Family Social Status and Academic Performance of Senior Secondary Students on Nsukka Education Zone, Enugu State -Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This work aimed at ascertaining the influence of family social status on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Nsukka Education Zone. It is an ex-post facto study. Two research questions guided the work. The population for this research consists of all the senior class two (SS 2) students in Nsukka Education Zone. The sample size for the study comprised four hundred and thirty two (432) students from the schools in the study area. The research instrument for data collection was questionnaire. The work revealed that motivated parents gave encouragement to their children’s’/students’ reading habits. It recommended that parents and teachers should be motivated as this may help bridge the deficiencies from negative family social status.

Keywords: social status, parental motivation, parents’ occupation

INTRODUCTION
Family social status refers to all the conditions and circumstances in the family which influence the child physically, intellectually and emotionally Muola (2010). Children coming from different family social status are affected different by such family conditions, that is why some children have good family social status while some have poor social status. Citing Feege, Eke (1999) noted that with some families, the social status vary from time to time for the same individuals. Formal education therefore remains the vehicle for human development which must start from the family. There are different categories of families. The major categories of families according to Anderson and Taylor (2000) include:
Traditional families—where the father is the major breadwinner and mother at home rearing children;
divorced families— families that have been reconstituted following the breaking of marriage; single parent families—likely headed by women; step families—with new siblings and new parents stemming from remarriage. A family could also be categorized as extended or nuclear. Extended families are those in which large group of related kin in addition to parents and children live together in the same household. This is the type of families prevalent in African countries. Nuclear families are families where married couple resides together with their children. This type of family is common in Western countries (Andersen and Taylor 2000). Families are of various sizes. Family size has to do with the total number of people in a single family which may include the father, mother, children and even the extended members all living in one hamlet.

At home parse, it was noted that children learn the basic skill, behaviour, values and attitude deemed necessary for their social living. In this regard, it means that by the time the child enters school (secondary schools) and formally become a student, he/she would have become conscious of his/her personality. Under this circumstance, he has acquired some vital educational background though the quality and extent of education acquired depends heavily on his parental socio-economic background and
most importantly the environment in which, the child comes from. The nature of education the child has acquired at home will automatically spur or hinder his/her attitude towards school and thus his academic performance.

RESEARCH METHODS
Design: The study was carried out using ex-post facto

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS
Research Question 1: To what extent does parental motivation influence secondary school students’ attendance to classes?

Table 1: The influence of parental motivation on secondary school students’ attendance to classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>SA 4</th>
<th>A 3</th>
<th>D 2</th>
<th>SD 1</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students perform better academically when their parents provide basic educational aids and equipment for this studies</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1164</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students harder when their parents reinforce them for good academic performance</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1196</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parents’ concern about students’ grades and performances motivates students’ academic performance</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1302</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Home libraries and books motivate students for better performance in the school</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1150</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Educated parents arrange for supportive teachers for the subject/subjects which their wards/children find difficult in the school</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1366</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Parents who are educated guide their children in school assignments and homework</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1488</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Educated parents always demand for progress reports of their children to know the children’s academic and social progress</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1317</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result presented on table 1 showed that all items had mean scores which were above the cutoff of 2.50. This is an indication that the respondents considered parental motivation as capable of influencing student’s attendance to classes.
Research Question 2: How does parents’ occupation influence secondary school students’ performance?

Table 2: The influence of parental occupation on secondary school students’ performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/ N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>SA 4</th>
<th>A 3</th>
<th>D 2</th>
<th>SD 1</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parents on prestigious occupation want their children to take up the same type of occupation</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Some occupations do not give parents time to attend to their children’s academic needs</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>1016</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parents who are poor farmers can only enroll their children into minor apprenticeship programmes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>1022</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result presented on table 2 above showed that all items under the influence of parental occupation had mean scores below the cutoff mark of 2.50. This shows that parents occupation do not necessarily influence secondary school students’ performance.

DISCUSSION

The result of the study indicates that motivated educated parents provide conducive atmosphere for studies at home. This is in line with Qeca (1980) who asserted that children from literate families where parents provide atmosphere conducive for the formation of good study habit are in better chance of performing well in schools. Again, the result also agrees with Izundu (2005) who asserted that there is significant relationship between the level of parents’ education and the academic performance of the students. Again, Gary (2001) said that the importance of parental level of education to academic performance of students cannot be over emphasized. Accordingly the scholar, students from professional and to a less extent managerial occupational social status exhibit higher academic performance.

On Influence of parental motivation on secondary school students’ academic performance.

The findings revealed that:

i. Parents motivate their children by supervising their home work and assignments.

ii. Parents use positive reinforcement to encourage their children to study hard.

Influence of parental occupation on secondary school students’ performance.

The findings of the study showed that:

iii. Parents’ occupation does not necessarily influence students’ academic performance.

iv. The respondents (students) did not agree that parents’ on prestigious occupations like lawyers and doctors want their children to take up the same type of occupation.

v. There was no agreement among the respondents that parents who are poor farmers can only enroll their children into minor apprenticeship.

vi. Students agreed that they were motivated by prompt payment of school fees and other school levies.

CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study on parental motivation, it was found that students who received encouragement and motivation from the family perform better in schools than their counterparts from non-encouraging families. The major reasons for the observed difference in performance are the motivation and positive attitude of the parents towards their children’s academic progress. The acceptance was based on the result of statistical data from the field. Personal observation equally showed that parental occupation cannot determine student academic performance. This is because education which is the major determinant of occupation may not be the same in the parents and children. Again, a child from
large family size, who has strong determination, can compete favorably with another child from small family size. Moreover, most children from small families are over pampered and undetermined.

RECOMMENDATIONS
It is recommended consequently that

1) Teachers should understand that teaching is a job of conscience. Teachers should handle the students as their own children; try by all means to meet the students’ academic social and psychological needs. They should be motivational in their teaching and use different teaching methods so as to go along with all categories of students. This will help bridge deficiencies from negative family social status.

2) The state and Federal Governments should legislate against examination malpractices. Such situation will force students to sit up and take their studies serious. Again, the various governments should create employment opportunities for the graduate of various institutions of higher learning. Lack of job opportunities contributes to the loss of interest and zeal for education by students. The current situation in Nigeria where graduates are left with little or no hope of employment gives no encouragement to the school students for further education. Rather, the students see going to school is a waste of time.

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