EFFECTS OF PARENTS’ LITERACY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL IN POTISKUM LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, YOBE STATE

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Abstract

The effects of parents' literacy and socio-economic status on students' academic performance in some selected secondary schools within Potiskum local government area of Yobe state is investigated. Samples were obtained with one hundred (100) students and sixty (60) teachers randomly selected from four secondary schools. The students’ were asked through structured interview, while the teachers were through questionnaire and their responses were obtained. The four factors that were examined and statistically analysed were: Parental income level, parental educational status, health and nutrition. Stratified random samplings were performed in order for each student to have equal chance of being selected. The findings showed that there is a positive correlation between some of the parents’ literacy and level socio-economic status and the students’ class performances. Students who were provided with learning materials, are emotionally intact, eats to satisfaction, had good parenting and performs better academically than students who were not provided with learning materials, and/or come from poor family background.

The issue of parent’s literacy and socio-economic status and their relationship with the academic performance of a student is more complex. The socio-economic status of a family is usually linked with the family's income, parent's educational level, parent's occupation and the social status of other relatives. This logic is safe to create great parental influences on the student's school performance. Education is a very vital in the human existence because the society and education are interrelated and interdependent. This can also be seen in the nature and development of a child born in a given society. The school is an umbrella governing the background of children from different parental social and economic status and as such, the children's learning and rate of academic development is closely related to other experience. The responsibility of training a child always lies in the hands of the parents. This is congruent with the common assertion of sociologist that education can be an instrument of change which is being taught from home is relevant in this discuss. It is not out of place to imagine that...
parental socio-economic background can have possible effects or the academic achievement of their children in school, whatsoever affect the development environment of children would possibly affect their education or disposition to it. When a woman's nutritional-status improves, so too does the nutrition of her young children. Parents of different of occupation classes often have different styles of child rearing, different ways of disciplining their children and different ways of reacting to their children. These differences do not express themselves consistently as expected in the case of every family; rather they influence the average tendencies of families for different occupational classes… (Rothstein, 2004).

In line with the above assertion, Hill et’al (2004) had also argued that socio-economic status of parents do not affect the academic performance, but, also makes it possible for children from low socio-economic background to compete well with their counterparts from high socio-economic background under the, same academic environment, Parents with high literacy level and socio-economic status often have more success in preparing their children for school because they typically have access to a wide range of resources to promote and support status. Poor resources could not promote and support children’s development and readiness. According to Laosa (2005:5), the educational achievement gap has deep root; it is evident very early in child's lives even before they enter schools. Socio-economic differences- such as health and nutrition status, home environments that provide access to academically related experiences, mobility rates, and financial assets can certainly influence academic achievements.

The health status of the children which could also be traceable to parental literacy level and socio-economic background can be another factor that can affect the academic performance of the students; Adewale (2002) had reported that in a rural community where nutritional status is relatively low and health problems are prevalent, children academic performance is greatly hindered. This assertion is again hinged on nature of parental socio-economic background.

The growth and development of every society is linked to her 'children who are considered as the future generation and leaders. Apparently, the growth and development of these futures is influenced by various factor~ including the home, community, parents and friends among others. Education is the best legacy a nation can give to her citizens especially the youth. This is because the development of any nation or community depends largely on the quality of education of such nation. It is generally believed that the basis for any true development must commence with the development of human resources. Much then, is said that formal education remains the vehicle for literacy level and socio-economic, psychological and environmental development of
any society. When we come to think of students, they are the ones who learn ideas to become more responsible and productive someone. There is increasing demand for good education but its standard seems to be declining and this is why our educational system is now living in its former glory. Those who are dedicated and focused might not have the pre-requisite learning behaviour because they never know what to do. The introduction of neighbouring day schools in most part of Potiskum local government gave rise to mass enrolment of students in the area, The system made it possible for students to go to school from their respective homes.

Many of our present day students are no more interested in hard work as a means of achieving academic objectives. Those who are interested, dedicated and focused are faced with a lot of domestic core, by thy time they finish them, they are already tired and weak and cannot cope with their academic for that day. Academic work demands hundred percent attention while receiving lesson or during personal study at home. Most of these students study in an unconducive environment especially at home. Some parents/sponsors do not ask for the results of their children at the end of any academic session. Students from such homes are usually care free to be monitored.

Students from the rich and the poor, especially those from some selected secondary schools in Nguru local government are affected by myriad of factors. Examples of those factors are socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. Socio-economic factors are believed to be the common and most known factor affecting students’ academic performance. Children suffer due to what is called the 'socio-economic gap' between the families. The continued widening gap between the rich and the poor classes led to the disappearance of the so called 'middle class'. The children of the rich either go schooling overseas or attends the most expensive private schools while the children of the poor have no, other option, but to go to neglected public schools and sit on the bare floor at the mercy of the ram and the sun, sometimes under the trees. It is within this milieu that this study examines the effects of parents’ socioeconomic status on the academic performance of their children in secondary schools.

The effects of parent’s level of education and socio-economic status on the academic performance of their children have been posing a very serious problem to many people in our society. It is argued in some quarters that children from rich parents perform better academically than those from poor parental background in the classroom situation. But some people hold the opposite view by arguing that most of the children from rich families are way-wards in school academically than children from poor and average families. It is also discovered that in some corner of the society, our educational system is often criticized by parents. Most of the parents pointing out that the standard
of education has fallen, some attributed it to teachers attitude and the school.

This research work is premised on this erroneous thinking and misconception in our society. The researcher is therefore poised to make findings to determine whose child performs better academically and what are the causative agents to this. The researcher will also find solution to the problems and suggest ways and methods. to eradicate or improve upon the situation for the benefit of students, parents, schools, educators, government and the society as well.

Objectives of the Study
This study was being undertaken with the following objectives;

i. To find out the effect of parents' income level on students academic performance.
ii. To determine their effect of parental educational status on children academic performance.
iii. To find out the effect of nutrition on students academic performance.
iv. To determine the effect of health status on students' academic performance.
v. To determine the effect of parenting style on students' academic performance.

Research Questions I
The following research questions have been formulated to guide the study;

1. What are the effects of parent income level on students academic performance?
2. Do parental educational status has any effect on students’ academic performance?
3. What are the effects of nutrition on students’ academic performance?
4. Do health status has any effect on students academic performance?
5. What is the effect of parenting style on students academic performance?

Research Hypotheses
The following hypotheses have been formulated for the study:

1. Ho: Parental socio-economic status does not have significant effect on the academic performance of their children

2. Hi: Parental socio-economic status have significant effect on academic performance of their children.

Methodology
In this research, the effects of parental socio-economic status on the performance of students in some selected secondary schools in Potiskum Local government Area of Yobe State were examined. In the research; students were sampled and administered a designed Structured questions for interview. Responses to the questions asked, and the
collected data were organised and analysed using statistical procedures.

**Research Design**

The study was correlational, because, the study sought to establish the extent of relationship between the independent variables (parents' socio-economic statuses) and the dependent variable (academic performance).

**Population and Sample of the Study**

The population of the study consists of all the secondary schools in Potiskum local government area of Yobe State. There are twenty two secondary schools spread across Potiskum local government area. This local government area has concentration of secondary schools in the state.

The researcher selected four secondary schools with a total population of 9175 which 4614 were male students and 4561 were female students. In each of these four secondary schools, twenty five (25) students were taken at random, making the students sample to be one hundred (100). And teachers are also taken at random at the rate of fifteen (15) teachers from each of the four (4) selected secondary schools, making the number of teachers to be sixty (60).

**Number of Students and Schools in the Study**

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<td><strong>21</strong></td>
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**Sampling Technique**

It was observed that certain schools in the sample are either males (boys) and females (girls) only or co-educational (mixed). The researcher then, adopted the use of Stratified Random Sampling (SRS) by sharing the schools on its basis to three groups of which one school is for the boys only, one for the 'girls only and the other two for the
both Sexes (mixed). However, in the selected mixed schools, both sexes were used. This was done to maintain an equal distribution of sample.

**Research Instruments**

The instruments used was a questionnaire, interview and students CA record book. The first two instruments; Questionnaire and interview was designed to elicit information from teachers and the students on the relationship between parental socio-economic and the academic performance of the students.

**Interview Guide**

The interview concerned only the students. This is so because, some of the sampled students may not appropriately fill the questions given to them on questionnaire for that reason, the researcher set structured questions for interview. It consists of eighteen (18) questions related to the study. The interview was verbal (face-to-face).

**Questionnaire Guide**

The questionnaire was designed for the teachers only. The questionnaire included only alternative questions where the respondents had to choose only from the alternative levels of YES or NO and the liken scale ranking. The questionnaire was made up of eight (8) questions related to the study.

**Procedure of Data Collection**

The researcher with the help of a friend (Potiskum resident) and some teachers from the selected schools administered the instruments so as to ensure orderliness and honesty. Instruments on how to fill the questionnaire followed their distribution. The respondents filled the questionnaires immediately and returned them on the spot.

However, the, interviewer repeated and explained a question(s) where it became necessary to ensure that the respondents (students) had properly understood what was required of them. In addition, the interview asked for clarification to responses found to be vague, ambiguous or not to the point. All the responses, obtained from the sampled population were recorded.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Data generated from the study were analysed using summary statistics involving frequency tables showing categories and percentages and ordinary least square approach.
Summary

The study was attempted to investigate the effects of parental socio-economic status on students' academic performance. Based on these research findings, it can be reasonably confirmed that parents' level of income and educational status have not significant factors in students' academic performance. However, health and nutritional statuses are significant factors that affect the academic performance of students. The two former factors (parents' income and educational status) are not significant factors, because it could be that the parents that were with low income and are illiterate or semi-illiterate might be sufficiently enlightened about the needed success of their children education; in such a case, they assist and encourage their children to be adequately involved in their academic activities and hence provide them with basic needs that might enhance their performance. Again, since the research was conducted in rural community, both the categories (high and low socio-economic families) knew each other and educating the children becomes competitive to close gap of disparity among the children in the same community.

Contrarily, the other two latter factors (nutrition and health) found to be significant. With adequate nutrition and sound health status, children would be able to perform well in schools. No matter how that child has the cognitive ability, if he or she lack the adequate diet and suffers from ill health, his or her academic performance is greatly hindered.

Conclusions

Parents have been the major persons involved in raising children in every society, That is why the family is recognized as an important agent of socialization. It is mainly through their efforts and abilities that children are socialized to become productive citizens. It is a fact that parental background influences students' academic performance .either positively or negatively. The primary function of parents is the rearing-and protection of children and passing on to them the values and beliefs of the society. It is also the responsibility of the parents to provide their children with shelter, food education, security, and personal development. The level of educational attainment of parents influences the academic achievement of their children. For instance, in a family where both father and mother are educated, their children are always taken good care of in their academic activities. They may go through their children's exercise books after school, or even employed a private teacher to teach them after school.

Prior to the findings of this research study, it was found that most of the students from low socio-economic families perform relatively well. It could be said therefore that to a great extent, not only the nutrition, provision of learning materials, parents' income level, parent educational status and the nature of parenting style, but
handedness (cognitive heredity) have a greater influence on the students’ performance at school. Children do inherit intelligence from their parents and therefore, they will perform better in schools whether their parents are of higher or lower social and economic status. This is because parental cognitive ability was substantially associated with offspring. Also, parents from lower socio-economic background might have higher level of involvement in their children educational activities at home. This involvement might led to the children’s higher achievement scores in reading and writing as in higher report card grades. It was also observed that nutrition had a strong association with academic performance, Students who eat food three times daily, eat before going to school/class and had snacks at break time, performs creditably well than those who eats two times and had no snacks at break time.

However, a sound parenting style and child-rearing practice is associated with academic performance. Children who had good upbringing might have higher, academic scores and are socially adjusted individuals. Parents of democratic nature might probably have Children that scores high grades in school. This goes .with the level of encouragement and motivations toward the children's education by their parents.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this research work, certain recommendations made toward improving students' academic performance. These include the following:

i. For the parents, more efforts are needed both from high and low socio-economic groups in ensuring that adequate facilities are provided in the home.

ii. For the government, there is need to consider those uneducated parents by extending Adult literacy campaign and programme in order to create an awareness and upgrade such parents.

iii. Parents should actively involved in supervising students' academic work at home.

iv. Parents should be sensitized on the need to make education of their children and wards a priority in the face of the present economic predicament by adequately providing for their school materials. Religious leaders and preachers' as well as Ministry of Women and Social Development including Non-governments (NGOs) should organise regular seminars to educate parents on the importance of good child rearing and the need to maintain intact families to enhance students academic performance and healthy development.

v. Social and economic policies should be put in place to enable children from low economic status to have equal opportunity of advancing the cause of education of
their children.

vi. Health care facilities should be provided for lower class children in order to bridge the inequality in health statuses among the children of the two different classes.

vii. Teaching materials like charts, maps, textbooks, flannel boards should be provided in large quantity to the schools to enhance equal opportunity of learning.

viii. The need for the intake of balance diet should be emphasized. The government can do a lot in this regard by providing adequate meal for the school-age children.

ix. Poor students should be provided scholarships, free books and other educational stationeries.

x. Students should belong to study groups in the schools so that they can exchange idea that will help them to excel in their academics.

Suggestion for Further Studies

This study work had taken into consideration some parental socio-economic status such as parents' income, parents' educational status, nutrition and health status of students, parents' occupation and parenting style. It was therefore, in the course of this research study that some other socio-economic statuses were found. These factors are; Family size, parents' tribe and home environment.

Therefore, it is suggested that further study(s) should be conducted on the above mentioned factors in order to know whether they have any effect on the academic performance of children.

References


