Gender, Parents' Job-Type and Family Size as Determinants of Junior Secondary School Students' Academic Performance

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Abstract

This study examined gender, parents' job type and family size as determinants of academic performance of selected junior secondary school students in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested. The study was descriptive in nature using survey research design. Four hundred (400) students formed the sample of the study. The respondents were randomly selected from eight (8) Junior secondary schools from the study area. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection and it consisted of two (2) sections. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Multiple Regression analysis was used in analysing the hypotheses. Findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between gender and academic performance; parents' job type and students' academic performance, but students' academic performance is influenced by their family size which is the only predictor.Furthermore, there was no significant combined contributions of gender, parents' job type and family size to the prediction of academic performance. Based on the various findings, it was recommended among others that parents are advised to focus their attention on the education of their children irrespective of the number of children in the family. There must be collaborative partnerships between schools, parents and relevant stakeholders in providing quality education with the aim of achieving academic excellence.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Business Studies, Family, Family Size, Gender, Junior School Students, Parents Involvement, Parents' Job-Type, Prediction, Secondary Schools

Introduction

There is an increasing interest in the study of gender, parental issues and family size as they affect academic performance. Academic performance (most especially of secondary school students) has been largely associated with many factors. Most students in secondary schools in Nigeria are daily confronted with challenges of coping with their academics under serious emotional strains occasioned by long walk to school, poor school environment and being taught by unmotivated teachers. Coupled with this, is an uncooperative attitude of parents who more often than not fail to provide for the needs of the family. These definitely do not augur well for academic success.

Gender is a range of characteristics distinguishing between male /masculinity and female/femininity, particularly in the cases of men and women. In the context of this, the discriminating characteristics vary from sex to social role to gender identity. However, one of the most controversial debates is the influence of gender on academic achievement. Rampacher and Peterson (1999) analysed the effect of gender on students' performance in adjustive technique classes and concluded that no statistically significant difference was found between the adjustive performance of male and female students. Mondoh (2001) argues that people differ in learning according to how they perceive and process reality. According to him, males and females have their own unique cognitive styles that may affect understanding and academic performance.

Parents are culturally referred to as caretakers of their off-springs or wards. Among humans, a parent is the mother or father figure of a child (where child refers to off-spring, not necessarily by age). Children can have one or more parents, but they must have two biological parents.

On parental involvement and achievement, studies have shown that these two constructs seem to be positively related as parents' involvement in the education of their children has been found to be of benefit to parents, children, and schools (Tella & Tella, 2003; Campbell, 1995; Rich, 1987). Ransinki and Fredrick (1985) concluded that parents play invaluable roles in establishing the foundation for their children's learning. Zang and Carrasquillo (1995) also remarked that when children are surrounded by caring, capable parents and are able to enjoy nurturing and moderate competitive kinship, a foundation for literacy is built with no difficulty.

The influence of family size, income on the academic achievement of students cannot be overemphasized especially in developing countries. Literatures have shown that inequalities in the educational participation have direct consequence on household decisions as to which child is to be sent to school; these decisions are influenced by different factors. Consideration of the return to schooling, status attainment, and children's endowment are the most powerful driving forces that influence parent's decisions concerning children's schooling (Becker & Thomes, 1976; Becker, 1968). However, these choices have often been constrained by the limited financial resources available to parents (Colclough & Lewin, 1993; Schultz, 1993; Lloyd & Blanc, 1996). Uninterestingly, in developing countries, families with a large number of children limit parental choice of providing education for all their children (Knodel, 1990; Parish & Willis, 1993). Despite the general acceptance of this perspective, the applicability to the actual situations differs from one context to another. With all these, one can imagine the extent to which each of these variables affect students' academic performance in Nigeria.

Hence, there is need to assess the impact of these variables on academic performance. Anyanwu (2004) opined that there are literatures on the effect of motivation on learning outcome. A number of these studies have also been carried out on the impact of gender, parental involvement and teachers characteristics on academic performance, while little has been examined about its relation to household and income (Amin, Rai & Topa, 2003). This study is a contribution to this important but relatively less researched area of human life and how the standard of education can be raised in Nigeria.

Incontrovertibly, academic performance is affected by a host of factors. These include individual and household characteristics such as students' ability, motivation, the quality of secondary education obtained and the likes. The gender of the student may also be a factor in determining students' performance, childhood training and experience, gender differences in attitudes, parental and teacher expectations and behaviours, differential course taking and biological differences between the sexes may all be instrumental to gender differences in achievement (Feingold, 1988). Akande (2007) researched socio-economic factors influencing students' academic performance in Nigeria using some explanations from a local survey. The study revealed that insufficient parental income, family type and lack of funding by government are factors influencing students' academic performance. Ijaiye (1998) contended that the desire for better quality of education is a generally shared feeling in Nigeria as in many other countries. Though quality production is the responsibility of all stakeholders, while the schools, in particular, play key role in the quality control process. The traditional practices of quality control through school inspection, auditing and monitoring are mere retroactive actions taken after possible damage had been done. Another source of worry is the sensitisation of parents toward their children's education. It was observed that parent's involvement actually declines as students grow older and become less in secondary schools as compared with the elementary level. There are many problems associated with such involvement. Many secondary schools simply do not know how to deal with the non-traditional family and the areas of concern that it represents. Parents feel un-welcomed at school, lack of knowledge and education, and may not feel that education is important. The lack of parent involvement is therefore evidence on the middle school level, unemployment, unqualified academic staff and students' attitude.

It is on this premise that this study examined gender, parents' job type and family size as they determine the academic performance of students in some selected junior secondary schools in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. It is thus hypothesized that:

1. There is no significant relationship among gender, parents' job type, family size and academic performance of students in Business Studies.
2. There is no significant relative contribution of gender, parents' job type and family size in determining the academic performance of students in Business Studies.
3. Gender, parents' job type and family size will not significantly combine to determine academic performance of students in Business studies.

Method

Design

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design because the variables being studied had occurred and were not manipulated by the researcher.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The population for this study consists of all the junior secondary school students in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State. The sample for the research was drawn from eight (8) randomly selected schools. Fifty (50) students were randomly selected from each school making a total of four hundred (400) students.

Instrumentation

A self-constructed questionnaire based on 4-point Likert type was used to gather data from the participants in the study. The questionnaire tagged Gender, Parents' Job Type and Family Size Questionnaire (GPJTFSQ). The instrument had reliability co-efficient of 0.81. Experts in the area of psychometrics assisted in the face and content validation of instrument. The instrument was developed to elicit response from the participants on both independent and dependent variables. The instrument consists of two sections: Section A elicits demographic data from the subjects such as gender, name of school, parents' job type, family size, and parents' income. Section B consists of items on the dependent variable with response ranging from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3) to Strongly Agree (4).

Procedure

The instrument was personally administered to the participants in the study. The researcher first made an effort to explain the purpose of the questionnaire to the students before they were given out. After filling the questionnaire, they were immediately collected from the respondents.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from this study was subjected to statistical analysis using descriptive Statistics (mean and standard deviation), Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Regression Analysis, significant at 5% error margin (0.05 alpha level of significance).

Results

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship among gender, parents' job type, family size, and academic performance of students in Business Studies.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Matrix of Dependent and Independent Variables

	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4
1. Academic Performance	50.0931	5.20023	1.000	.003	-.037	.108*
2. Gender	1.64	.481	.003	1.000	.003	.018
3. Parents' job type	8.13	7.166	-.037	.003	1.000	.013
4. Family size	2.02	.723	.108*	.018	0.13	1.000

***significant at 0.05 level (2 tailed)**

Results in Table 1 revealed relationship among gender, parents' job type, family size and academic performance. There is no significant relationship between gender and academic performance (r=.003; P> .05). The Hypothesis which stated that there a significant relationship between students' gender and their academic performance is therefore answered in the negative as there was no significant relationship. This means that students' academic performance is not related to their gender. Also, parents' job type and academic performance are not related (r=-.037; P> .05). This means that parents' job type and students' academic performance are not related. However, there is a significant relationship between family size and academic performance (r= .108; P<.05).

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relative contribution of gender, parents' job type, and family size in determining the academic performance of students in Business studies.

Table 2: Coefficients and t Ratio for Relative Contribution of Gender, Parents' Job Type and Family Size in Determining the Academic Performance of Students

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t-ratio	Sig
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	48.716	1.183		41.177	.000
Gender	0.13	.534	.001	.025	.980
Parents' job type	-.028	.036	-.038	.773	.440
Family size	.783	.355	.109	2.204	.028

a. Dependent Variable: Academic performance.

The results in Table 2 above revealed that out of gender, parents' job type, and family size, it was only family size that predicted academic performance (β =.109 t= 2.204; p< .05). Gender (β = .025; t = .980; p> .05) and parents' job type (β = -.773; t = .440; p> .05) are not good predictors of students' academic performance. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relative contribution of gender, parents' job type, and family size on academic performance of students in Business Studies was by this finding accepted.

Hypothesis Three: Gender, parents' job type, and family size will not significantly combine to the prediction of academic performance of students in Business Studies.

Table 3: Model Summary and Analysis of Variance of the Combined Contributions of Gender, Parents' Job-Type and Family Size to the Prediction of Academic Performance of Students

Regression		Analysis of Variance				
Analysis	Source	SS	Df	MS	F.	Sig
R=0.115	Regression	145.553	3	48.518	1.805	0.146[a]
R^2 =.013	Residual	10861.130	404	26.884		
Adj. R^2=.006	Total	11006.683	407			
SE= 5.18498						

a. Predictors: (Constant), Family Size, Parents' job type, Gender.
b. Dependent Variable: academic performance.

The results in Table 3 indicates that there is no significant combined contributions of gender, parents' job type and family size to the prediction of academic performance (R=115; R Square = .013; Adjusted R Square= .006; $F_{(3.404)}$= 1.805; p > .05). The hypothesis which stated that gender, parents' job type, and family size will not significantly combine to determine academic performance of students in Business Studies was by this finding accepted. In effect, gender, parents' job type, and family size do not combine to significantly determine academic performance of students in Business Studies.

Discussion

The first hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship among gender, parents' job type, family size and academic performance of students in Business Studies was by the results of the analysis accepted. The result in Table 1 revealed that no significant relationship was observed between gender and academic performance on one hand, also parents' job type and students' academic performance on the other hand. There was however, a significant correlation between family size and academic performance. This implies that students' academic performance is not related to their gender. This is in consonance with the finding of Ann-Rampacher and Peterson (1999) that discovered in their study of the effect of gender on students' performance in adjective technique of classes that there was no statistically significant difference between the adjective performance of male and female students. On the contrary, Mondoh (2001) argued that people differ in learning according to how they perceive and process reality. He further asserted that males and females have their own unique cognitive styles that may affect understanding and academic performance. Halpern (2000) affirms that researches in the area of gender difference have shown very few true differences between Mathematics and verbal abilities between man and women. Moreover, it is worthy of note that studies on gender factor in education abound and that there exists gender gaps in students' performance in commercial and science subjects Mills,1993; Balogun,1994; Ogunkola, 2000; Alebiosu, 2003). The divergent views of this phenomenon make it a dynamic subject for further study.

The implication of the findings is that there is no significant relationship among two independent variables (gender and parents' job type) and the dependent variable (academic performance). However, family size was found to have a strong correlation with academic performance.

The second hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relative contribution of gender, parents' job type, and family size in determining the academic performance of students in Business Studies was accepted. The results in Table 2 further revealed that among gender, parents' job type and family size, it was only family size that determined academic performance. Adegboye (1998) underpins this empirical evidence by reporting that there is no significant gender difference in students' performance. Also, Naderi, Abdullah, Aizan, Sharir and Kumar (2009) in their study on a study of creativity, age and gender as predictors of academic achievement reported that males and females did not differ significantly on CGPA (t= -1.167 and sig=.295). while Fuller (1996), Parish and Wills (1993) are of the opinions that a family with a large number of children may limit parental choice to provide education for all their children. Makewa, Role and Otewa found a correlation coefficient of (-0.007) family size with child performance with corresponding p-value of 0.896 which made family size not statistically and significantly correlated with child performance and opined that the difference observed occurred by chance.

However, when these children are left uncared/ catered for, their academic performance is likely to be affected negatively. The larger the family the less the attention and devotion to each child by the parent and the more the difficulties encountered by the parents in meeting the physical and emotional needs of the children particularly in this era of economic crunch where prices of goods/services are skyrocketing and GDP of many countries is nose-diving.

Cherian (1990) reported a differed position by discovering a negative relationship between family size of children and their achievement. It was noted that the achievement and adjustment of students are influenced by many people, processes and institutions. Parents, the larger family, peer groups, neighbourhood influences, schools churches etc. are all factors that can shape the children's behaviour and progress towards achieving success in life. The result of this analysis revealed that there was no significant contribution of parents'job type and students'academic performance. This means that the parents' job type do not have effect on students' academic performance. Although, Barnett and Hyde (2001) reported that there is the possibility that employment may reduce the amount of time and energy Japanese women have for interacting with their children and becoming involved in their schooling. Alternatively, employment may boost women's support for children's schooling by making financial resources available for lessons and materials. Barnett and Hyde (2001) further reported that involvement in the workplace may bring opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge as well as increased self-confidence, all of which mothers can bring to the fore in their interaction with their children and with school staff.

The third hypothesis which stated that gender, parents' job-type and family size will not significantly combine to determine academic performance of students in Business Studies was by this findings accepted. This means that gender, parents' job and family size will not have a composite contribution in determining academic performance of students in Business Studies. The thrust of this finding is that if two of the independent variables (gender and parents' job-type) could not relatively determine academic performance, the inclusion of the family-size would not be a strong predictor in influencing the significant contribution of other predictors on academic performance. Moreover, smaller family size has been linked with higher academic achievement (Eamon, 2005), while children from families with fewer siblings are likely to receive more parental attention and have more access to resources than children form large families. According to Alexander, Entwisle and Bedinger (1994), parents of moderate to high income and educational background held beliefs and expectations that were closer than those of low-income family in respect of the actual performance of their children. Low-income families instead had higher expectation and performance beliefs that did not correlate with their children's actual school performance.

Conclusion

Researches on academic performance of students is very challenging as reasons for poor academic performance are multi-dimensional ranging from inadequate resources, larger classes, inadequate time allocation, teachers' incompetence, poor students' academic engagement and attitude to learning. Student's achievement is considered a vital indicator of good schooling. Hence, educationists and researchers are constantly and continuously researching into factors that influence students' achievement. This study therefore, concluded that there were no significant relationship between gender and academic performance.

There was no significant difference between parents' job type and students' academic performance. It was also found that there was a significant correlation between family size and academic performance. Also, out of gender, parents' job type and family size, it was only family size that predicted academic performance.

However, this research work just like any other has some limitations. The obvious ones are that the target sampled students was delimited to junior secondary schools in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area only. This could raise the question of the extent to which its findings are generalisable. More samples from other settings and level of secondary education (senior) could included, the results would provide more useful insights into the different mechanisms existing between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Nevertheless, further research in different settings involving other levels of education and demographic variables is needed to clarify this issue of academic performance.

Based on this, future study could cover broader geographical and school research contexts. Also, to compare sample within the same sector, that is, either in public or private secondary schools or other levels of higher education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, Parents are advised to focus their attention on the education of their children irrespective of their number in the family. Appropriate care must be given to them, especially in the area of schooling and academic performance. Government should improve its involvement in the education of the students at all levels of education, which will engender a developed society with productive citizens. Adequate attention should be paid especially to students in public schools. There must be collaborative partnerships between schools, parents and relevant stakeholders in providing quality education with the aim to achieving academic excellence.

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