



Perceived Influence of Selected Family Variables on Academic Performance of Public Senior Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State: Implications for Counselling

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated perceived influence of selected family variables on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. Population of the study was 47,297 students in all the 37 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State for the 2020/2021 academic session. Sample of the study was 397 SSS 2 students (181 males and 216 females), which was determined using the Taro Yamane's sample size formula. Cluster sampling technique was adopted in selecting the sample for the study. A self-structured instrument titled: "Influence of Family Variables on Academic Performance of Students Questionnaire" was used for data collection. The face and content validity of the instrument was determined by other experts in Guidance and Counselling and Measurement and Evaluation in the Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. Cronbach Alpha was used to obtain reliability coefficients of 0.77 and 0.74 for the two clusters of the instrument. Results showed that: parents' occupation and parents' involvement in children's school activities influences academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis to a high extent as perceived by the respondents. Results also revealed that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent to which parents' occupation and parents' involvement in children's school activities influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. It was recommended that: parents should not allow their occupations to affect their children's academic activities for them to do well in school, and that parents should be fully involved in their children's academics by guiding them in their homework to enable them do well academically.

Keywords

INTRODUCTION

Academic performance is an important issue in the education process of any given society because it reflects what the learners the skills and knowledge that learners have gained, and their ability to accomplish assigned task after being exposed to course of instruction. Academic performance can be seen as the knowledge or skill obtained after being exposed to a given set of instruction or subject curriculum in the school. Babatunde (2015) described academic performance as the behaviours exhibited by an individual (student) which is noticeable after undergoing a programme in a secondary school or a school. Students' academic performance is the final grade which students get after a systematic and comprehensive measurement and evaluation of the individual student in a school setting for the purpose of making decision or judgment on his/her cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains (Ahmodu, Adaramaja & Adeyemi, 2018). Ahmodu, Adaramaja and Adeyemi explained further that the commonly

used method of measuring students' academic performance in school is the result of students in public examinations such West African Examinations Council (WAEC), National Examinations Council (NECO) and National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB), which is used to pass judgment on the schools and teachers. However, the teacher-made test is equally used to measure students' academic performance internally, that is, within a particular class or school. In the context of this study, however, the researcher's focus is not to measure students' academic performance, but to examine the extent to which family factors can influence academic performance as perceived by the students using a questionnaire to elicit data on the subject matter. Academic performance is so important to the students themselves, schools, family and society at large because it reveals how quality the teachers and the teaching resources, are as well as the general standard of the education of the people. More so, it tells much about the trend of overall development of the society. Despite the importance of academic performance in a student's educational and vocational career, Farooq, Chaudry, Shafiq and Berhanu (2011) pointed out that socio-economic status, parents' education and family background can affect academic performance of students in schools. This is to say that the place of family cannot be ruled out in terms of academic performance students in school.

Family is the smallest but all important unit of the larger society where every child receives the first educational training and moral instruction that can help him/her in life to be a good citizen of the society. The family or home is seen as consequential for the child developmental outcomes such as cognitive ability, school readiness, academic achievement and emotional adjustment (Alabi & Oni, 2017). There is no doubt that families are critical in determining the level of academic performance of students at various levels of education, hence the need for this study. This study, however, examined the perceived influence of selected family variables (parents' occupation and parents' involvement in children's education) on academic performance among secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Parents' occupation can be regarded as whatever job parents engage in for a period of time through which they earn a living and provide the basic needs of the family including children's education. Examples of jobs which the parents can do include trading, farming, teaching, transportation, banking, etc. Parents' occupation is critical because it does not only determine the rate at which the parents can provide for the children's education, but it is usually the first kind of occupation which the children would hear about and may first practice as they grow up in life.

In a family for instance where the parents' occupation is trading, the children will practically be exposed to trading to support their parents even before they enter into secondary school and this could make such students not to have enough time to study at home which could affect their performance academically in school. Elechi and Ogbonda (2005) opined that the occupation of parents can affect the academic achievement of students. In support, Summan (2011) revealed that occupation of the parents positively influences the academic achievement of the child, but the impact of mother's occupation is more on the academic achievement of the child as compared to father's occupation. Adiele (2005) asserted that occupational status is an important predictor of educational attainment of children. Ogunshola and Adewale (2012) observed that parents of different occupation classes often have different styles of child rearing, different ways of disciplining their children, and different ways of reacting to their children. This could greatly affect the children academically.

Parents' involvement in children's school activities is another critical family variable when it comes to academic performance of students in school. Parents' involvement in children's school activities refer to the rate at which parents gets to know about or participate in the school matters of their children by way of attending parent-teachers' association meetings, guiding the children through their home works, etc. Parents' involvement in children's school activities occurs in several ways among which include communication with the educators about students' progress (Diji, 2013), checking of children's study notes and report cards, asking children questions concerning their school activities, guiding the students to do their home works, attending the children's open days, PTA meetings and other programmes of the school and making remarks where necessary on the children's performance generally. Diji (2013) reiterated that parents' involvement is an important part of children education and this involvement is

expected to give the students emotional, moral and financial support. William (2014) carried out a meta-analysis drawing from 77 studies, comprising over 300,000 students and reported in one of his findings that parental involvement is associated with higher student achievement outcomes.

Parental involvement is one of the major factors responsible for poor achievement in science hence children whose parents show high level of involvement performs better in their academic tasks than those children whose parents are not involved in school matters (Olatoye & Agbatogun, 2009). Mangal (2012) revealed that there is a significant relationship between academic achievement and parental involvement among higher secondary government schools. Also, Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) reported that parental involvement in the form of at-home good parenting has a significant positive effect on children's achievement and adjustment even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken out of the equation. Ajayi, Oloda and Lawani (2013) reported that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and students' performance. Parents' involvement in children's education is very important because it can help to build the self-confidence of the children and makes them to be in better position to do well in the school academically. The issue of how important the family is or the extent to which the family variable can influence academic performance of students cannot be overemphasized, and it is on this backdrop that conduct of this current study becomes imperative.

Statement of the Problem

Academic performance of students in secondary schools goes a long way in determining the students' future educational and occupational career in life. Hence, it is important the parents to get involved and support their children at home to keep up their studies because according to Alabi and Oni (2017), the family or home is consequential for child developmental outcomes such as cognitive ability, school readiness, academic achievement and emotional adjustment. Family variables could possibly make or mar students' interest in academics because the family is a center for learning and socialization for every human being. However, observations and experiences of the researchers have shown that some parents are not actually meeting up the expectations may be due to the nature of their occupation and social lives. Some students whose parents are into trading are often engaged by their parents before and after school hours, which might not allow them enough time to study at home with its effect of poor academic performance in school. This study sought to empirically reveal the perceived influence of parental occupation and parents' involvement in children's school activities on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State

Aim and objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the perceived influence of selected family variables on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the perceived influence of parents' occupation on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
2. Examine the perceived influence of parents' involvement in children's school activities on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the conduct of the study:

1. To what extent does parents' occupation influence academic performance among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis as perceived by students?
2. To what extent does parents' involvement in children's school activities influence academic performance among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis as perceived by students?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent parents' occupation influence academic performance among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

2. There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent parents' involvement in children's school activities influence academic performance among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

RESEARCH METHODS

Design of the Study

Descriptive survey research design was adopted. Dike (2017) defined descriptive survey research design as an attempt to gather and interpret data about a social institution, an event, a group or an area. The descriptive survey research design was appropriate for this study because the study investigated the perceived influence of selected family variables on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State without the researcher manipulating the variables.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the 47,297 senior secondary school students (21,714 males and 25,583 females) in all the 37 public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State for the 2020/2021 academic session (Rivers State Senior Secondary Schools Board, Port Harcourt, 2021).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample of the study was 397 SSS 2 students (181 males and 216 females) in public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, which was determined using the Taro Yamane's sample size formula. Multi-stage technique was adopted for sample selection which involves the use of cluster and simple random sampling techniques. At first, cluster sampling technique was used to divide or group (cluster) the population of the study into Local Government Areas (i.e. Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt City Councils) and gender (male and female students). After the grouping, simple random sampling technique was used to select 15 schools from Obio/Akpor and 11 schools from Port Harcourt City Local Government Areas for the study. Simple random sampling technique was also used to select 259 SSS 2 students (112 males and 147 females) from the 15 randomly chosen schools out of 21 schools in Obio-Akpor LGA, and 138 SSS 2 students (69 males and 69 females) from the 11 randomly chosen schools out of 16 schools in Port Harcourt City LGA. The observed difference in the numbers of schools and students that was selected in Obio-Akpor and Port Harcourt City Local Government Areas for the study is because the number of schools and students in the two Local Government Areas are not the same. Appendix B presents the sample distribution table.

Research Instrument

The instrument that was used for data collection in this study was a researcher-constructed questionnaire titled: "Influence of Family Variables on Academic Performance of Students Questionnaire" (IFVAPSQ). The instrument consists of sections A and B. Section A centers on the respondents' bio-data, while section B elicits information on the influence of selected family variables on academic performance of students. Section B consists of clusters A (Parents' Occupation and Academic Performance of Students) with 8 items and cluster B (Parents' Involvement in Children's School Activities and Academic Performance of Students) 7 items and both clusters were prepared on a four-point rating scales ranging from Very High Extent (VHE) with 4 points to Very Low Extent (VLE) with 1 point. A weighted average of 2.50 and above was rated as acceptance for the research questions.

Validation of the Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was subjected to face and content validity by two experts in Guidance and Counselling and Educational Measurement and Evaluation in Rivers State University, Nkpulu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt. The experts scrutinized the instrument in terms of its clarity, suitability of the language, content coverage, adequacy and relevance of the items in addressing the research questions and made corrections which formed the basis for the final print out of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to obtain the internal consistency reliability coefficients of the items of the instrument, the researcher administered 30 copies of the instrument on thirty (30) SSS 2 students who were selected from two public senior secondary schools in Ikwerre Local Government Area which is not part of the study area, and the responses of the selected students were recorded and coded. By using the Cronbach Alpha with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25, the instrument yielded the following reliability coefficients: 0.77 for cluster A and 0.74 for cluster B which are high for the study.

Methods of Data Analyses

Mean was used to answer the research questions, while z-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. However, the mean cut-off mark was 2.50; hence items with mean scores of 2.50 and above were accepted. On the other hand, items with mean scores below 2.50 were not accepted. Furthermore, the z-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance because the sample size of the study is large (i.e. $n > 30$) which is a major criterion for the use of z-test statistic for data analysis.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does parents' occupation influence academic performance of Public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis as perceived by respondents?*

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Perceived Influence of Parents' Occupation on Academic Performance of Public Senior Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt Metropolis

S/N	Items	Male Students (n = 180)			Female Students (n = 211)		
		\bar{X}	SD	Remarks	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
1.	Parents' occupation can motivate their children in school to study hard in order to be like them in future	2.70	0.80	High Extent	2.74	0.85	High Extent
2.	Occupation of some parents can give them time to help their children with some difficult home works which can affect them academically	2.72	0.76	High Extent	2.67	0.68	High Extent
3.	The nature of some parents occupation can encourage their children to study hard in school	2.42	0.68	Low Extent	2.47	0.71	Low Extent
4.	Students whose parents' occupations are high income earning do buy all their study materials which could enable them do well in school academically	2.78	0.82	High Extent	2.72	0.75	High Extent
5.	Parents who engage in trade would always want their children to assist them which affects the children's study time as well as their academic performance in school	2.72	0.84	High Extent	2.77	0.78	High Extent
6.	Students who have interest in their father's occupation are likely to do well in subjects related to their father's job	2.85	0.96	High Extent	2.76	0.82	High Extent
7.	Occupation of some parents allow them enough time to know how their children are faring with their school activities	2.78	0.88	High Extent	2.70	0.70	High Extent
8.	Parents' occupation can challenge some children to work hard and perform well in school	2.70	0.82	High Extent	2.62	0.74	High Extent
Grand \bar{X} and SD		2.71		High Extent	2.68		High Extent

Source: Field Data, 2021.

Data in Table 1 revealed that out of the eight items on the extent parents' occupation influence academic performance of senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, the mean ratings of the respondents (male and female students) on seven items (items 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8) are higher than the mean cut-off mark of 2.50, while that of item 3 are lower than the mean cut-off mark of 2.50. With the

grand mean of 2.71 and 2.68 for the male and female students (respondents) which are higher than the mean cut-off mark of 2.50, it was concluded that parents' occupation influences academic performance of senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis to a high extent. More so, the standard deviation (SD) of the items which ranged from 0.68 – 0.96 for male and 0.68 – 0.85 for female respondents signifies that the respondents are close in their responses. Thus, it was deduced that parents' occupation influences academic performance of senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis to a high extent as perceived by the respondents. This result could be due to the fact that school children are most times occupied at home after school with some of the jobs their parents do, especially trading which does not give them enough time to study at home.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does parents' involvement in children's school activities influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis as perceived by respondents?*

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Perceived Influence of Parents' Involvement in Children's School Activities on Academic Performance of Public Senior Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt Metropolis

S/N	Items	Male Students (n = 180)		Remarks	Female Students (n = 211)		Remarks
		\bar{X}	SD		\bar{X}	SD	
9.	Parents who always attend PTA meetings in their children's school encourages the children to actively participate in their school activities for better performance	2.72	0.80	High Extent	2.77	0.85	High Extent
10.	Parents checks their children's school notes regularly which make the children to be serious with their studies in school	2.46	0.70	Low Extent	2.40	0.67	Low Extent
11.	Parents who always revise their children's notes with them during examinations helps the children to do well in school	2.80	0.78	High Extent	2.87	0.88	High Extent
12.	Educated parents do give their children weekend assignments which helps to enhance their academic performance in school	2.86	0.82	High Extent	2.74	0.75	High Extent
13.	Educated parents do discuss with their children issues concerning their school activities, which helps them to be focused in their studies as well as do well academically	2.88	0.80	High Extent	2.80	0.76	High Extent
14.	Involvement of parents in school activities of their children can improve the attendance as well as academic performance of the children	2.77	0.82	High Extent	2.72	0.78	High Extent
15.	Generally, parents' involvement in school issues helps to foster better classroom behaviour, which improves academic performance among students	2.92	0.88	High Extent	2.84	0.79	High Extent
Grand \bar{X} and SD		2.77		High Extent	2.73		High Extent

Source: Field Data, 2021.

Table 2 presents the mean ratings of male and female students (respondents) on the extent parents' involvement in children's school activities influences academic performance of senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. Data in Table 2 shows that except for item 10 with mean ratings of the respondents lower than the mean cut-off mark of 2.50, the mean ratings of the respondents (male and female students) on items 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 are all higher than the mean cut-off mark of 2.50, and

are remarked as high extent. With the grand mean of 2.77 and 2.73 for male and female students which are higher than the mean cut-off mark of 2.50, it was concluded that parents' involvement in children's school activities influences academic performance of senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis to a high extent as perceived by respondents.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent parents' occupation influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Table 3: Z-test Analysis of Differences Mean Ratings of Male and Female Students on the Extent Parents' Occupation Influence Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	α	Remark
Male students	180	2.71	0.82	389	0.500	1.96	0.05	Not Sig.
Female students	211	2.68	0.75					

Source: Field Data, 2021.

Data in Table 3 revealed that at 0.05 level of significance and 389 degree of freedom (df), z-calculated value = 0.500 and z-critical value = 1.96. Since the z-calculated value of 0.500 < z-critical value of 1.96, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent parents' occupation influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis is accepted. Thus, male and female students of senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis are in agreement that parents' occupation influence academic performance of senior secondary school students to a high extent. This result is so probably because the first occupation which students irrespective of their gender hear about or are usually exposed to is that of their parents; hence they would want to do well in school especially in those subjects related to their parents' occupation.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent parents' involvement in children's school activities influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Table 4: Z-test Analysis of Differences Mean Ratings of Male and Female Students on the Extent Parents' Involvement in Children's School Activities Influence Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Port Harcourt Metropolis

Respondents	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	z-cal	z-crit	α	Remark
Male students	180	2.77	0.80	389	0.667	1.96	0.05	Not Sig.
Female students	211	2.73	0.78					

Source: Field Data, 2021.

Results in Table 4 revealed that at the degree of freedom (df) of 389 and 0.05 level of significance, z-calculated value of 0.667 < z-critical value of 1.96. Since the z-calculated value (0.667) < z-critical value (1.96), the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent parents' involvement in children's school activities influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis is accepted. Thus, both male and female students of senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis agreed that parents' involvement in children's school activities influence academic performance to a high extent.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings from the research question one and hypothesis one shows that parents' occupation influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis to a high extent as perceived by the respondents, and that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent parents' occupation influence academic performance among senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This result is so probably because the first occupation which students irrespective of their gender hear about or are usually exposed to is that of their parents; hence they would want to do well in school especially in those subjects related to their parents' occupation. Also, it is common that children even at tender age tends to take after their parents' occupation or profession because their parents' occupation is usually the first type of occupation that rings into their ear which they may have no option than to embrace, and most times, it makes them to do well in school as to be like their father or mother in future. This result is in agreement with Adiele (2005) who noted that the occupational status of parents is an important predictor of educational attainment of children. However, the result of this study disagreed with Yee and Eccles as cited by Akinsanya, Ajayi and Salomi (2011) who observed that the different disciplines engaged in by parents through their various educations have different emphases on the education of their children. This is because parents with very low paying jobs may find it difficult to provide the basic requirements and needs of their children in school. In addition, due to the low paying jobs, the basic need of certain students is not being met, which does not allow the students to physically and mentally be able to properly fed or give proper hygiene care, hence they cannot be expected to perform successfully in their academic.

Findings for research question two and hypothesis two revealed that parents' involvement in children's school activities influences academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis to a high extent as perceived by the respondents, and that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the extent parents' involvement in children's school activities influences academic performance of senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This result is not far from the fact that parents do attend the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings and Open Days of their children's school, as well as asking questions about their school events irrespective of their gender. This result is also because, according to Ferguson (2017), parents promote reading at home, discuss reading materials with their children in ways that encourage children to enjoy learning, and seek opportunities at home to discuss and apply what children are learning in school, among other activities. The finding of this study is supported by Mangal (2012) who revealed that there is a significant relationship of academic achievement in relation to parental involvement among higher secondary government school. Parents can encourage, advice and guide their children in developing positive attitudes towards academics.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study showed that parents' occupation and parents' involvement in children's school activities influences academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis to a high extent as perceived by the respondents. Hence, it can be concluded that parents' occupation and parents' involvement in children's school activities are significant family variables that can determine academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Implications for Counselling

Based on the findings of the study and conclusion drawn, the following are the implications for counselling:

- a. There is need for counselling associations to collaborate with the school owners and managers for the provision of educational and family counselling services to the parents of their students in order to properly guide and educate them about the impact of family factors on their children's academic performance in particular and their education in general.
- b. The school counsellors would be in a better position to draw the attention of the parents to the need for them to be involved in the school activities of their children by way of attending the PTA

meeting, visiting the school management for update on their children's academics, guiding the children in their assignments and projects, etc as to motivate their children to be committed to their studies for better academic performance.

- c. With this study, parents would be encouraged to embrace positive change and avoid allowing their occupations to negatively affect the attendance and learning outcomes of their children in school.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should not allow their occupations to affect their children's academic activities for them to do well in school.
2. Parents should be fully involved in their children's academics by guiding them in their homework to enable them do well academically.

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