools. From each school selected, 90 students (30 students from each arm SS1-3) were selected to give a total of 540 respondents.

A well structured questionnaire containing two sections was used as an instrument for data collection. Section A contain information on the personal background of respondents. Section B measures economic status of senior secondary school students, adapting Ariko (2009) factors influencing low academic performance of pupils scale in rural primary schools in Uganda. This include the present student/parent economic situation that affect the academic performance of student.

Respondents English and Mathematics results were used for the academic performance. Section B is with options of response: Strongly Agree = 1, Agree = 2, Disagree = 3, Strongly Disagree = 4. Data was analyzed using simple percentage and multiple regression analysis (ANOVA), hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance.

5. Analysis and Results

Table 1: Demographic analysis of respondents

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Class:		
SSS 1	184	35.9
SSS 2	168	32.8
SSS 3	160	31.3
Age:		
< 15years	129	25.2
15-18years	380	74.2
>18years	3	0.6
Sex:		
Male	236	46.1
Female	276	53.9
Parents' marital status:		
Single	32	6.3
Married	437	85.4
Divorced	24	4.7
Widowed	19	3.7
Father's education:		
No formal education	17	3.3
Primary education	33	6.4
Secondary education	172	33.6
Tertiary education	290	56.6
Mother's Education:		
No formal education	20	3.9
Primary education	50	9.8
Secondary education	257	50.2
Tertiary education	185	36.1
Father's occupation:		
Trading	145	28.3
Public servant	113	22.1
Artisan	45	8.8
Others	209	40.8
Mother's occupation:		
Trading	272	53.1
Public servant	82	16.0
Artisan	46	9.0
Others	112	21.9
Size of the family:		
3-4	169	33.0
3-5	185	36.1
3-6	158	30.9

Table 2: Effect of Economic Status on Academic Performance

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N	r	P	Remark
Economic status	25.7188	3.8079	512	.535	.900	Significant
Academic performance	22.3711	3.8009				

6. Results

Majority of the students used for the study were SSS 1 with 184 (35.9%), their mean age ranges from 15 to 18 year and were mostly females (Table 1).

The marital status of their parents shows that 85.4% are married, the singles and widowed have 6.3% and 3.7% respectively. A good number of parents have acquired good education, for fathers 56.6% have acquired tertiary education, while in the mothers, 50.2% have acquired secondary education.

In terms of occupation of parents, greater number of males and females engage in trading with 28.3 and 53.1 per cent.

7. Discussions

The results obtained in testing that hypothesis 1 revealed that there is a significant relationship between the economic status and academic achievements of student, those from lower income houses score significantly lower than children from higher income households. The explanation for the poor academic achievement of student from low economic status homes is that the parent has so much work and family responsibilities that require time, attention, and money which he/she cannot meet with the consequence of paying less attention to the education of his/her children. The result is poor academic achievement on the part of the children from such homes. This finding corroborates the findings of other researchers such as the United States Department of Education (2000) that found in a study that the relationship between poverty and students performance is not simple and direct. The study concluded that poverty is an important factor accounting for differences in performance and achievement across rural, sub-urban and urban districts. Johnson (1996) findings also showed that poverty of parents has elastic effects on their children academic works as they lack enough resources and funds to sponsor their education and good school, good housing facilities and medical care and social welfare services.

The finding agrees with a study by Brownell, Roos, Fransoo (2006) that showed that the result for an entire body of children who write an examination were analyzed, the differences between low and high socioeconomic students were staggering.

8. Conclusion

It has been seen from the literature review that many factors affect the academic performance of students. Schools are poorly funded and managed by the governments. Low income of parents is a major impediment to academic success and development of children.

Students academic performance is predicted by a chain of socio-economic factors resident in parents, family network, and government inconsistent nature of implementation of its policies and funding of schools.

It is recommended that government should increase allocation of funds to provide for more amenities to facilitate learning in the schools and economic empowerment programmes should be embarked on to enhance parents income.

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