Parental Factors and Students’ Academic Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to identify and analyse the impact of parental factors on students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state. The study adopted the correlation survey design with a population of 268 public secondary schools in Rivers state. The sample size for this study was 134 principals which formed 50% of the entire population, made up of male and female principals selected using the simple random technique. The instrument for the study was a structured questionnaire titled parental factors and students, academic performance questionnaire (PFASAPQ) consisting of fifteen (15) items to elicit information from the respondents. The reliability of instrument was determined using test-re-test method, and the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to measure the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.82. Data collected were analysed using mean ratings and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while z-test statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that parental occupation determine the type of schools children attend, higher parental occupational status predicts higher academic performance for children in schools, parents income level negatively or positively influenced children’s academic performance, children from high income level achieved more academically in schools, parent monitoring of children out of school activities enhanced academic performance and children whose parents provided all their educational needs performed well in schools. From the findings it was recommended that parents should provide their children all necessary assistance and support needed for academic enhancement, parents’ should always monitor their children’s out of school activities and parents should provide all material needs of their children at school and also assist the children with their homeworks.

Keywords: Parental Factors, Academic Performance and Senior Secondary Schools

INTRODUCTION

Many variables determine the academic performance of secondary school students. Some of these have been enumerated to include the school environment, peer groups, role of the students, government, parents’ level of Education, Occupation, climate change, vegetation, availability and non availability of technological equipment among others. Adelusi (1984) opined that home environment or the socio-economic background of the child has great influence on academic performance of children in schools. The home environment constitutes the cultural matrix, being the primary platform on which learning not only begins but nurtured, encouraged and developed which later transforms to the academic performance of the students. Taylor (1971) saw the home as an essential variable for the all round development and achievement of a student. The family i.e. the parents normally provide a child with his first social experience. Parents, siblings and others who regularly enter the home provide the models with which the child can identify (Hayes & Hopson, 1987). The function of the home in education is very emphatic because it lays the foundation such as moral, spiritual and intellectual sustainability upon which the child is to build later in life. Taiwo (1977) asserted that the first people with whom the child comes in contact with is his parents. He stated further that the
parents initiate the child into their own value of right and wrong at a time when he is not in contact with any other influence. The parents initiate the child into the cultural heritage and into his immediate society, and also teach him from birth what is morally acceptable to the society. Data (2006) also identified father-mother relationship as having key roles to play in the proper upbringing of a child and enhance academic performance. Thus, Super (1957) described the family as a social, psychological and economic entity. It is a social entity because it contains a group of people who function as a unit. Unless the foundation laid by the parents is solid and sound, the school has little or nothing to build upon and the student later becomes a problem not only to his parents but also to the society at large. Onueke (1994) opined that lack of parental supervision as one of the factors that contribute to poor academic performance of students. Parents do not watch over activities of the children at home. It is only when the parents perform their traditional and educational roles effectively that the school can hope to strengthen the foundation of greatness and intellectual achievement laid for the student and the society. Gloom (1972) stated that variations in academic performance is characterized or patterned to home and school environment. The home compliments the efforts of the school to enable the students perform well in their academics. In this direction, the role of the school seems to include: transmitting the culture of the society from one generation to another and improving the culture by enriching it to produce students who are more enlightened. Precisely, the aim of secondary education is to provide opportunity for qualitative education for primary school leavers, cater for the differences in talents of the pupils, develop Nigeria cultural heritage, produce a generation of people who respect the dignity of labour, foster Nigeria unity and to inspire its students with the desire for achievement and self improvement both at school and later in life. It must be stated that only the provision of qualitative education can guarantee the accomplishment of the above stated goals. The extent to which the secondary school system is able to accomplish its objectives determines its effectiveness. Parental factors can be seen as all those surrounding influences which affect the growth and development of the child. Indeed, parents are not only important for their roles in contributing the chromosomes (genes) but also as custodian to nurture, encourage, protect and secure the development of the resulting products of their union. The physical, emotional, intellectual characteristics are vital aspects to be monitored and improved upon by parents and guardians towards producing high academic outcomes in children. Thus Plato writing in the republic described education as: the first and fairest thing the best men can ever have, and for children are your riches upon their turning out well or ill depends the whole order of their father’s house. He said no man should bring children that are unwilling to persevere to the end in their nurture and education. According to Ezewu (1983) it is the home environment that offers the requisite knowledge, attitudes and skills aimed at making the child a responsible member of the society. Therefore, the extent to which the family succeeds as a role model is the extent the society achieves its ultimate objectives of a stable order. Where the family fails, it reflects on the society in general including the academic performance of the child. Also, Okere (2002) opined that quality teaching and learning results from inter play amongst a broad range of successful factors that are essential consequences on students learning. The school environment which has to do with the qualified teacher, good accommodation, libraries, recreational facilities and basic school facilities are accessories to student academic performance. Thus, any school which lacks these qualities is regarded to as environment unconducive for teaching and learning to take place. Youngman (1981) opined that socio-economic status of parents play an essential role in the child’s performance in schools which results to good achievement. Many benefits are accrued for the school and for parents themselves when parents become involved in their children’s school activities. Active parent’s involvement and positive home-school-community relations have been shown to positively influence effective schooling and student’s academic performance.

Statement of the problem
Academic performances of students have been linked to the adequacy of school facilities, quality of teachers and the school environment. Other notable scholars in the society attribute poor academic performance to government inability to adequately provide the facilities necessary in translating the curricular content into forms that can be understood by students. Another school of thought attributes poor academic performance of students to teachers’ indifference to students’ academic well being and performance. Another group of individuals relate it to students’ lack of interest and hard work. Despite the above listed factors on students’ academic performance, it seems parental factors may to a
large extent influence students’ academic performance. These factors may include parent’s occupation, income, level of education attainment, religion and academic support to their children. This study is therefore designed to determine if these variables are in any way related to students’ academic performance either positively or negatively.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine parental factors and students’ academic performance among secondary school students in Rivers state. Specifically the object of the study is to:

1. Determine how parents’ occupation affects students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.
2. Determine how parents’ income level influences students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.
3. Investigate the extent which parents support affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.

**Research Questions**

i. How does parents’ occupation affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state?

ii. How does parents’ income level influence students’ academic achievement in secondary schools in Rivers state?

iii. To what extent does parents’ academic support affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state?

**Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between parents’ occupation and students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.

2. There is no significant relationship between parents income level and students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.

3. There is no significant relationship between parents’ academic support and students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers State.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design**

This study adopted the co-relational research design as it established relationship between two or more variable. The researcher was interested in investigating the relationship between the independent variable (parental factors) and the dependent variables (academic performance).

**Population of the Study**

The population of this study consist of two hundred and sixty eight senior secondary schools in Rivers state. The target population consists of 268 male and female principals of public senior secondary schools in Rivers state, statistical data collected from Rivers state senior secondary schools board (RSSSB) 2017/2018. The sample of this study consists of 134 principals drawn from a population of 268 using random sampling technique. The sample size form 50% of the population of the study. The instrument which was used for this study is parental factors and students’ academic performance questionnaire (PFSAPQ). The questionnaire has two sections A and B. Section A is a demographic data containing information such as sex and school location. Section B contains questionnaire items based on the major variables of the study. The instrument was designed to elicit data online variables and the questionnaire items are 15. The items were designed in the pattern of a modified 4 point Likert-type scale of strongly agree (SA), Disagree (D) and strongly Disagree (SD). The respondents were asked to indicate their responses to any of the items by making a tick in the appropriate space. Twenty copies of the validated parental factors and students’ academic performance questionnaire (PFSAPQ) were administered to 20 private senior secondary schools principals. After an interval of two weeks from the first administration, another 20 copies of the same instrument were re-administered to the same respondents. Their responses in the first and second tests were co-relate using Pearson product moment statistical formula and obtained reliability co-efficient of 0.82 thereby guaranteeing the reliability of the instrument. The instrument for this study was administered by the researcher and two trained research assistants. One hundred and thirty four (134) copies of the questionnaire were administered and one hundred and twenty two (122) filed copies were retrieved.
from the principals duly filled. Completed copies of the questionnaire were personally scored by the researcher and data were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Research Question 1: How does parents’ occupation affect students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Table 1: mean responses on male and female principals on how parents’ occupation affects students’ academic performance on senior secondary schools in Rivers state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Male Principal N=83</th>
<th>Female Principal N=39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \bar{x} )  SD</td>
<td>Mean Set Dec S/N Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parents occupation determines the school a child attends</td>
<td>2.89 0.77 3.00 0.78 2.95 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Parents occupation positively or negatively affect student academic performance</td>
<td>3.01 1.03 2.76 0.69 2.93 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parents in a better job educate their children in better schools</td>
<td>2.90 0.90 2.66 0.86 2.78 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parents in inferior work retards their children academic performance</td>
<td>2.68 0.82 2.85 0.90 2.77 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Higher parental occupational status also predicts higher academic performance for children.</td>
<td>3.07 0.77 2.95 0.81 3.00 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aggregate mean</td>
<td>2.91 0.86 2.65 0.81 2.89 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 1 above showed that the mean scores of items 1,2,3,4 and 5 are 2.95, 2.93, 2.78, 2.77 and 3.00. The mean scores are above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents agreed that parents’ occupation affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state. Their responses are evident in the grand mean score and standard deviation given as 2.89 and 0.84 respectively.

Research Question 2: How does parents’ income influence students’ academic performance?

Table 2: Mean responses on male and female principals on how parents’ income influences students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Male Principal N=83</th>
<th>Female Principal N=39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \bar{x} )  SD</td>
<td>Mean Set Dec S/N Items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parents income level determine the type of school a student attends</td>
<td>3.00 0.92 2.80 0.87 2.91 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Parents with low income do not send their children to grand schools</td>
<td>2.92 0.81 2.70 0.76 2.81 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Parents with low income level cannot afford their children school fees and books</td>
<td>2.96 0.71 2.60 0.92 2.78 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Parents income level negatively or positively affect students’ academic performance</td>
<td>2.81 0.66 2.90 0.62 2.86 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Children from family of higher income achieve more academically in schools</td>
<td>2.90 0.76 2.91 0.59 2.91 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand mean</td>
<td>2.92 0.77 2.78 0.75 2.85 Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 2 above showed that parents income level affect students’ academic performance as shown in the mean scores of items 6,7,8,9 and 10. The mean scores are 2.91, 2.81, 2.86 and 2.91
which were above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondent agreed that parents’ level of income affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools. Their responses are evident in the grand mean score and standard deviation given as 2.85 and 0.75.

**Research Question 3: How does parents’ academic support affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state?**

**Table 3: Mean responses on male and female principals on how parents’ academic support affects students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers state.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Male Principal N=83</th>
<th>Female Principal N=39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>( \bar{x} )</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Adequate parental support can enhance children academic performance</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Parental monitor of children out of school activities can enhance their academic activities</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Children whose parents provide all their materials need perform well in academics</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Parents assistance with children study at home enhances their academic performance</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Parents employing home teacher for their children will enhance academic performance</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Aggregate mean</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.95</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.81</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 3 above showed that parents academic support affect students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers state. This is evident in the mean score ratings of male and female principals as shown in items 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. The mean scores are 2.97, 2.91, 2.95, 2.76 and 2.78 which were above the criterion mean of 2.50. The respondents agreed that parents’ academic support affects students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools. Their responses are evident in the grand mean score and standard deviation of 2.87 and 0.69 respectively.

**Hypothesis 1**

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between male and female principals on how parents’ occupation affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.

**Table 4: z-test analysis of the mean scores of male and female principals on how parents’ occupation affects students’ academic performance in secondary schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>( \bar{x} )</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Cal-Z Value</th>
<th>Critical Z-value</th>
<th>Dec.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>≠1.96</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 revealed the z-test analysis of male and female respondents on how parents’ occupation affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools. The table also revealed that z-calculated value of 0.08 at degree of freedom of 120 and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, male and female principals do not differ in their responses on how parents’ occupation affects students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers state. This shows that the hypothesis is accepted.

**Hypothesis 2**

**H02:** There is no significant relationship between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on how parents’ income influences students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers state.
Table 5: z-test analysis of the mean score ratings of male and female principals on how parents' income influence students' academic performance in secondary schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Cal-Z Value</th>
<th>Critical Z-Value</th>
<th>Dec.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>≠1.96</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 above showed that the z-calculated value of 0.05 is lower than the critical value of ≠1.96 at 0.05 level of significance the hypothesis is hereby accepted. There is no significant relationship between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on how parents' income influence students' academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.

Hypothesis 3
H03: there is no significant relationship between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on how parents’ academic support affects students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.

Table 6: z-test analysis of the mean score ratings of male and female principals on how parents' academic support affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Cal-z Value</th>
<th>Critical Z-value</th>
<th>Dec.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>≠1.96</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data in Table 6 above showed that the z-calculated value of 0.06 at degree of freedom of 120 and 0.05 level of significance was less than the z-critical value of ≠1.96 the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that the hypotheses which states that there is no significant relationship between the mean score ratings of male and female principals on how parents academic support influence students’ academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers state was upheld.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Parents’ occupation and students’ academic performance in secondary schools
The finding of research question 1 revealed that parents occupation determines the school a child attends, affects the child positively or negatively in his academic performance and parent occupational status predicts better educational opportunities for children which in turn enhances their academic performance. This finding is in agreement with Ukaegbu (2014) who submitted that higher parental occupational status predicts better educational attainments. The finding also agree with Gratz (2006) who opined that parents in inferior occupations earn lower incomes and often have to work longer hours to earn more for their families. Result 1 showed that there is no significant relationship between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how parents’ occupation affects students’ academic performance in secondary schools.

Parent’s income level and student academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state
The findings of research question 2 revealed that parents with low income cannot afford their children school fees, parents income level determines the type of school their children attend and parents income level negatively or positively affect students’ academic performance in schools. This findings is in conformity with Uchenna (2011) who reported that family income significantly influence students’ academic performance in schools.

Result 2 showed that there is no significant relationship between the mean ratings of male and female principals on parents’ income level influencing students’ academic performance in Rivers state.

3. Parents academic support and student academic performance in secondary schools:
The findings of research question 3 revealed that adequate parental support enhance children academic performance, parental monitoring of children out of school activities enhance their academic activities, parents assistance with children study at home, parents employing home teachers will enhance academic performance of their children. This finding is in line with Harderves (1998) who noted that family whose children are doing well in schools are because their parents monitor their out of school activities, helping them in their homework and employing home teachers. Result 3 showed that there is no significant relationship between the mean ratings of male and female principals on how parents academic support affect students’ academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state with aggregate mean score of 2.87.

CONCLUSION
Low parental occupation, lack of parental support and low income level of parents have to a higher extent affected students educational opportunities and career choices. This in turn has affected the children academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers state.

RECOMMENDATIONS
Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:
1. Parents should provide their children with all necessary assistance and support needed for academic enhancement
2. Teachers should advise parents to always monitor their children out-of-school activities.
3. Parents should also provide all the material needs of their children at school, and assist the children with their home works.

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