

Parents Socio-Economic Status as Predictor of Performance in English Language among Secondary Schools Students

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Abstract

The focus of this study is to showcase the effects of socio-economic status of people in selected Nigeria secondary schools. The highlighted questionnaire looks at the variables in Table 1 in relations to pupils' achievement in English language in school. The study recommends that education should be subsidized at all cost so that children of poor parents will also have access to good education.

Introduction

Socio-economic status simply means the position of somebody in a society that determines his level of financial capacity and economic influence among many people all over the world. Social economic status has to do with the degree of social status in monetary term, according to the level of position whether he is poor or rich. The economic statuses of parents are determined by his standard of living, the GDP standard, the amount of money and properties he possesses in Nigeria context.

The economic status of parents of students varies from one tribe to another in Nigeria. For instance students from middle class homes lack very little and their parent could afford to give them what they need at any point in time. For instance a student who has enough textbooks on subjects like English language, has money to buy what he wants, dresses properly and neatly, with neat school uniform, sandals, beret, and cap for boys, pupils have two or three uniforms which he/she can change. A student who needs N1000 and his parent can afford to give him N2000 is said to have high economic status parents. In a situation where you see a student who does not have any recommended textbook on English language, could not afford to buy biro worth N20; exercise books for all the subjects he is taken in schools couple with having only one uniform that has greatly torn, dirty and suffering from psychological inferiority complex among his peers could said to have parent with low economic status. The physical fitness of students in the school, like the way he dresses, his neatness ability, how he spends money and the number of textbooks he has, often dictate whether he comes from parents of low or high economic status parents.

Parents' socio economic status often affects students academic performances at schools especially in the performance of English language especially both in internal and external examination. In the internal examination conducted within the school system especially promotion examination from one class to another, students performances varied from one person to another. Statistics have shown that children of parents whose economic status are high perform better in English language than the other. (Douglas 2010)

This is so because, the parent have enough money to buy necessary materials like textbooks on English subject especially in the areas of grammar, oral English lexis and structure, letter writing, essay writings, summary writings and comprehension. To be honest with ourselves children of parents with high economic status have 80% chance of performing higher in the internal examination than his counterparts from low economic status. It is an erroneous nation to say that, children who have enough textbooks cannot cope in the school? Is it the children of poor people who does not have money to buy books, talkless of feeding, will perform higher in the examination. Children of parents with high economic status, often settle with their books, able to concentrate with reading at home and in the school, because the confidence is there that parent are there for him to provide all his basic and essential needs in the school.

That is why we see children of aristocratic and affluence parents attended the best school in the world, because their parents know the value of education and they are ready to spend all what they have on education of their children.

Unlike the illiterates people whose level of education is below zero level, who does not value the goodness of education and not ready to give money to his children going to school. Even if such parent valued education and there is no financial means of taken care of such children no matter how brilliant the students is he will find it difficult to cope with others in the school. Imagine a student who does not have hope of three square meal in a day from a broken home, coupled with no hopes of meeting his parent at home to take afternoon meal. How do you expect such child to perform excellently well in English language in the school.

The poor economic status of parents of any child could be easily seen in his face in the school, because he or she will not be at ease, always hungry without anything to eat. An hungry man is an angry man. How do

you expect a student who has not eaten since morning to be able to read and assimilate what he is reading in the class.

The inferiority complex coupled with identity problems of not belonging to the aristocratic class will be constantly affecting him since he will not be able to meet with the Jones.

The Sociologists classified classes into upper-upper class, upper-class, middle class, upper-lower, lower class, and lower-lower class. In Nigerian society middle class has been eradicated. It is either you belong to extreme upper class or extreme lower class. It is either you are extremely rich or become extremely poor salary earners or government workers could not categorize themselves into the upper class because they do everything with getting loan. For instance salary earners struggle for loan to send his children to the best secondary schools, best university in Nigeria, which often attracts thousands of Naira could not be said to belong to the upper class. A salary earner get loan to build a house, to buy car, to do this and that. That is the nature of the society we are living in Nigeria. Like in the study of English Language, parents need to buy seasonal recommended textbooks for their children in private and public secondary schools if they want them to excel. Even some with good books cannot even boast of performing better in the school.

The socio-economic status of parents of students often determines how they interact with each other in the school. For instance children of parent with high economic status move with each other, share the same idea, since they are men of like minds in the school. Students of parents with low economic status cannot move with them due to his poverty level, who could not boast of having money to buy all necessary textbooks, to feed himself, to wear good uniform like two or three that will make him neat always. Even nowadays children if rich men marry each other nowadays. Who will marry the daughter of a poor wretched man who could not cross the Rubicon of poverty. That is why children of poor parent cannot excel in the public examinations like WASSCE, NECO, and JAMB. There are many secondary schools, nowadays. We have private and public schools. Even in the Public school, everything is not free. If the government can pay for WASSCE Examination fees, is it the government that will pay for textbooks, feeding, uniform, external lessons and other things. That is why 90% of our students failed English language in the public examination every year. Most of the reasons highlighted includes poor background of parents, poor economic status of parents, parents did not value education, poverty of parents could not give them chance to buy text books, good uniform, sandals, biros, exercise books for their children in schools. Who is to blame for this poor performance in English Language. Is it the fault of parents who are destined to be poor for life or what. Like in the play of Julius Ceasar written by William Shakespeare,

Cassius a deadly Jealous character quotes:

“The fault is not
in us, but in our
stars we are undertakings”.

Everybody is an architect of his own destiny good or bad, and this often affect our children whom we are supposed to cater for financially in the schools, but due to our inability to cross the Rubicon of poverty we either send our children to lesser schools or if we are rich send them to the best school so far. Money is the key to success nowadays. If parents are poor, it will adversely affect children academic performance in English language in all ramifications.

Take a look of a student who is brilliant but his parent is poor. They cannot buy all the necessary materials needed in the school. What do you expect from such student. No matter the degree of his brilliancy, he will perform badly in English language. English language is a continuous process. You learn and acquire the skill of any language throughout your lives. There is no day you cannot learn and study English because of new innovation and ideas. You need to be current by buying textbooks that are seasonal. Any text book on English could be declared obsolete at any point in time, so you have to continuing buy current textbooks on oral English, summary and comprehension, letters and Essays, coupled with grammar lexis and structure. Children at school does not face the rigour of studying alone, other things like feeding, have good uniform, buying good textbooks are also important. If any of this is lacking, students and children will not concentrate again. It is the duty of parent to buy adequate textbooks for their children. Education is the best legacy you can give to your children, but one has to equip his child or children with all necessary materials which required money. Statistic have shown that children of parents with high economic status fly high in their examination better than children of parents with low economic status. The issue of class struggle and social stratification cannot be ignored in the students performance of any subject including English language which is our main focus in this project.

Table 1 reflects the synopsis of the findings

Table - This table juxtapose parents of children with high and low economic status, in relation to how their children perform in English language in schools.

Behaviours of children with high economic status in schools.	Behaviours of children with low economic status in schools
1. Their children performed better in school	Their children perform poorly in the school
2. They are emotionally stable	They are not emotionally stable
3. They have confidence in whatever they do	They do not have confidence in themselves, and in whatever they are doing.
4. They are able to learn the acquisition of languages like English very well	They are not able to cope with learning the acquisition of English language.
5. They have relevant and enough textbooks on English	They do not have relevant textbooks in English
6. They have focus and they are organized	They are not focus, not organised, not stable and do things in a zig zag manner
7. They have everything at their disposal	They do not have anything at their disposal
8. They have enough fund to feed themselves in schools	They do not have enough fund, they do not have any fund to feed themselves.
9. They study hard to pass	They do not study to pass since there is no book to read
10. They often have A and upper Credit in English in public exams Like WASSCE and NECO.	they often have last credit passes in public exams like WASSCE and NECO
11. They fly higher and higher	They look down on themselves feels totally rejected
12. They feel free not suffering from Inferiority complex in the class.	They are not free, often suffer from inferiority complex in the class.

CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATION,

The issue of parents with either higher or lower economic status is a question of destiny which is difficult to determine. Some schools of thought believe that everybody is an architect of his own destiny. In this way, to cross the Rubicon of poverty is not an easy task. It is an herculean task to make it in Nigerian society of nowadays. This often affect the children. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigerian country is below the poverty level. The standard of living of an average Nigeria is below the poverty level. The fault is not on the population of people in the interim but rather depend on leadership, administration of a country, the Number of human resources and personnel management we have as workforce in Nigeria. Just of recent the minimum recommended wage, is by the federal government to be N18,000 per head, per worker, but up till now, many states of the federation are yet to comply. Statistics have shown that countries with liquid and mineral solid resources lack human resources and personnel know how in the country. For instance Nigeria depend too much on oil which makes him to lack good personnel and human resources. This creates unemployment in labour market. Corruption is now a Cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the society. If the wealth of our nation could be evenly distributed, and bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, children of parents with low economic status will have chance to send their children to school, and provide for their needs, thereby such children will have money to buy relevant textbooks on English, which will improve their performances in the public and private examination. Textbooks on English, which is a lingua franca in Nigeria should be made free for all students in secondary schools. If there are enough text books, given free of charge to students in the areas of oral English, summary and comprehension, letters and Essays, lexis and structure grammar, students

performances in English will improve drastically in WASSCE and NECO. Evenly distribution of Nigerians wealth will help parents of low economic status to cross the rubicon of poverty and have access to get money to provide for their children education. Nigerian wealth should not be concentrated in the hand of few aristocratic Cabal capitalists, but rather evenly distributed among all. Education should be totally free from primary to secondary and tertiary institutions whereby both publics and private schools should be paying the same tuition fees especially in private and public universities.

Recommendations

Education should be subsidized at all cost so that children of poor parents will also have access to good education. Library especially language, of English library should be established throughout all secondary schools in Nigeria to alleviate the problems of mass failure in English language in both public and private examinations. The implementer of government policies should be honest. Laptop provided to ease learning needs adequate qualified teachers for thorough implementation.

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