



Educational Level of Parents on Students' Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools in Abia State

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the influence and impact of parents' educational level on students' academic achievement at the secondary level of education. Numerous researches have been conducted around the world on this aspect but not in Abia State. Even the research that had been done worldwide focused on the socio-economic status of the parents which includes income, education, and occupation as factors influencing children's academic success. The concepts of education, academic performance and its influence were examined. The paper recommends that parents should utilize their high educational level by participating, assisting, and being directly involved in their children's homework, education and activities both at school and at home. Parents of low educational status should as much as possible integrate their relatives, friends and neighbors (privileged to be educated) into the academic upbringing of their children at home. Teachers and administrators should provide feedback to parents concerning the progress of their children. Concerned agencies should initiate programmes to upgrade the literacy of the parents which will eventually affect their children positively.

Keywords: *Educational level, parental education level, achievement, influence of parents, secondary education*

Introduction

Education plays an essential role in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. It is a tool which can be used to train the future generations, to inculcate skills and competencies. The way a child is raised affects not only oneself but the whole society. While growing up, the child spends most of his time at home, and the type of environment he or she is brought in may hamper their cognitive development. In order to help a child grow in good health, parents should come into the picture in shaping the child's character and frame of mind. Education is a primary need in this time of globalization. Education not only gives insight, it grooms the personality, inculcate moral values, add knowledge and give skill. Education is necessary owing to the nature of competition. In every area, highly qualified people are needed. Battle & Machel (2002), indicated that in this era of globalisation and technological revolution, education is considered as the first step in every human endeavour. It plays a fundamental role in the development of human capital and is linked with an

individual wellbeing and opportunities for better living. Education is exclusively used for the development of human beings in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and psychoproduative domains. It also involves a desirable approach in human behaviour through the process of teaching and learning (Kingdom and Maekae, 2013).

It sorts people according to differences in value abilities, channels them into streams of training that develop their skills, and helps them to aspire to various roles that are in keeping with their talent. However, many factors other than the capacity of the student influence his later educational experiences and attainments. These include differences in the level and quality of education available in the country, region or community; difference in access to educational equipment according to their social status, religion, race, and ethnic origins, as well as differences in the willingness and capability of their parents to provide the financial and psychological support necessary for the maximization of their talent

potentials. Comments from educators indicated that, the blame from lack of good performance has been as a result of neglect and carefree attitude toward academic work by student and parent. Home is the first school for a child where they are taught the basic norms and values by the parent before the children leave for the formal education. Safe and conducive environment coupled with adequate learning facilities would help to boost the intellectual and academic capability of the child. Well educated parent would always have the right attitude toward education and provide learning materials such as television, videotapes, novels, and journals that could facilitate the learning process of their children. The motivation of any intelligent child towards learning is being accelerated by the positive influence of their environment while others who lacks motivation are negatively affected.

Research Methodology

The study was carried out in Abia State of Nigeria, and adopted a quantitative approach using questioners as a source of data collection. The study was conducted using the descriptive survey and ex-post facto research designs. The population of the study comprised all the 19,879 junior and 16,314 senior secondary school students in all the one hundred and forty-six (146) junior and senior secondary schools in all the seventeen (17) Local Government Areas (LGA) of Abia State (Abia State Ministry of Education, 2018).

The sample of 495 junior and 495 senior secondary school students (totaling 990 secondary school students) was justifiably drawn from the minimum estimate or benchmark given by the Taro Yamane formula. The data collection comprised sets of questionnaire administered to the students (respondents). The data was analyzed using mean. The mean scores of each of the respondents were computed and the data obtained were subjected to chi-square statistical analyses to ascertain the relationship between student's family status and educational performance.

The Concept of Education

The term education is the process through which individuals are helped to develop their inbuilt potentials to enable them function effectively and contribute their quotas in any societies they belong. Education is dynamic. Its meaning changes from time to time and people also interpret it in different ways.

Education is popularly used among different classes of people that one begins to think that there is a general agreement on what it means.

Shanka – Rao (2013) defined education as the conscious training of young, for the later adoption of the adult roles. He went further to state that by modern convention, education involves the modern training of the younger minds by specialists within the formal organization of the school. Education is exclusively used for the development of human beings in the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and psycho-productive domains. It also involves a desirable approach in human behavior through the process of teaching and learning (Kingdom and Maekae, 2013). Education is also the process through which individuals are helped to develop their inbuilt potentials to enable them function effectively and contributes their quotas in any societies they belong. For Ogbondah (2010), education is a process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social as a social institution of man to satisfy social needs. He argued that this needs are unique to the societies and are addressed in different ways by different societies depending on the particular circumstance a society tired herself. It is an instrument used for the transmission of knowledge either by formal or informal methods. Indeed education is a process and product that reforms society and induces desirable change in behavior patters of individuals (Okorosaye-Orubite, 2008).

Parental education level

Parental educational level refers to the highest educational attainment of parents. It may range from the high school to professional. Parents' levels of education have been regarded as predictors of children's academic achievement. Parents' level of education is part of a larger constellation of psychological and sociological variables influencing children's school outcomes. Level of education influences parents' knowledge, beliefs, values, and goals regarding childrearing, so that a variety of parental behaviors are indirectly related to children's school performance. Students whose parents have higher levels of education may have an enhanced regard for learning, more positive ability beliefs, a stronger work orientation, and more effective learning strategies than the children of parents with lower levels of education.

Academic Performance

Academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has attained their short or long – term educational goals. Completion of educational benchmarks such as secondary school diplomas and bachelor's degrees represent academic performance.

Academic performance is commonly measured through examinations or continuous assessments but there is no general agreement on how it is best evaluated or which aspects are most important-procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as facts.

Furthermore, there are inconclusive results over which individual factors successfully predict academic performance, elements such as test anxiety, environment, motivation, and emotions require consideration when developing models of school achievement.

Secondary Education

Secondary education is an important segment in every person's life. In most countries, it is responsible for the development of the young during their adolescence, the most rapid phase of their physical, mental and emotional growth. It is at this very level, that values and attitudes formed at primary school are more firmly ingrained alongside the acquisition of knowledge and skills. It also serves as a means to potential empowerment for children. Secondary education is the stage of learning following primary education. It is of a six-year duration, and given in two stages, namely, junior and senior, each of which lasts for three years, and between students of 11 and 18 years of age. The junior level of education is the one a child receives immediately after primary education, the aim of which is to provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurship and education advancement. The students write the Basic Education Certificate Examination at the end of this level. The senior secondary school is the level of education received after the junior secondary school which covers another three years after which the students write the West African Senior School Certificate Examination at the end.

Influence of parents' education on students' academic performance

Parental educational level is the characteristic that may affect the parental involvement in an individual's academics, when a parent is not educated, it

influences the ability or willingness for that parent to involve him or herself in child's learning.

Parental educational level is known as a factor positively related to children's academic achievement (Grissmer, Kirby, Berends & Williamson, 1994). The family is the main factor influencing the lives and outcomes of students (Okantey, 2008). The educational level of parents is a powerful factor influencing children's academic success. It has been established that generally, the educational level of parents is greatly connected to the educational attainment of their children (Sarigiani, 1990).

Parents play an immense and significant role in the academic performance of their children. Educated parents would have increased emphasis on educational excellence. Educated parents are equipped by virtue of their education to take cognizance of the fact that parent-student-school-community relationship is important in order to promote educational attainment and academic achievement of their children and so they make the partnership a priority (Okantey, 2008).

Education plays an essential role in the acquisition of knowledge and skills. It is a tool which can be used to train the future generations to inculcate skills and competence. The way a child is raised has an adverse impact not only to oneself but to the whole society. While growing up, the kid invests the vast majority of his energy at home and the kind of condition the person in question is raised in likewise hampers their intellectual turn of events. The inspiration of any smart kid towards learning is being quickened by the positive impacts of their condition while other people who need inspiration are contrarily influenced. Guardians are the primary instructors of their children.

Children who perceived their parents as loving, accepting, encouraging and less controlling' behavioral and psychological less hostile perform better in school and feel more competent. When the parental involvement in educational process is high; students get higher grades, graduation rates are high, better school attendance is realized, increased student motivation to self driven academic orientation is realized (Hountenvilli and Conway 2008). Taught guardians ingrain additionally shrewdness to their children instruction has a critical factor for a kid's future. The offspring of taught Parents are more certain, creative and experienced than the youngsters whose guardians are not instructed.

Children whose parents are highly educated do well in their academics than those with less educated parents. Academic performance is essential to get

promoted to the next level in school and the turning point of the lives of the students is when they got into secondary level of schooling from that stage in order to have a secured life by getting enrolled in tertiary education.

Rana (2015) in his research on parent's educational level on their children's academic performance, discovered that when parents support students 'academics, there will be positive academic performance. Jamila (2009) in his exploration on the impact of parental degree of instruction on understudies' scholastic execution is of the view that when guardians are taught, their kids will exceed expectations academically.

Sarigiani in ukap, (2014) on a paper named "Impact of parent's instructive foundation and study offices on scholarly execution among optional school understudies noticed that parental instructive level or achievement" has been seen as altogether identified with the instructive fulfillment of their youngsters in both country and national examples. The kids from taught homes will in general have higher yearnings and higher instructive plans than their partners. Children from parents with higher educational level tend to do better than the children from less advantaged group. Children in turn are then disadvantaged when their parents have a lower education as well. Purport that parental education level affects parenting style which in turn, affect children's academic success. They added that families with higher educational levels are likely to be more permissive and less strict in parenting. Parental education shows a strong correlation to students' academic achievement.

Dornbrusch et.al found that parent's educational attainment link positively adolescent academic performance. Mothers who have a predisposition to information about school are more likely than less educated mothers to discuss their child's performance. Well educated mothers' expectations levels are higher and they have more demands of academic achievement for their children. Parents who have college degree tend to have higher income and higher educational attainment and their children attend selective colleges more frequently than their first-generation college peers. Parental educational attainment has long term influence on their children's educational attainment. The influence of parental education has an impact on the collage experience of their children. Parents who have higher degree tend to have incomes and higher educational attainment and their children have the privilege to attend good and selected more their peers.

Educated mothers are more likely to adopt parental investment strategies designed to maximize the life chances of the students such as their probability of survival, health and economic success. They are also concerned and knowledgeable about obtaining educational credentials for her children by supervising their school attendance, changing them to better school if the former is not favorable. They also provide lesson teacher when necessary. Educated mothers will provide her child with more useful forms of instruction self-perception, encouragement, interaction and exposure, thus transmitting skills and shaping his or her psychological development in distinctive ways.

Abeya, D.(2018) on his paper “The relationship between parental education and children’s academic performance” found out that children with educated parents are being supportive by their parents in their academics while children lacking educated parents tend not to do well in academics. Gratz et al. (2006) in their work titled the “impact of parent’s background on their children’s education” found out that parents have a huge role on their children’s education since they are their children’s first teachers. Children’s brains are like sponge and absorb in everything surrounding them in the early years of development. Parents with educational background find it easy when preparing their children for school than parents without educational background.

When a student is exposed to learning environment in the home, the better his/her academic achievement. Educated parents help their children to study hard. They help their children to arrange time table for studies and provide a place or make a space for learning, they answer questions that are not clear for children during study. Mutoddi & Ngirande (2014) carried out a research on effect of parental inclusion on understudies' exhibition and discovered that the scholastic execution of understudies relies on the association of guardians in their youngsters' scholarly exercises to achieve the more elevated level of value in scholastic achievement. Khajehpour and Ghazvini (2011) in their examination on parental inclusion influence in youngsters' scholarly presentation is of the view that when guardians truly include themselves in their kids' schoolwork, empower support in extracurricular exercises, assist children with creating plans for their future, kids are bound to react and do well in school. They likewise share that family association which improves part of youngsters' instruction, for example, day by day fulfillment, understudy accomplishment, conduct and inspiration. Hafiz and Wagas (2013) in their examination on parental contribution and scholarly execution of understudies found that

parental association has importance impact in better scholastic execution of their youngsters.

Karshen in Rana, M.et.al (2015) discovered that understudies, whose guardians are instructed, get higher situations than those whose guardians are not taught. Instructed guardians help their kids in school work exercises. Likewise high achievers have a place with homes with parent's higher instructive level, while the bombed understudies have a place with homes whose guardians' instructive level is low. Instructed parent's show enthusiasm for their youngsters' scholarly exhibitions, they meet and co-work with instructive organization to guarantee kids earnestness in their investigations.

Influence of parents' education level on academic performance of students

Rana et al. (2015) undertook a study of the influence of parents' education level on their academic performance of their children in the street of Rajanpur in South Punjab, Pakistan. Rana took as population of his study the students of both private and public secondary schools in that district. He randomly selected 200 students of 10th grade as sample. His instruments of data collection were questionnaires, interviews, and direct personal observation. Rana made a direct documentary analysis of the result of 9th level students. He used the Z-test to compare the mean score of students' performance with high and low level of parental education. His observed Z-value was 3.87. To test the value for significance, he compared it with the critical value at 0.05 level. The value he obtained was greater than the critical value. The result shows that there is significant positive influence of parents' academic background on secondary school students' academic learning.

Li and Qiu (2018) titled his work "How does family background affect children's educational achievement? Evidence from Contemporary China." He proposed three major research hypotheses, namely, 1) "Family socioeconomic status has an important impact on the quality of the educational opportunities that children have access to. The higher the family's socioeconomic status, the higher the qualities of children's educational opportunities attend." 2) "Parental education participation and the quality of children's educational opportunities affect children's learning attitude and behaviour." 3) "Parental participation in children's education and the quality of children's educational opportunities affect their academic achievement."

Li and Qiu collected their data from a Chinese Family Panel Studies of 2010 with the code name of CFPS2010. This CFPS2010 covered 14,960 households in 25 provinces and municipalities in China. The data collection involved three questionnaire surveys each, for Li and Qiu. The research object of the study is children who were between the ages of 10 and 15, and who have compulsory education. The two researchers harmonized the data obtained from the children's questionnaire with the data from the family and parent questionnaires while removing samples containing missing variables. They obtained 2750 cases for analysis. Measurement Family SES is one of the key explanatory variables of their study.

Ogbugo-Ololube (2016) conducted a study on the impact of parents' background on their children's education achievement. One of the objectives of his study was on the influence of parental education on the academic achievement of their children. Ogbugo-Ololube used the correlational research design approach. He used a population of 4752 respondents. He made a sample size of 1,426 senior secondary school (SSS) 2 and 3 students by random sampling. His structured questionnaire was titled Students Parental Background Variable Inventory (SPBVI) and used to collect data from the respondents. He used four research questions and four hypotheses which he adopted for his test. His study was face validated. As he puts it, two experts in educational measurement from the University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt validated the study. Ogbugo-Ololube employed the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) to determine the extent of significant relationship that existed between the independent and dependent variables at 0.05 alpha levels and also to analyze the data and reliability of the instrument. His result showed a positive relationship between the two variables. In other words, there was a positive relationship between parents' educational background and the performance of their children at school. He advised that children should not allow the educational attainment of their parents to be an obstacle to their education; rather it should be employed to their advantage as it is supposed to be naturally. The researcher employed a test re-test method to establish reliability of the research instrument. The Students Parental Background Variable Inventory (SPBVI) was pre-tested through test retest using 45 secondary school students outside the selected schools. The instrument was subjected to Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) statistics, which produced a reliability coefficient of .78. The instrument was therefore found suitable as it tested what

it purports to test. Ogbugo-Ololube concluded that there was significant relationship between parents' educational background and students' academic achievement scores. Students from good educational background tended to achieve more than students whose parents did not attain formal education.

Conclusion

After the correlation between the parents' level of education and the academic achievement of the students, the study found that parental level of education influenced the academic performance of secondary school students in Abia State, irrespective of the parents' positive or negative attitude to education. This finding compliments the finding from other researchers that the status of parents does not only affect the academic performance of students but also makes it impossible for children from low socio-economic background to compete well with their counterparts from high socio economic background under the same academic environment.

Recommendations

1. Parents and guardians are encouraged to utilize their high educational level by directly involving, participating and assisting in their children's homework, education and activities both at school and at home.
2. Parents of low educational status should as much as possible integrate their relatives, friends and neighbors (privileged to be educated) into the academic upbringing of their children at home.
3. Teachers and administrators should provide feedback to parents concerning the progress of their children.

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