

Role of Parental Influence on Academic Performance: A Case of Students in Secondary Schools in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State

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Abstract

The role of parental influence on academic performance: a case of students in secondary schools in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue state was examined. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. It has three research questions and three hypotheses. From the population of 9720 students, 405 respondents were sampled from 9 secondary schools using the simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a self structured questionnaire titled “role of parental influence on academic performance”. A total of 405 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the students and 380 representing 93.83% were returned. Data were analyzed using mean and Standard Deviation to answer the research questions, while Chi Square was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results reveal that family size with Mean cluster of 2.97 and Standard Deviation of 1.90 has influence on the academic performance of the students. It was also found that there was a significant difference between those students whose parents have interest on the education of their children and those parents that do not. Additionally, it was also revealed that there was significant difference between students whose parents encourage to learn at home and those whose parents do not encourage to learn at home in secondary schools in the study area. Based on these findings, the study recommends that parents’ whose occupational position is low should not be discouraged from taking care of their wards or children but continue to give the necessary assistance to their children to excel in their academics and children from such families should not look at themselves as inferior but continue to put in more efforts in their academics.

Keywords: Parental influence. Academic performance. Secondary school. Students.

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Introduction

It is observed that some parents are supportive and enthusiastic of their children's education, while some may be neutral and uninterested. Others may be antagonistic to school education (Nkwocha, 2005). The role of parents like other factors such as school environment, teachers and school administrators, social media etc. also has great influence on academic performance of children in school. According to Godwin (2010), the children whose parents show much interest in their education always have the urge to excel in academics. While those whose parents show little or no interests in their education generally have a tendency to develop apathy towards schooling and learning. He however, concludes that parental interest should not exceed the child's ability; that it may disturb the child's learning ability. William (2003), in Nkwocha (2005) posits that parental expectation is also a strong factor that affects academic performance of the children. He explains that parents who show interest in their children's studies by monitoring and the assisting them enhance their academic performance greatly.

Oluwaterure & Oloruntegbe (2009) point out that parents that have interest and always assist their children at home improve and reinforce their children's academic performance. This implies that the interest and involvement are out of parental expectation of what the child will achieve at the end of a programme. Ziglet & Child (2001) observe that children that perform well academically in school are those children whose parents show a lot of interest in and encouragement for learning at home. They further explain that when parents play vital roles by rewarding success and condemning failure, it will lead to positive achievement and motivation for their children. Kemjika (2006) identifies the home as one of the external factors that influence learning. He declares that academic achievement cannot be so perfect if the role of the home is an illusion. He further attributes the role of the home or family to parental motivation and satisfaction which according to him when parents are in the habit of making provision for their wards, there is bound to be progress. Bandura (2007) opines that reinforcement is very important in the training and teaching of a child. He concludes that reinforcement, when given to a child as scheduled, goes a long way to improve learning. Therefore, children whose parents set aside time each day to look at their academic work by helping or correcting their areas of weakness or failure will put them in order. Non encouragement by parents surprisingly does not only show negligible effects but also has a negative sign (Nkwocha, 2005). Parental expectation brings about encouragement to the children.

There have been researches that show the correlation between family size and academic performance. Downey (2005) reveals that one relationship that has been consistence is 'as the number of siblings increases, educational performance decreases'. He quotes the resources dilution model that "parental resources are finite and that additional children dilute the total quantity of resource any one child receives, which in turn decreases their educational outcome" (page 31). This implies that the more number

of children one has, the less learning resources that each child will have, and the less children found in a family, the more learning resources that each will have.

Musgrave (2003) opines that most children from large families are likely to have low Intelligent Quotient because they are not given sufficient time and attention by their parents. He further explains that their inherited intellectual capabilities could hardly develop fully. This implies that the larger the number of children to be catered for by a parent, the little attention that will be given to one individual child. This will lead to low performance or low I.Q. Additionally, Children who come from large families are less motivated to do well in their school career. Ipwell (2003) states that mothers of large family sometimes neglect the children and give them inadequate food. This situation is typical of many homes in Nigeria and Agatu Local Government Area in particular where the mother is a farmer or petty trader that leaves home very early in the morning not bothering whether the children have taken breakfast or not and prepared to go to school.

Barry (2006) observes that family size affects academic performance of students. He declares that students who come from small families are more likely to adopt adult value and attitude than those who come from larger families. He also points, out that those parents who have fewer children tend to devote more time and attention to every individual child. More is expected from them, than the parents who have many children. Children who come from large families are less motivated to do well in their school career. Ipwell (2003) states that mothers of large family sometimes neglect the children and give them inadequate food. This situation is typical of many homes in Nigeria and Agatu Local Government Area in particular where the mother is a farmer or petty trader that leaves home very early in the morning not bothering whether the children have taken breakfast or not and prepared to go to school. The mother comes back late and finds herself tired. Iwuji (2002) points that child's position in school depends on the number of children his/her parents have. She concludes that small size plays a great part in determining which is to give opportunity to continue schooling, revise is the case in large families. Himmelwet (2001) supports the above claim that the educational inspiration is affected by family size. This according to him occurs because when a family is too large, the family revenue will be concentrated on feeding. There will be the tendency for the children to start schooling late in their lives. Davies (2004) asserts that, irrespective of social class, children from large families tend to perform low in reading, numerical skill, and creatively compared to families with one or two siblings. This is because parents with large number of children have little time to give attention to each of them. He concludes that the most senior appears to suffer most as he or she may be the one to cater for younger siblings.

Adeyomo (2007) states that when individuals feel caught in the web of misfortune they may be driven to adopt attitudes and standards which perpetuate bad interaction and parental care. They will lose hope of higher attainment in life and getting better things of life. This will lower their interest or probably

educational achievement in school. This shows that there is a relationship between family size and academic performance.

Musa (2012), reports that family structure has effect on academic performance for he also links parental socio-economic status with academic performance. According to Considine & Zappala (2002), a sole-parent family is likely to be the labour force; children from these families are likely to have lower educational performance. He further enumerates other factors in sole parent families that are likely to adversely affect educational outcomes of the children as:

- i. Reduced contact between the child and non-custodian parents.
- ii. The custodian parents, having less time to spend with children in terms of supervision of school-work and maintaining appropriate level of discipline.
- iii. Lack of an appropriate role model, especially for males.
- iv. Increased responsibilities on children such as children's roles, domestic duties which impede the time available for school work and
- v. The nature of parent-child relationship in sole parent families may cause emotional and behavioral problems for the child.

Jimoh (2008) revealed that when a child suffers parental and maternal deprivation and care due to divorce or death, or absconding of one of the parents, the child's schooling may be affected as the mother alone may not be financially buoyant to pay fee, purchase books and uniform. Jimoh concludes that such child may play truancy, thus his performance in school may be adversely affected. The role of two parents on their children should not be over looked. Two parental and single parent households have their influence on the learning and achievement of children in school (Barry, 2006). This shows that there is a relationship between family size and structure on academic performance.

Some parents discovered that the academic performance of their children differs from that of other children and also realized that the academic performance of their children is poor. The parents of students in secondary schools in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State are not left out, because some of these parents are seen at homes, market squares, roads and sometimes in the beer parlours discussing and wondering why the performance of their children in school is very poor. They also consider the falling standard of education in the country and that of Agatu Local Government Area in particular as a serious problem across the country. As such, they keep on pondering and asking series of questions such as: Is it their paying little or no much interest on their children`s education that affect them negatively in school? Does their large family size contribute to the poor performance of their children in school? How will they encourage their children to perform well in school?

These are some of the problems and questions they always ask and discuss among themselves without solution. Some of these parents could not understand that home is the cradle of education. The foundation of education begins from home and not all everybody understands this. Moreover, majority of parents especially in remote area like Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State and other places are ignorant of these. For this reason, this study examines the role of parental influence on academic performance: a case of students in secondary schools in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How does parental interest influence academic performance of children in school?
2. How does family size and structure influence the educational achievement of students?
3. How does parental encouragement influence the educational achievement of students?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents have interests on their academic performance and those whose parents' do not have interest.
2. There is no significant difference between the academic performance of the students from large family and those students from small family.
3. There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents encouraged to learn at home and those students that their parents do not encourage them at home.

Research Method

The research design for this study is descriptive survey. The design is considered appropriate for this study because it sought to sample opinions of the respondents who are students within the study area. Survey design is the type that a group of people or items are considered to be representative of the entire group (Nworgu, 2001, Emaikwu, 2006). Abonyi, Omebe, Okereke and Anugwo (2006) point out that survey is one of the cheapest and quick ways to obtain facts and figures from systematically selected segments of a population with the purpose to ascertain the general characteristics of the population. The population of the study consisted of the entire students in the twenty four secondary schools in Agatu Local Government Area of Benue State. Statistics available in the Area Education Office, Agatu puts the population of the students at 9,720. The study was restricted to senior secondary classes. The choice of SS I – SS III students was because the researcher expected the students in the senior classes to have a better knowledge and

understanding of the socio-economic background and the role their parents play to influence their academic performance.

The sample consists of 405 students selected in 9 secondary schools out of 24 secondary school in Agatu Local Government Area. The selection was done by random sampling technique of hat and draw. This was to ensure that each element of the population has equal and independent chance of being included in the sample (Nworgu, 2001). The secondary schools in the area were grouped into three supervisory zones. Three secondary schools were selected from each zone making a total of nine secondary schools. An average of forty-five students per secondary school ($SS1-SS3 = 15 \times 3 = 45$) were selected from the sampled schools and the total respondents from the nine selected secondary schools was 405 ($45 \times 9 = 405$). A structured questionnaire named "role of parental influence on academic performance" was used as the research instrument. The instrument has two sections (A and B). Section A is the bio-data of the students. Section B of the instrument is a four-point Likert type rating scale. The scale ranges from strongly disagree = 1 point, disagree = 2 points, Agree = 3 points and strongly Agree = 4 points.

The questionnaire has twelve items that were responded by the students. That is four questions to each of the research questions. Students were instructed to respond objectively by putting a tick (✓) against the option that appeal to them. A total of 405 copies of the questionnaire were taken to the field and administered to 405 students and 380 or 93.83% copies of the questionnaire were completed and returned.

The data were analyzed using mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (SD). Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Chi-square (χ^2) was used to test the entire hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A mean cut-off points of 2.50 was used for decision making. This is because it used four points rating scale ($4+3+2+1=10/2=2.50$) Any mean score of 2.50 and above was accepted as having a significant influence while mean score below 2.50 were rejected as not significant influence.

Results and Discussion

Research Question One

How does parental interests influence academic performance of children in school?

The data that provides answers to the research question are presented on Table 1.

Table 1. Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of students on the influence of parental interests on academic performance of students.

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	X	S.D	Decision
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1.	My parents always pay my school fees on time.	15 8	11 5	83	24	3.07	0.94	Accepted
2.	My parent provides books, magazines, newspapers and other materials for studying at home for me.	15 0	13 1	66	33	3.05	0.96	Accepted
3.	My parent always rewards me when I performed well in school.	10 0	67	151	62	2.54	1.05	Accepted
4.	My parents provided a study room at home for me	97 7	10	66	11 0	2.50	1.16	Accepted
Cluster mean						2.79	1.03	Accepted

Data presented in Table 1, showed that the mean ratings of items 1-4 are 3.07, 3.05, 2.54, and 2.50 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.94, 0.96, 1.05, and 1.16. Based on the cut-off point of 2.50, the respondents' mean response is above the cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 2.79 with the standard deviations of 1.03 was also found to be above the cut-off point. This implies that parental interests influence the educational achievement of the students.

Research Question Two

How does family size and structure influence the educational achievement of the students?

The data that provide answers to the research question are presented on Table 2.

Table 2. Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of students on the influence of family size and structure on the educational achievement of the students.

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	X	S.D	Decision
5.	My father is a polygamist	88	94	76	122	2.39	1.16	Rejected
6.	Large family delays payment of school fees	165	164	30	21	3.24	0.82	Accepted
7.	Both my mother and father pay my school fees every term.	124	128	89	39	2.89	0.98	Accepted
8.	The large family contributes to my poor performance in school.	182	107	75	16	3.20	0.90	Accepted

Cluster mean

2.93

0.97

Accepted

Data presented on Table 2, show that the mean ratings of items 5-8 are 2.39, 3.24, 2.89, and 3.20 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 1.16, 0.82, 0.98, and 0.90. Based on the cut-off point of 2.50, the respondents' rejected item 5 and accepted items 6-8 that are well above the mean cut-off point of 2.50. The cluster mean of 2.93 with the standard deviations of 0.97 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that family size and structure influence the educational achievement of the students.

Research Question Three

How does parental encouragement influence educational achievement of the students?

The data that provides answers to the research question are presented on Table 3.

Table 3. Mean Ratings and Standard Deviations of students on the influence of parental encouragement on the educational achievement of the students.

Item No	Item Description	SA	A	D	S	$\bar{X}$	S.D	Decision
9.	My parents encourage and check my work regularly at home.	144	103	105	28	2.96	0.98	Accepted
10.	A part-time teacher is employed to teach me at home	81	77	167	55	2.48	0.98	Rejected
11.	My parents comply fully to my academic demands.	140	138	78	24	3.04	0.91	Accepted
12.	my parents are worried anytime I fail school work.	187	163	19	11	3.38	0.72	Accepted
Cluster mean						2.97	0.90	Accepted

Data presented in Table 3, show that the mean ratings of items 9-12 are 2.96, 2.48, 3.04 and 3.38 respectively with the corresponding standard deviations of 0.98, 0.98, 0.91, and 0.72. Based on the cut-off point of 2.50, the respondents rated items 9, 11, and 12 as accepted. The cluster mean of 2.97 with the standard deviations of 0.90 was also found to be above the cut-off point of 2.50. This implies that parental encouragement influences the educational achievement of the students.

Hypotheses Testing

In testing the hypotheses, the chi-square (χ^2) test of goodness of fit was used to test the options of respondents at 0.05 level of significance for which the results are presented on Tables 4 to 6.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents have interests on their academic performance and those whose parents do not have interest on their academic performance.

Table 4. Chi-square test of the difference between academic performance of students whose parents have interests on their academic performance and those students whose parents do not have interest on their academic performance.

Opinions	Observed frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -tab	Decision
Good occupation	107(28%)	190(50%)	1	0.05	85.20	3.84	Ho
Poor occupation	273(72%)	190(50%)					Rejected

Values in parentheses are percentages ($\chi^2 = 85.20$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.05 > 0.00$)

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of chi-square that was used to test the difference between academic performance of those students whose parents have interest on their academic performance and those students whose parents do not have interest on their academic performance. The results show that 72% of the students agreed that there is a difference between academic performance of students whose parents have interest and those whose parents do not have interest.

The Chi-square calculated value of 85.20 was greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents have interest on their academic performance and those whose parents do not have interest on their academic performance.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the academic performance of the students from large family and students from small family size.

Table 5. Chi-square test of the difference between the academic performance of students from large family and those from small family.

Opinions	Observed frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -tab	Decision
Large family	97(26%)	190(50%)	1	0.05	99.39	3.84	Ho
Small family	283(74%)	190(50%)					Rejected

Values in parentheses are percentages ($\chi^2 = 99.39$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.05 > 0.00$)

Table 5 show the chi-square test of the difference between the academic performance of students from large family and those from small family. The results show that 74% of the students agreed that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students from large family and those from small family.

The Chi-square calculated value of 99.39 was greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at 1 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of the students from large family and those from small family.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents encourage to learn at home and those whose parents do not.

Table 6. Chi-square test of the difference between the academic performance of students whose parents encourage to learn at home and those whose parent do not.

Opinions	Observed frequency	Expected Frequency	df	Level of sig	χ^2 -cal	χ^2 -tab	Decision
Encouraged by parents	133(35%)	190(50%)	1	0.05	74.25	3.84	Ho
Not encouraged by parents	247(65%)	190(50%)					Rejected

Values in parentheses are percentages ($\chi^2 = 74.25$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.05 > 0.00$)

Table 6 show the chi-square test of the difference between the academic performance of students whose parents encouraged to learn at home and those who did not. The results show that 65% of the students agreed that there is difference between the academic performance of students whose parents encouraged to learn at home and those whose parents did not.

The Chi-square calculated value of 74.25 was greater than the chi-square table value of 3.84 checked at 0.05 level of significance and at 1degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents encourage to learn at home and those whose parents do not.

Discussion of findings

From the results of the analysis of the three research questions and testing of the three research hypotheses of this study, the findings are organized and discussed here.

The first finding of the study reveals that 72% of the students agreed that there is difference between academic performance of students whose parents have interest on their academic performance and those whose parents do not have interest on their academic performance. This implies that there is a significant difference between academic performance of those students whose parents have interests on their academic performance and those students whose parents do not have interest on their academic performance. This finding is in consonance with the opinions of Godwin (2010) that children that their parents show much interest in their education always have the urge to excel in academics while those that their parents show little or no interest in their education, generally, have a tendency to develop apathy towards schooling and learning.

The second finding reveals that 74% of the students agreed that there is a difference between the academic performance of the students from large family and those from small family. This implies that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of the students from large family and those from small family. Children who come from large families are less motivated to do well in their school careers than those who come from small family. This agreed with the findings of Barry (2006), who declared that, Children who come from large families are less motivated to do well in their school career.

The third finding revealed that 65% of the students agreed that there is difference between the academic performance of students whose parents encourage them to learn at home and those do not encourage these children to learn at home. This implies that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents encourage them to learn at home and those whose parents do not encourage. This finding is in consonance with the opinions of Ziglet & Child (2001) who observe that children that perform well academically in school are those children whose parents show a lot of interest in and encouragement for learning at home.

Conclusion

Role of parental influence on academic performance: a case of students in schools is presented. Results of the present study show that there is a significant difference between those students whose parents have interests and those students whose parents do not have interest on their academic performance, between students from large family and students from small family; between students whose parents encourage to learn at home and those whose parents do not encourage to learn at home in secondary schools in the study area. Based on the findings, the study recommends that parents' whose occupational position is low should not be discouraged from taking care of their wards or children but continue to give the necessary assistance to their children to excel in their academics. At the same time, children from such families should not look at themselves as inferior but continue to put in more efforts in their academics.

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