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Impact of Students' Parental Background on Academic Achievement in Secondary Schools in Obio/Akpor LGA, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of parental background on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The population consisted of 4,752 respondents. A sample size of 1,426 senior secondary school (SSS) 2 and 3 students was randomly selected. A structured questionnaire titled: Students Parental Background Variable Inventory (SPBVI) was used to collect data from respondents. Four research questions and four hypotheses were adopted and tested for the study. To determine the extent of significant relationship that existed between the independent and dependent variables at 0.05 alpha levels, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) was employed to analyze the data and reliability of the instrument. The result showed positive relationship between parent socio-economic status, educational status, parents' level of income, family size and students' academic achievement. Based on this finding, it was recommended that parents' should improve on their level of socio-economic status and endeavor to control their family size among others. Students should not allow their parents' position to negatively influence their academic pursuits.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows:

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INTRODUCTION

The notion that educated parents provide a better environment for their children has been the basis of many interventions. Besides, scientific literature are not so clear, but it is widely believed that, providing education for both parents has broadly similar effects on household income. The external effects associated with education are largely for maternal education than for paternal, because mothers tend to be the main provider of care within the home. For example, a positive relationship between mother's education and child birth weight, which is a strong predicator of child health, is found not only in the developing world but also in US (Currie & Moretti, 2003) and in Nigeria.

The existence of such externalities provides important argument for reducing the education of children, especially in low income homes or by low educated parents. There may be indeed, some multiplier effects since policy interventions that increase educational attainment for one generation may spill over into other generations. Though the existence of intergenerational correlations is not disputed (Ololube, 2012), the type of policy interventions that are suggested depended critically on the characteristics of the intergenerational transmission mechanism, and the extent to which the correlation is informal. Although, it is difficult for inherited genetic factors or environmental factors and if it is the later, what is the real benefit of education and income? For example, ability could be inherited from parents to children or positively associated with more academic effort. The relationship therefore between parents' academic background and that of their children could be due to unobserved inherited traits rather than an informal effect of parental education as such in household production. Parental education may be direct input into the production function that generates a higher quantity of other inputs through the effect of educational levels of household income.

A considerable literature (e.g., Behrman, 1997; Heckman & Masterov, 2004) has focused on the effects of parental background on such outcome for their children as cognitive skills, education health and subsequent income. There is little doubt that economic status is positively correlated across generations. Parents and the family environment in general, have important impacts on behavior and decisions taken by adolescents. There is also the belief that there is a strong link between parents' social class and their children's school achievement. The differences could be traced to the type of occupation in which one is engaged which could also determine to a great extent, one's income and ability to provide enough funds and optional facilities which a growing school child requires for high performance at school (Ololube et al. 2015).

Davie et al. (1972) argued that working class homes are usually associated with overcrowding; and children from overcrowded homes are usually deprived of quietness, privacy and good healthy environment which often do not allow for a healthy living. They added that, such conditions exposes children of working class to different types of diseases and illness, which contribute to their irregular attendance at school, lack of concentration, tiredness and other weaknesses, all of which correlate negatively to school success. Stressing the negative relationship between poverty and school achievement (Battin-Pearson et al. 2000; New-Comb et al. 2001) confirms Davie et al. opinion by adding that, poverty and low socio-economic status directly increases the likelihood for general school failure and early high school dropout. According to Hawkins et al. (1992), poverty is associated with risky health behavior and must be taken care of when evaluating the effect of these behavior and achievement.

Parents' educational attainment is indicated by three highest levels of schooling, which the students' mother completed: primary, secondary and tertiary. These categories are defined on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED, 2011). They posited that children brought up in less favorable conditions obtain less education despite the large financial returns to schooling for an extensive review (Heckman & Masterov, 2004).

Krueger (2004) evaluated various contributions on parents' background supports the view that financial constraints significantly affect educational attainment. On the contrary, Carneiro and Heckman (2003) opined that current parental income does not explain a child's educational choice but that family fixed effects such as parental education levels that involve permanent income, and much more positive role. Positive attitude to school will probably be encouraged by those parents who themselves attained a high level of western education. While the father is away, it is expected that the mother takes care of the children at home and as such, the children are closer with their mother (Chevalier et al. 2005). The educated mother, knowing the importance of education should as much as possible generate in the child interest and curiosity for education at an early age. With this, it is therefore necessary to agree with Mutran's (1980) view that children with more educated parents score higher than children from less education homes (or parents) on the intellectual curiosity which is positively associated with grades.

Random assignment experiments are potentially informative but not common concerning parents' incomes on educational outcomes. Blandon and Gregg (2004) review US and UK evidence on the effectiveness of policy experiments which focused largely on improving short term family finances. These include initiatives such as the moving to opportunity (MTO) experiments in the US which provides financial support associated with higher housing costs from moving to more affluent areas. According to DFES (2002), the pilots of Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMA's) in the UK, provided a reasonable means tested cash benefit condition on participation in education and paid, depending on the pilot scheme either to the parents or directly to the child.

In the absence of experimental evidence, instruments have been used to identify income effects. Shea (2000) uses union status (occupation) as an instrument for parental income and so, assumes that unionized fathers are not more "able" parents than non-union fathers with similar observable skills, while Meyer (1997) uses variation in family income caused by state welfare rules, income sources and income before and after the education period of the child, as well as changes in income inequality. In both studies unanticipated changes were found in parental long-run income, which have modest and sometimes negligible effects on the human capital of the children. However, Shea's (2000) view in using union status as an instrument for income was accepted.

The effect of home background on school achievement of a child or two children families may be compared to that of five or more children families. Conversely, in a large family, the tendency of parents to cope financially with the home as well as school requirements will not be there. Most children from such families might not acquire up to secondary level of education, while some might withdraw before they complete their course work at the primary level. However, Brown and Steinberg (1991) confirmed that high school success was affected by a mixture of family, peer and school influences. Duran and Weffer (1992) supporting this view added that, the academic performance of their sample students was influenced by pre high school attainment, academic skill development, curriculum studied and commitment on school related tasks. But since the relationship among final year school achievement and several variable were explored, the result of their reports was very important.

Statement of the problem

Despite the zeal of parents to send their children to school, academic achievements differ from one individual to another, for example, some children withdraw from school without completing their course work even at the primary level. This situation has attracted a lot of research work into the causes of differences in academic or school achievement among school children. literature have shown that factors like home background, the society, hereditary, the school itself and other factors could be held responsible for this.

Before we look at the part played by parental background in school achievement, which is the main concern of this study, the first thing that should strike our minds is the wrong conception that parental background is synonymous with home location, that is, whether urban or rural. A study involving home background should not consider location only, but also the parental socio-economic status, parental support and encouragement, family size and position in the family. These factors operate severally and in different capacity to affect a child's academic pursuit or school achievement. The aim of this study is to investigate the impact parental background has on the academic achievement of secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

- How does parents' socio-economic background influence student's academic achievement in secondary schools?
- How does parents' educational background influence student's academic achievement in secondary schools?
- To what extent does parents' level of income affect student's academic achievement in secondary schools?
- To what extent does family size affect students' academic achievement in secondary schools?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is no significant relationship between parents' socio-economic background and students' academic achievement in secondary schools.
- There is no significant relationship between parents' educational background and student's academic achievement in secondary schools.
- There is no significant relationship between parents' level of income and students' academic achievement in secondary schools.
- There is no significant relationship between family size and students' academic achievement in secondary schools.

METHODS

Research design

This work adopted a correlational research design approach.

Population

The population of this study consisted of 4,752 respondents from the selected senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The respondents were drawn from SS2 and SS3 classes (3,383 SS2 students and 1,369 SS3 students). The choice of the population of the study was based on the fact that the secondary schools where the respondents were drawn are located within the local government area. The breakdown of the population used in this study is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Population of the study

S/N	Name of schools	Senior Secondary		Total
		SS 2	SS 3	
1.	Government Girls Secondary School, Rumueme	498	129	627
2.	Akpor Grammar school, Ozuoba	276	197	473
3.	Government Girls Secondary School, Rumuokwuta	864	180	1040
4.	Community Secondary School, Oginigba	425	335	760
5.	Community Comprehensive Secondary School, Rumuokwurushi	455	165	620
6.	Community Secondary School, Rumuolumeui	230	251	481
7.	Army Day Secondary School, Bori-Camp	635	112	747
	Total	3,383	1,369	4,752

Source: Rivers State Post Primary Schools' Board 2011/2012

Sample

Stratified random sampling procedure was adopted to select the sample size using 30% of the population for the study. The sample size comprised 1,426 respondents (1,016 SS2 and 410 SS3 students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The breakdown of the sample size used in this study is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample size

S/N	Name of Schools	Senior secondary		Total
		SS 2	SS 3	
1.	Government Girls Secondary School, Rumueme	149	39	188
2.	Akpor Grammar school, Ozuoba	83	59	142
3.	Government Girls Secondary School, Rumuokwuta	259	54	313
4.	Community Secondary School, Oginigba	128	100	228
5.	Community Comprehensive Secondary School, Rumuokwurushi	137	49	186
6.	Community Secondary School, Rumuolumeui	69	75	144
7.	Army Day Secondary School, Bori-Camp	191	34	225
	Total	1,016	410	1,426

Instrumentation

A structured research instrument was used to collect data for the study tagged "Students Parental background Variable Inventory (SPBVI)". The first part of the SPBVI contains personal data of the respondents' gender, age and name of school. The SPBVI is of four-point Likert type of scale and comprised of forty five (45) items which was used in eliciting responses from the respondents concerning their parental background *vis-à-vis* socio-economic background, educational background, level of income and family size. The research instrument has the options of strongly agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1).

Validity and Reliability

The instrument was face validated by two experts in educational measurement from the University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt, Nigeria. To establish reliability of the research instrument, test re-test method was employed. The SPBVI was pre-tested through test-retest using 45 secondary school students outside the selected schools. Also, 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.

Administration and Scoring

The researcher personally administered copies of the research instruments (questionnaire) to respondents, and ensured that it was adequately administered and properly filled. The researcher accomplished this through the office of the principals. The administration of the data lasted for two months, after which the data obtained was sent for analyses. There was no loss of instrument in the process but some questionnaire were wrongly filled and mutilated.

Regarding the scoring, score between the ranges of 1-2, represents low level of academic achievement, 2.5 represents average academic achievement and score between the ranges of 2.51-4 represents high level of academic achievement. The data generated was analyzed based on statistical – package for social sciences (SPSS Batch System). This was done with the use of frequency counting of the response scores of the respondents. The mean and standard deviation scores were extracted and presented in appropriate tables to answer the 4 research questions.

Research Question One

Table 3 revealed the computed mean and standard deviation scores of parents' socio-economic background (M=2.501 and SD=0.248). This shows that average level of parents' socio-economic background was found among secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, because the mean score is on the average point of 2.5. The result shows that parents' average level of socio-economic background influences students' academic achievement in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation computation on the extent to which parents' socio-economic background could influence students' academic achievement in secondary schools (N=1,426)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
Parents' socio-economic background	2.501	0.248	Average level
Students' academic achievement	2.500	0.246	Average level

Research Question Two

Table 4 Shows that computed mean and standard deviation scores of parents' educational background are 2.499 and 0.249 respectively. This reveals that the average level of parents' educational background was found among secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State since the mean score is on the average point of 2.5. The table shows that the computed mean score and standard deviation scores on the level of students' academic achievement are 2.500 and 0.246 respectively. The results revealed that parents' average level of educational background influences students' academic achievement in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation computation on the extent to which parents' educational background could influence students' academic achievement in secondary schools (N=1,426)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
Parents' educational background	2.499	0.249	Average level
Students' academic achievement	2.500	0.246	Average level

Research Question Three

Table 5 indicates the computed mean and standard deviation scores of parents. level of income which is 2.264 and 0.224 respectively. This shows that low level of parents. income was found since the mean score is less than the average point of 2.5. Also, the table shows that the computed mean and standard deviation scores of level of student academic achievement are 2.500 and 0.246 respectively and the mean score is at the average point of 2.5. The result shows that parents' low level of income influences students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 5: Mean and standard deviation computations on the extent to which parents' level of income could determine students' academic achievement in secondary schools.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
Parents' level of income	2,264	0.224	Average level
Students' academic achievement	2.500	0.246	Average level

Research Question Four

Table 6 reveals the computed mean and standard deviation scores of family size, which is 3,781 and 0.368 respectively. This shows that large family size has greater influence of students' academic achievement since the mean score is greater than the average point of 2.5.

Table 6: Mean and standard deviation computations on the extent to which family size could influence students' academic achievement in secondary schools (N=1,426)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remarks
Family size	3,781	0.368	Large level
Students' academic achievement	2.500	0.246	Average level

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis one states that "there is no significant relationship between parents' socio-economic background and students' academic achievement in secondary schools". The result in table 7 depicts the calculated r between parents' socio-economic background and students; academic achievement to be 0.427* and the critical value of r is ±0.1946. This shows that the calculated r is statistically significant at $p > 0.05$ level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of r. The hypothesis (HO$_1$) is thus rejected. This implies that significant relationship exists between parents' socio-economic background and students' academic achievement scores.

Table 7: Computation of the relationship between parents' socio-economic background and students' academic achievement

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Est. std. Error	r-cal	r-crit.
Parents' socio-economic background	2.501	0.248	21.456	0.427*	±0.1946
Students' academic achievement	2.500	0.246			

N = 1,426
df = 1,424
p > 0.05* = significance

Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis two states that "there is no significant relationship between parents' educational background and student's academic achievement in secondary schools" and calculated r between the parents' educational background and students' academic achievement was 0.541* and the critical value of r was ±0.1946. The calculated r is statistically significant at $p > 0.05$ level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of r. The hypothesis (HO$_2$) is rejected, the result now reveals that significant relationship exists between parents' educational background and students' academic achievement scores (see table 8).

Table 8: Computation of the relationship between parents' educational background and students' academic achievement

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Est. std. Error	r-cal	r-crit.
Parents' educational background	2.499	0.238	23.658	0.541*	±0.1946
Students' academic achievement	2.500	0.246			

N = 1,426
df = 1,424
p > 0.05* = significance

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis three states that "there is no significant relationship between parents' level of income and students' academic achievement in secondary schools" and the calculated r between parents' level of income and students' academic achievement was 0.278* and the critical value of r was ±0.1946. Since the calculated value is greater than the given critical value of r, the hypothesis (HO$_3$) is thus rejected, meaning that significant relationship exists between parents' level of income and students' academic achievement (see table 9).

Table 9: Computation of the relationship between parents' level of income and students' academic achievement

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Est. std. Error	r-cal	r-crit.
Parents' level of income	2.264	0.224	25.332	0.278*	±0.1946
Students' academic achievement	2.500	0.246			

N = 1,426
df = 1,424
p > 0.05* = significance

Hypotheses Four

Hypothesis four states that "there is no significant relationship between family size and students' academic achievement in secondary schools" and the calculated r between family size and students' academic achievement was 0.379* and the critical value of r was ±0.1946. Therefore, the calculated r is statistically significant at $p > 0.05$ level of significance since it is greater than the given critical value of r, as a result, hypothesis (HO$_4$) is therefore rejected, meaning that significant relationship exists between students' family size and students' academic achievement scores.

Table 10: Computation of relationship between family size and students' academic achievement

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Est. std. Error	r-cal	r-crit.
Family size	3.781	0.368	24.221	0.379*	±0.1946
Students' academic achievement	2.500	0.246			

N = 1,426
df = 1,424
p > 0.05* = significance

DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher generated four research questions, which guided the study and she formulated and tested four hypotheses for the study. The result of this study showed that parents' socio-economic background and average level of income influences students' academic achievements in school. It also exposed the significant relationship between parents' educational background and students' academic achievement scores. The quality of students' academic achievement in secondary schools is significantly related to parents' level of income. Same is true of family size, which showed greater significance to students; academic achievement. The

findings in this study are similar to the findings of Ololube et al. (2015), Kainuwa and Yusuf (2013), Okioga (2013), Udida et al. (2012) and Blandon and Gregg (2004).

Correspondingly, children who have a combination of risk factors which are poverty, many siblings close in age, parental neglect and single parents are at greater risk of poor academic performance and other negative child developmental outcome than children from single-parent homes with higher incomes and fewer siblings. In fact, if Nigerian education objectives are to be achieved, students must be serious with their studies, our secondary school managers must be proficient in their job and most importantly too is for the institutions to understand the social setting and background of students *vis-à-vis* the changing of their attitudes. One must understand that there are other forces in our societies that are causing problems in schools, for example alienation, boredom and loneliness, outburst of anger and others.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, it was concluded that significant relationship existed between parents' socio-economic and educational background, level of income, students' family size and students' academic achievement scores. Students from middle and high level background tend to achieve more than students from low background.

Recommendations

1. Efforts should be made by students not to allow their parents' socio-economic and educational background, level of income and family size influence their academic pursuits. This will assist to improve on their level of academic achievement.
2. Parents should endeavor to control the size of their families to a manageable one. This will enable them make good use of the available resources to care of the education of their children, and could lead to the high level of academic achievement of such students.
3. States and federal government should see to the needs of the adult citizens of Rivers State by providing social amenities. To improve on their socio-economic status, government should also help to supplement their expenditure based on their income.

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