



Influence Of Social Stratification On Students' Academic Performance In Senior Secondary Schools In Port-Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined Influence of social Stratification on Students' Academic Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Five research questions and Five Hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study was Descriptive Survey Design. The Population of the study was 3,720 students, and due to the size of the population, Simple Random Sampling Technique was used to select 20% which amounted to 744 as the sample. The instrument that was used to collect the data was a Questionnaire titled; Influence of Social Stratification on Students Academic Performance (ISSAP) to elicit response from the respondents. The instrument was subjected to scrutiny by the researcher's supervisor and two experts, and their inputs and corrections were further implemented. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Statistic and a reliability index of 0.81 (0.94, 0.85, 0.76, 0.68 and 0.82) was obtained. The researcher and two briefed assistants administered and retrieved 744 copies of the questionnaire. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while the null hypotheses were tested using z-test statistics at 0.05 significant level. Based on the analysis, the following were the findings made, Parental socio-economic status has strong influence on students' academic performance, good classrooms, library and qualified teachers influence students' academic performance and the emergence of private school's influence students' academic performance.

Keywords: Social Stratification, Academic Performance, Students

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the integral parts of human resource development, and students' performance in their various examinations also play a vital role in producing graduates of the best quality who will at the end point become great leaders and role models for the country. Thus, they could be in-charge of the country's economic, political and social development (Oladebinu, Amos & Oyediran 2018). Ekwueme and Ogbondah (2005) asserted that education is the shaping of behavior or modification of behaviours of an individual for adequate adjustment in the society. Accordingly, education is also seen as the process by which society through secondary schools, colleges and universities deliberately inculcate its cultural ethics. Education can also be a change in behavior, the change can be either overt-open or covert-hidden. It can be impactful or non-impactful depending on the quality of the experience provided by the instructor who provides the instructions.

Ngozi, Igwe, Asodike, Onueike and Anyaogo (2014) observe that educational change is a pre-condition for educational improvement and therefore, the planned change is more likely to be effective than the unplanned change. Ekwueme et al (2005) postulated that the period spent in our educational system

should produce specialized individuals in medicine, law, education, engineering, politics, industry, military, business, and the likes. In the same vein, it automatically reflects their various classes to which they belong, and the kind of school (education) they can afford, and prefer their children to attend. This is why Okoh (2004) postulated that the way in which the dissemination of knowledge is developed in any society, reflects the social strata of that society, because knowledge as reflected in the schools syllabus and curriculum is being stratified according to the social structure of the society, where the upper and middle class choose the best in the society, because of their financial capabilities, and reserve the ill-funded and neglected public schools for children of those who do not have or lower class parents in the society. He further asserted that the social class (status) to which parents belong, dictate the type of education and school their wards acquire and attend. That is equally the reason why in our society today, using Rivers state as an area of concentration, parents of the upper and middle social class, send their children to private schools with high school fees in clean and decent environment, well-equipped and good library; class rooms with good reading desks and chalkboard, equipped science laboratories with good extra-curriculum activities like excursions, visit to zoos and other educational meaningful places. Whereas parents of the lower class can only afford public or government schools in the state with little or no equipped libraries, laboratories, class rooms, reading desk, unfenced school compounds with little or no excursion or trip of any kind. Thus it is argued that children from the lower strata parents are likely to have lower rates of literate offspring, both in expression and understanding, lower retention rates and also have lower senior secondary school rate (UNDP, 2013). In this regard the researcher deduced that students' academic performance could be influenced by a number of factors, some of which are considered in this study.

Provision of good and quality education, requires requisite physical facilities, that is, good library, laboratories, serene class rooms and qualified non and academic staffs which are prerequisite school based factors for effective learning environment. This as a result makes finance a major resource in education performance (Mbatia, 2004).

Academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools, specifically determines the Students' academic future or achievement. In other words, education is an indispensable means of climbing the social ladder from one rung to another (Nwafor 2016). It actually determines the students' success, whether he or she will proceed to University, or any relevant higher institution of her choice for a higher degree in order to boost his or her chances in the labour market. The performance of students is also determined by the quality of education acquired by them through their teachers at their various secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

Senior secondary school students feel that it is proper or right to perform better in their class and external examinations, like Senior School Certificate Examination (S.S.C.E.), General Certificate Examination (G.C.E) and the like. There had been records of failure on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State, Nigeria, which cannot be over emphasize, and has become a great challenge to educational outcomes. There are cases where students cannot answer questions in the class in the course of lectures, because they lack the knowledge of what to say in situations that calls for expressiveness. These may be attributed to the social class parents belong to which has negatively affected the student not to have the tone and loudness of voice, the fluency of speech, facial expression, eye contact and the body posture necessary for academic performances. (Goldfriend & Davison in Nwakwo, 2011). From the foregoing, Nwankwo (2011), stated that even though it is their wish to do so, but because they are not confident, they are inhibited by fear, anxiety or shyness, or what would become the outcome if they speak. This is a problem situation.

Mainstreaming appeared to be another factor affecting student's academic performance in senior secondary schools. Some students have been marginalized, denied resources and even education. In this regard, can the concept of equality of educational opportunity accommodate all and sundry in Rivers State irrespective of their class or social strata? Some critics claim that theories of reciprocity and cooperation as a pre-condition to equal opportunity, and the demand for justice (Kittay, 1999).

There could be a number of factors that apparently affect academic performance of students in senior secondary schools in Rivers state. The researcher looked into some of these factors that affect student's academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The study also found out that school based factors such as teacher qualification, habit of absenteeism, financial motivation, and student's parental social strata contribute positively or negatively to student's academic performance. Mr Olu Adenipekun who is the head Nigeria National Office, West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), avers that from 2017 - 2018 and 2018 - 2019 vast number of students performed low in English Language and Mathematics as general subject. The statistics reflected that a total of 1.57m candidates sat for WAEC in 2018. Total percentage of candidates with 5 credits including English Language is put at 48.15%. Whereas in 2019, a total number of 1,590,173 sat for the examination in Nigeria. Mr. Olu Adenipekun reiterated that only 64.18% obtain credits including English Language and Mathematics. It is on this premise that the researcher seek to investigate the influence of social stratification on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in the study area. The problem of this study therefore is: how do social stratifications influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port-Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State?.

Purpose of the Study

The study is intended to investigate the influence of social stratification on student's academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State. Based on the articulated problems, the researcher undertook this study to achieve the following objectives to:

1. determine the extent to which Parental Social Status Influence Students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.
2. examine the extent of the influence of school-based factors on students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.
3. determine the extent to which parental occupation influences the academic performance of students in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does parental social status influence students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?
2. To what extent does school-based factors influence students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?
3. To what extent does parental occupation influence students' academic performance in Senior Secondary School in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rives State?

Hypotheses

- Ho1 There is no significant difference between the mean responses of public and private school students on the extent parental social status influence academic performance of students in public and private Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.
- Ho2 There is no significant difference between the mean responses of public and private school students on the extent school-based factors influence academic performance of students in public and private schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, in Rivers State.
- Ho3 There is no significant difference between the mean responses of public and private school students on the extent parental occupation influence academic performance of students in public and private schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

METHODOLOGY

The design of this study was descriptive design. The study was carried out in two (2) Local Government Areas; Obio-Akpor and Port-Harcourt, known as Port-Harcourt Metropolis Rivers. The Population of the study comprised 3,720 students from eight selected Senior Secondary Schools; four Private and four Public Schools in Port-Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 20% of the population which was 744 students. This is in line with Nwana (2008) who held that for

few thousands, use 20% or more, that is five thousand below. The instrument used in gathering data was questionnaire titled: Influence of Social Stratification on Students' Academic Performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State (ISSSAP) with fifty (50) questionnaire items designed by the researcher in line with the modified likert four-point scale. The questionnaire has (2) two sections: section A was used to gather the bio-data of the respondents, while section B contained the questionnaire variables and items. To ascertain the face and content validity of the instrument the questionnaire was presented to the researcher's supervisor and other experts in the Department of Educational Foundations for scrutiny. The comments, suggestions and corrections of these experts were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. To ascertain the reliability, the researcher administered 20 copies of the validated instrument to 20 selected respondents outside the selected sample for this study. After retrieval, Cronbach Alpha Statistics was used to determine the reliability index of 0.81.(0.94, 0.84, 0.76, 0.68 and 0.82). The researcher and two research assistants administered and retrieve the distributed copies of the questionnaire. The research assistants were briefed on the modalities for the distribution and retrieval of the instrument from the respondents. The research questions were analyzed by using mean and standard deviation while the null hypothesis was tested using z – text statistics at 0.05 significant level.

The questionnaire was rated thus;

- Very High Extent (VHE).....3.50 - 4.00
- High Extent (HE).....2.50 – 3.49
- Low Extent (LE)1.50 – 2.49
- Very low Extent (VLE)1.00 – 1.49

RESULTS

Research Question 1

To what extent does parental social background influence students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?

Table 1: Weighted mean and rank order statistics of the opinions of the respondents on the extent parental social background influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

| S/N | Items | Public school Students 452 | | Private school Students 292 | | X ₁ X ₂ | Remark |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| | | X ₁ | SD ₁ | X ₂ | SD ₂ | | |
| 1. | Parents in upper class stratum influence student academic performance | 3.17 | 1.69 | 2.80 | 1.34 | 2.48 | Low Extent |
| 2. | Social Stratification has influenced greatly parent's choice of career for their children | 3.14 | 1.66 | 2.85 | 1.37 | 2.99 | High Extent |
| 3. | Parents with lower class stratum influence student academic performance | 2.72 | 1.29 | 2.81 | 1.35 | 2.76 | High Extent |
| 4. | Parents with good educational background influence student academic performance | 2.32 | 1.28 | 1.76 | 1.79 | 2.04 | Low Extent |
| 5. | Parents with low educational background influence student academic performance | 2.15 | 1.37 | 1.93 | 1.57 | 2.04 | Low Extent |
| 6. | Parents who reside in Government Residential Areas (GRA) influence student academic performance. | 2.38 | 1.26 | 2.75 | 1.31 | 2.56 | High Extent |
| 7. | Parents who resides in waterfront influence Students' academic performance | 3.17 | 1.69 | 3.04 | 1.54 | 3.11 | High Extent |
| 8. | Parents who send their children to high tuition fee school's influences students academic performance | 2.69 | 1.28 | 3.06 | 1.56 | 2.87 | High Extent |
| 9. | Parents who takes their children to school on private cars influence student academic performance | 4.14 | 3.94 | 2.71 | 1.29 | 3.43 | High Extent |
| 10. | Parents who takes their children to schools on public cars or influence student academic performance | 2.37 | 1.27 | 2.86 | 1.38 | 2.62 | High Extent |
| | Aggregate | 2.83 | 1.67 | 2.66 | 1.45 | 2.69 | |

Data on table 1: shows that items 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 have means above the criterion mean of 2.50, they are 2.99, 2.76, 2.56, 3.11, 2.87, 3.43 and 2.62 respectively, which means that parental social background influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. In essence, this item reveals that student's academic performance is tied to parental social background. The social background a student parents belongs to greatly influence the student academic performance. While items 1, 4 and 5 has means less than the criterion means of 2.50, they include; 2.48, 2.04, and 2.04. This means that parental social background does not influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The aggregate mean of 2.69 indicate that parental social background greatly influence students' academic performance to a high extent. This might have been attributed to the poor performance of students in internal or external examinations. As such it can be concluded that parental social background influence academic performance to a high extent.

Research Questions 2

To what extent does school-based factor influence students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State?

Table 2: Weighted mean and rank order statistics of the opinions of the respondents on the extent school-based factors influence students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

| S/N | Items | Public school Students 452 | | Private school Students 292 | | X ₁ X ₂ | Remark |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| | | X ₁ | SD ₁ | X ₂ | SD ₂ | | |
| 11. | School with adequate science teacher influence student academic performance | 3.04 | 1.54 | 2.78 | 1.33 | 2.91 | High Extent |
| 12. | School with adequate arts teacher Influence students' academic performance | 3.14 | 1.66 | 2.78 | 1.33 | 2.96 | High Extent |
| 13. | School with good staff room influence student academic performance | 2.68 | 1.28 | 2.67 | 1.28 | 2.67 | High Extent |
| 14. | Learning in a conducive classrooms influence student academic performance | 2.79 | 1.33 | 2.92 | 1.43 | 2.85 | High Extent |
| 15. | Schools with good reward system toward the students, influence student academic performance | 2.48 | 1.25 | 2.85 | 1.37 | 2.66 | High Extent |
| 16. | School with equipped laboratory facilities influence student academic performance | 2.16 | 1.36 | 2.77 | 1.32 | 2.46 | Low Extent |
| 17. | Equipped library influences students' Academic performance | 2.39 | 1.26 | 2.79 | 1.33 | 2.59 | High Extent |
| 18. | Living in boarding house influence student academic performance | 2.25 | 1.31 | 2.09 | 1.17 | 2.17 | Low Extent |
| 19. | Anxiety and fear influence student academic performance | 2.68 | 1.28 | 2.82 | 1.35 | 2.75 | High Extent |
| 20. | Poor funding influence student academic performance | 3.37 | 2.01 | 1.76 | 1.79 | 2.56 | High Extent |
| | Aggregate | 2.70 | 1.43 | 2.62 | 1.37 | 2.66 | |

Data on table 2: shows that items 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19 and 20 has means above the criterion mean of 2.50. They are, 2.91, 2.96, 2.67, 2.85, 2.66, 2.59, 2.75 and 2.56 respectively. This means that school based factors influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. That is, good library, laboratory, good class rooms qualified teacher's influences students' academic performance. While item 16 and 18 has means less than the criterion means of 2.50. They are, 2.46 and 2.17 respectively. This means that school based factors does not influence students' academic performance. School based factors such as the school environment, location, man power and facilities does not influence students' academic performance. The aggregate mean of 2.66 revealed that school based factors such as; good library, laboratory, good class room, qualified teachers and etcetera influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools to a high extent.

Research Question 3: *To what extent does parental occupation influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers state?*

Table 3: Weighted mean and rank order statistics of the opinions of the respondents on the extent parental occupation influence students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State

| S/N | Items | Public school Students 452 | | Private school Students 292 | | X ₁ X ₂ | Remark |
|-----|--|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| | | X ₁ | SD ₁ | X ₂ | SD ₂ | | |
| 21. | Parental occupation influence student's Passes in English Language. | 2.96 | 1.46 | 2.71 | 1.29 | 2.84 | High Extent |
| 22. | Finance is crucial for child to have Quality education | 3.02 | 1.52 | 2.68 | 1.28 | 2.85 | High Extent |
| 23. | Qualified English teacher influence Student's academic performance | 2.48 | 1.25 | 2.46 | 1.25 | 2.47 | Low Extent |
| 24. | Students with adequate books Influence academic performance | 2.42 | 1.26 | 2.37 | 1.27 | 2.40 | Low Extent |
| 25. | Homes with mini-library influence Student's academic performance | 2.44 | 1.34 | 2.87 | 1.38 | 2.66 | High Extent |
| 26. | Teachers with degree in education Influence students' academic Performance | 2.17 | 1.36 | 2.63 | 1.27 | 2.40 | Low Extent |
| 27. | The kind of school attended influence Students' academic performance | 2.69 | 1.29 | 2.18 | 1.35 | 2.44 | Low Extent |
| 28. | Home type influence students' academic performance | 2.69 | 1.29 | 2.16 | 1.36 | 2.43 | Low Extent |
| 29. | Schools with boarding house Influence students' academic Performance | 2.36 | 1.27 | 2.81 | 1.35 | 2.59 | High Extent |
| 30. | Few students in a class influence Students' academic performance | 2.46 | 1.25 | 1.88 | 1.64 | 2.17 | Low Extent |
| | Aggregate | 2.60 | 1.33 | 2.48 | 1.34 | 2.56 | |

Data on table 3 shows that item 21, 22, 25 and 29 has means above the criterion mean of 2.50: They include 2.84, 2.85, 2.66 and 2.59 respectively. Which implies that parental occupation influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. While items 23, 24, 26, 27, 28 and 30 has means below the criterion means of 2.50. They include, 2.47, 2.40, 2.40, 2.43, 2.44 and 2.17 respectively. This implies that parental occupation does not influence student's academic performance in senior secondary schools, despite the kind of job secondary school students' parents are engaged in, it does not relatively affect student's performance or scores in internal or external examinations in the Obio/Akpor and Port-Harcourt Local Governments in view.

To this end, the aggregate mean of 2.56 indicates that parental occupation influence students' academic performance to a high extent.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho₁ There is no significant influence of parental social status on student academic performance between public and private Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Table 4: Z-test calculation of differences between the opinions of Public School Students and Private School Students on their mean responses on the influence of parental social status on student academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

| Categories | N | X | SD | DF | Sig | Z-cal | Z-crit | Remarks |
|-------------------------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-------|--------|--------------|
| Public School Students | 452 | 2.83 | 1.67 | | | | | |
| | | | | 742 | 0.05 | 1.47 | 1.96 | Not Rejected |
| Private School Students | 292 | 2.66 | 1.45 | | | | | |

Data on table 4: shows the summary of means, standard deviation and z-test of the difference between public school students and private school students on their mean rating on the influence of parental social status on students' academic performance of senior secondary school in Rivers State. The z-test value calculated and used in testing the hypotheses stood at 1.47, while the z-critical value stood at 1.96 with a degree of freedom of 742 at 0.05 level of significance. At 0.05 level of significance and 742 degrees of freedom, the z-cal of 1.47 is less than that of the critical z-value of 1.96. As such the null hypothesis was not rejected, that there is no significant difference between the mean opinions of public and private school students in their mean rating on the influence parental social status on students' academic performance in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Ho₂ There is no significant influence of school-based factors on students' academic performance between public and private Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Table 5: Z-test calculation of differences between the opinions of Public School Students and Private School Student on their mean responses on the influence of school-based factors on student academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

| Categories | N | X | SD | DF | Sig | Z-cal | Z-crit | Remarks |
|-------------------------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-------|--------|--------------|
| Public School Students | 452 | 2.70 | 1.43 | 742 | 0.05 | 0.76 | 1.96 | Not rejected |
| Private School Students | 292 | 2.62 | 1.37 | | | | | |

Data on table 5: shows summaries of means, standard deviation and z-test of differences between the responses of public school students and private school students on their mean responses on the influence of school based factors on student academic performance in public and private senior secondary school in Rivers State. The z-test value calculated and used in testing the hypotheses stood at 0.76, while the z-critical stood at 1.96 with degree of freedom of 742 at 0.05 level of significance. At 0.05 level of significance and 742 degree of freedom, the z-calculated value of 0.76 is less than that of the table value of 1.96. As such the null hypothesis was not rejected that there is no significant difference between public school students and private school students in their mean responses on school based factor as it influences students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Ho₅ There is no significant influence of parental occupation on student's academic performance between public and private Senior Secondary Schools student in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Table 6: Z-test calculation of differences between the opinions of Public School Students and Private School Students on their mean responses on the influence of parental occupation on students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

| Categories | N | X | SD | DF | Sig | Z-cal | Z-crit | Remarks |
|-------------------------|-----|------|------|-----|------|-------|--------|--------------|
| Public School Students | 452 | 2.60 | 1.33 | 742 | 0.05 | 1.2 | 1.96 | Not rejected |
| Private School Students | 292 | 2.48 | 1.34 | | | | | |

Data on table 6 shows summaries of means, standard deviation and z-test of differences between the opinion of public school students and private school students on their mean rating on the influence of main streaming on students' academic performance in senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The z-test value used and calculated in testing the hypotheses stood at 1.2 degree of freedom is 742 at 0.05 level of significance, z-cal of 1.2 with a degree of freedom of 742 at 0.05 level of significance. At 0.05 level of significance and 742 degree of freedom, the calculated value of 1.2 is less than that of the critical value of 1.96. In this regard, the null hypothesis is accepted on the ground that there is no

significant difference between public school students and private school students in their mean responses on the influence of parental occupation on students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools in Port-Harcourt metropolis, Rivers State.

Summary of Major Findings

The following are the summaries of the major findings of the study:

- 1** Parental social background is an important factor of students' educational participation, and influence students' performance in senior secondary school. To this end, students' educational performance has positive link to parental social background. The parents of the student have to persevere to attain the heights he wants to, in other for the children to succeed in their educational performance and achievement. Student's academic performance is relatively tied to parental social background.
- 2** School based factor is another vital aspect of educational pursuit, and to that, influence students' educational performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State according to the respondents. Schools might as well have the needed facilities to aid learning in other to facilitate learners' performance. School laboratory, library, school buildings, instructional materials in a school aids learners' performance both in public schools and private schools in Obio/Akpor and Port-Harcourt Local Government Area, otherwise known as Port-Harcourt metropolis. To this end, Learners' academic performance is also linked to school based factors. Such as library, laboratory qualified teacher etcetera.
- 3** Parental occupation and its influence on students' academic performance in Rivers State were necessary because income definitely provides basic needs for the students in pursuant of her goals. For a child to have quality and hitch free education in our secondary schools, finance most have its own share in child's performance and achievement. A family with high income, adequately provide necessary needs of a child more than a low income family. Which also have a play with the number of text-books parents would be able to purchase for their children during the academic session. The null hypothesis was accepted that parental occupation influence students' academic performance in public and private senior secondary school's students in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section dealt with discussion of findings as provided under the following subheadings.

Parental social background and its influence on students' academic performance

The study has revealed that parental social background influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. In essence, this item reveals that students' academic performance is tied to parental social background. The social background a student parents belongs to, greatly influence the student academic performance. These findings agree with Ekwueme (2005) that parents' socio-economic hierarchy in the community has a strong influence on the education of the child. Socio-economic indices ascribed as follows; parents' income, wealth, education, occupation and political class. Also the findings agreed with Okujagu (2003) who stated that the family social status can help to determine the type of education the child receives and learning capabilities.

School Based Factor and its Influence on Students' Academic Performance.

The findings as regard school based factors such as, teachers' qualification, absenteeism, financial motivation, school infrastructure and quality of instruction and its' influence on students' academic performance reveals that school based factors influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Rivers State. These are good library, laboratory, good class rooms and qualified teacher's influences students' academic performance. These findings are in line with Nwafor (2016), who argues that children who grew up in a family where there is cordial relationship, where they feel more secure, have little or no difficulty in adjusting and adapting to the school environment; whereas the reverse is the case in a family characterized by hostility and neglect. In another assumption, Goldhaber and Brewer (2002) hold that students in secondary school perform better if they are taught by a teacher with a master or bachelor degree in education. Kaziah and Lawrence (2003) are also of the view that a

qualified teacher is effective, impactful and purposeful, neat and properly dressed, has a warming personality acceptable to the learner.

Parental occupation and its influence on students' academic performance

The result from the study revealed that Parental Occupation influence students' academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools Obio/Akpor and Port-Harcourt Local Government Areas in Rivers State. Onyia (2002) revealed that family of high income and social economic status is likely to adequately provide the need of the child, compared to family of low income and social economic status. These findings are against Ugoji (1998) who postulated that socio-economic status affects the child academic performance or achievement. And in the same page with Nwafor (2016) who submitted that a child of low ranked parents will study and climb up the pedestrian ladder. Whereas a child of a highly ranked citizen of a state might end up a drop out.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the discussion of the findings and their implication in the education system, it was concluded that social stratification has ingredients that positively influence students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt Local Government Area in Rivers State to a high extent. That is, the social strata which a parent belong to in the society, influence the academic performance of the student.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the plight of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following are recommended.

1. Government should provide budget or funds to enable the school function properly whereby students in public schools whose parents or guidance cannot afford textbooks, school uniforms, bags and sandals can have access to fund provided by Government and private individuals in a way of bursary or total scholarship, to cushion the hardship and suffering of the students and their parents. This situation is having serious effect mostly with students from the rural communities. Most of these students withdraws from schools for fishing or farming because, their parents could not afford these items, talk of school fees. These should be properly put into consideration by those in authority, in other to improve students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in the Rivers State.
2. To ensure effective learning environment, government should provide public schools with good infrastructure, so that students in public schools can adequately get access to good school building and facilities that are available to students in some private schools, with fully equipped laboratory equipment for practical, library with updated text books for students to sit comfortably to read and prepare for internal and external examinations. This will lead to positive outcome in student academic performance in the state.
3. Government and other partners should ensure or make it a policy that, all public schools in the state should be boarding schools, whereby students in respect of their background are given the opportunity stay in the school premises. And also ensure that equal opportunity is given to all and sundry, by accessing the school facilities.

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