

Socio Economic Status as Determinants of Students Achievements in English Language

*OWOLEWA Olusegun Okunnuga, PhD

Department of Arts Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State, Nigeria

OLAGUNDOYE, Olubunmi Christiana, PhD

St. Louis Secondary School, Ondo, Nigeria.

*All correspondence to the asterics

Abstract

The study examined socio economic status as determinants of students' achievements in English language in Ondo State. 320 questionnaires were drawn to elicit information from secondary school students about their parents' educational status. 317 of the questionnaires were duly completed by the respondents using four point Likert scale. Data collected were subjected to frequency counts and simple percentage. Findings showed that only 28.78% of students' fathers had higher education and 22.72% of students' mothers had higher education while a higher percentage of parents belong to low SES. This could have adverse effect on their children as students from low SES may likely not be able to meet their academic needs in the area of availability of English textbooks and other academic materials which could lead to poor performance of students in their final examinations conducted by WAEC and NECO every year. Based on the findings, recommendations were given to enhance better performance of students in English language.

INTRODUCTION

The crucial role which socio economic status such as home background and parents educational status play in child's academic achievement can not be overemphasized. The way and manner parents show concern and get involved in their children's academic pursuit differ. Some parents see education as a legacy which must be given to their children while some see it as an addendum. It is observed that though many students are in schools today but not all are actually equipped for learning. Some parents see it as the responsibility of the government to provide academic materials for their children hence do not bother about the affairs of their children academically. In view of this, such students face such challenges like non-payment of school fees as at the right time, lack of textbooks and other writing materials. While some take the academic pursuit of their children as topmost priority. Since school system is a place where students of different background come together under the same umbrella to learn, there is no doubt that the academic achievements of students would vary.

In recent time, numerous factors have been identified to be responsible for the continuous poor academic performance of students especially in external examinations conducted annually by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and Nigeria Examination Council (NECO). Ondo State Ministry of Education (2012) report of West African Senior School Certificate examination results from 2009-2012 showed a failure rate of 54%, 52.79%, 41.38% & 38% respectively. However, a credit pass in English language together with four other subjects is a prerequisite for admission into institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Hence, the poor performance have made it increasingly difficult for students to gain admission into higher institutions. The poor performance of students in English language could be traced to family background which is linked to parents' educational status and income. There is no iota of doubt that if the parents fail to provide the necessary materials for their children, there is bound to be poor outcome. Observations revealed that in some families, either or non of the parents is educated which may have adverse effect on their income as their income may not be sufficient enough to sustain the family hence, may have influence on the academic performance of such students as they may likely be faced with the challenges of lack of educational materials, not paying school fees promptly. Students need to be exposed to various textbooks so as to build their vocabularies and to widen their horizons in the area of registers. Perna and Titus (2002) declare that family support foreshadows students' achievement. Also, Senechal and Lefevre (2002) assert that parents involvement is very important to students' academic success.

Statement of the problem

The failure rate of secondary school students especially in English language in external examinations conducted annually by WAEC and NECO is alarming. Meanwhile success in English language together with four other subjects is a prerequisite for admission into institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. It is presumed that the parents' socio economic status may influence students' performance which needs to be addressed as education is the vehicle for socio economic and technological advancement of any nation.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive design of a survey type. Questionnaire was drawn adopting Likert-Type four-point scale of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentage.

Three hundred and twenty (320) SS3 students were randomly selected as samples from sixteen (16) schools from Ondo state and questionnaires were administered to elicit information on their parents' educational background of which 317 questionnaires were duly completed. The questionnaire was given face and content value by the experts.

RESULTS

Table 1: Analysis of Educational Status of Students' Parents

Father's education status	F	%	Mother's education status	F	%
No formal education	50	15.77	No formal education	79	24.92
Sec/ Grade II	72	22.71	Sec/Grade II	81	25.55
NCE	104	32.81	NCE	85	26.81
B.SC/B.ED	62	19.56	B.SC/B.ED	56	17.67
Higher Education	29	9.15	Higher Education	16	5.05
Total	317			317	

The results in Table 1 showed fathers' educational status of the respondents. The analysis on father's educational status indicated that 50 (15.77%) had no formal education, 72(22.71%) had attained either secondary education or Grade II, 104(32.81%) had NCE while those that had attained B.SC or BA.ED were 62 representing 19.56% of the population and those who attained higher degree were 29(9.15%). The data also revealed that mothers' educational status of the respondents. The analysis of mothers' educational status indicated that 79(24.93%) had no formal education (25.56%, n =81), (26.82%, n = 85) and (17.67%, n = 56) secondary or grade II, NCE and BA.ED/B.SC respectively while just (5.05%, n =16) had higher degree.

Table 2: Analysis of Parents Qualifications With Low Degree

Fathers' educational status	F	%	Mothers' educational status	F	%
No formal education	50	15.77%	No formal education	79	24.92%
Sec/ Grade II	72	25.71%	Sec/Grade II	81	25.55%
NCE	104	32.81%	NCE	85	26.81%
%	226	71.29%	%	245	77.38%

The findings in table 2 showed the total number of respondents' fathers having low education qualifications. 226(71.29%) fathers were having non or low qualifications while the total of 245(77.38%) mothers were declared to be having no or low qualifications.

Table 3: Analysis of Parents Qualification with High Degree

Fathers' educational status	F	%	Mothers' educational status	F	%
B.SC/BA.ED	62	19.59%	B.SC/BA.ED	56	17.67%
Higher Education	29	9.15%	Higher education	16	5.05%
%	91	28.74%	%	82	22.72%

Table 3 showed the analysis of parent qualifications with high degree. Only 91(28.74%) fathers had high degree while 82(22.72%) mothers had high degree.

Discussion

The study showed that 129(40.69%) of the respondents' parents had no formal education. This is an indication that the income of such parents could be mean and may not be able to sustain them, hence would have influence on the academic achievements of students whose parents are in this category. No wonder many students engage in street hawking and other petty activities to augment the needs of their family members. Luck (1991) asserts that parental educational status is an important indicator for academic achievements and attitude. Also, Krashen (2005) declares that students whose parents are educated score higher on standardized tests than those whose parents were not educated. Educated parents can communicate better with their children regarding school work, activities and the information being taught in the school. They can better assist their children in their and participate at school.

The findings in table 2 revealed that 226(71.29%) fathers and 245(77.28%) mothers were having no or low educational qualifications. This is an indication that a higher percentage of the respondents came from low socio economic background. Gale (2004) asserts that parents with high educational trainings are more involved in their children's educational training and programmes.

The findings in table 3 showed that 91(28.74%) fathers and 82(22.77%) mothers had high educational

qualifications. This is an indication that only a few percentages of the respondents could enjoy parental involvements which could have positive influence on students' academic achievements. Garzon (2006) and Kalhhlenberg (2006) opine that students with high level of SES perform better than students with low level of SES

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore concluded that the general attitude of parents towards academic achievements of their children is not encouraging. This could be traced to poor academic achievements of students that WAEC and NECO record every year as a reasonable percentage of the respondents declared that their parents came from low socio economic background.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parents should endeavour to support their children by providing necessary academic materials that could enhance academic achievements

Parents should desist from engaging their children in street hawking as it takes the valuable part of the time the students supposed to be reading or engaging in other co-curricular activities as Choi (2005) asserts that students' academic achievements could be hindered by family circumstances.

Government should from time to time from time give supports to educational system by supplying current relevant textbooks which would enable students from low SES to have access to academic materials that could influence their achievements.

Government should also endeavor to give scholarship awards from time to time to the less privileged or indigent students so that students from low SES would be able to settle down in school for teaching and learning .

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