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Effects of Parental Socio-Economic Characteristics on the Learning Performance of Pre – Primary School Pupils in Abuja – Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the effect of parental Socio economic characteristics on pupils' academic performance in pre-primary schools in Abuja, Nigeria. It's main focus here, is on Parental Income. One research question was raised while one null hypothesis was formulated and tested to guide the study. This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study used a sample of 250 out of 400 pre-primary schools in Abuja, which was more than half of the population. The data for the study were gathered through copies of the questionnaire that were administered to 250 respondents. The method of selection was through simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire tagged "Parental Income Background Questionnaire" (PIBQ) was pilot tested and reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was obtained. Furthermore, mean, frequency, standard deviation and percentage was used to answer the research question while Pearson's product-moment correlation co-efficient was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between parental income background and pupils' academic performance in pre-primary schools in Abuja. The finding of this study have led the researcher to conclude that parental income background influenced pupils' academic performance in pre-primary schools in Abuja, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that, parents as a matter of importance should diversify their sources of income so that they can be able to provide fund their children in school for better academic performance.

Keywords: Parental Income, Academic Performance and Pre-Primary Schools

Introduction

The effects of parental income on learning performance in primary schools are significant and multifaceted. Research consistently shows that children from higher-income families tend to perform better academically compared to their peers from lower-income households. This disparity can be attributed to several factors, including access to quality education resources such as private tutoring, enrichment activities, and educational materials at home. Higher-income families often have the financial means to reside in neighborhoods with better-funded schools and access to extracurricular opportunities that contribute to enhanced cognitive development and academic success. Conversely, children from lower-income backgrounds may face obstacles such as limited access to educational resources, inadequate nutrition, and higher levels of stress, all of which can negatively impact their learning outcomes. Addressing these disparities requires comprehensive policies that prioritize equitable access to quality education, support for economically disadvantaged families, and targeted interventions to level the playing field and ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive academically regardless of parental income background.

Among the several parental factors that have been linked to their children academic performance at school is the parent's level of income. According to Mayer, (2020) a casual observation is that the children of affluent parents are more likely to succeed in life than the children of poor parents probably because the rich parents spend more than poor parents on their children and these "investments" lead to better outcomes for their children. If the situation is correct, the author also suggested that government can improve the life chances of poor children by providing families with the means to make the investments or by providing the investments directly in the form of schooling, health care, and other human capital inputs. It is not out of place to imagine that parental socio-economic background can have possible effects on the academic achievement of children in school (Machebe & Ifelunni, 2014). When parents are financially capacitated, and also give moral support to the children by guiding their reading at home, the students perform better than their counterparts.

Although it has been argued that the most accurate predictor of students' performance is the extent to which the family is involved in the child's education, and not the family's level of income (Kajita, 2016). It is not clear if the situation is the same across developed and developing economies in the world.

Statement of the Problem

Many factors could contribute to the achievement of good academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Abuja. One of these factors is parental income position. Researchers have associated the level of parents' socio-economic status (income, education and occupation) to pupils' academic performance. According to Willingham (2012), income of parents' contribution to children's educational attainment is not very explicit but influences education in the long-term through: the

provision of an excellent pre-school which offers the child a stronger foundation to start on, well resourced school, educational stationary, library, and extra tuition for children. The quality of parental income position goes a long way to predict the quality and regularity of the satisfaction and provision of a child's academic needs. Poor parental income position with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child, usually yield to poor academic performance of that child. The poor academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Abuja, Nigeria is a serious concern to educational managers and parents. This study therefore, examined the effect of parental income background on pupils' academic performance in pre-primary schools in Abuja.

The research question that guided the study is:

- Of what significant relationship exist between parent annual income and academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

A null hypothesis formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H0: There is no significant relationship between parent annual income and academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual/Theoretical Framework

Concept of Parental Income

Concept of Parental Income Position The need for parental income position in determining students' academic performance cannot be overemphasized. Lareau (2003) explains that parental income position could be expressed in two terms, which are relative and absolute. According to Lareau, absolute income is a situation whereby as income increases, so is family consumption level while relative income on the other hand reflects a person or family's saving and consumption based on the family's income in relation to others. However, low income families focus on meeting immediate needs and therefore, have no interest in accumulating wealth that could be passed on to future generations. Thomas (2004) notes that family's income position could define such a family's social status in the community, because what creates the marginal difference between social classes has always been income position. Families with low income lack the time and the energy to invest for their children's preparation for school, and sometimes face the limited array of options for high quality child care both before their children start school and during early school years. Parental income position is associated with good parenting in the home, the provision of secure environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of constructive social and educational values, high aspirations relating to personal fulfillment and good citizenship, contact with schools to share information, participation in school events, monitoring the academic related activities in school and so on.

Concept of Students' Academic Performance

In educational institution, success is measured by academic performance, or how well a student meets standards set out by government and the institution itself (Bell, 2014). Academic performance generally refers to how well a student is accomplishing his or her tasks and studies. Although, education is not only the yardstick to determine success in the working world, much effort is made to identify, evaluate, track and encourage the progress of students' in schools. Olabanji (as cited in Ezeaneche, 2016) described students' academic performance as the result obtained creditably or otherwise by students' at both internal and external examinations. Academic performance is the students' achievement level in schools based on grades attained in schools, and placement in higher institutions.

Parent Income Level and Children Academic Performance

According to Shuani (2016), Family income is classified into three types: Money Income, Real Income and Psychic Income. Money Income is the purchasing power in rupees during a given period of time. Money income is one of the important material resources of the family. It is said, "Money is a matter of function four, a medium, a measure, a standard and store". Some people say that "We cannot cat money, but we cannot eat without money." According to D.H. Robertson, "Money is anything which is widely accepted in payment for goods or in discharge of other kinds of business obligations." Money income of the family includes all the earnings which come to the family in terms of rupees, coins or notes in a specific period of time, daily, weekly, or monthly. Money income may include salaries, wages, rent, interest, profits, sick benefits, pensions, gifts, dividends, securities, royalties etc. Money income may be converted into goods and services, whenever required by the family. Some parts of money income may be diverted into savings for future use. Money management includes the management of family income. As money is a limited resource it must be managed properly in order to achieve family goals. Money income is affected by factors such as the abilities and skill of the wage earner, personal attitude towards the work, and good relationship with management and co-workers.

Hijazi *et al.,* (2016) study explored factors affecting college students' performance, focusing on private colleges in Pakistan. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 300 students randomly selected. Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. Their findings show mixed results. They believed that the relationship between students' performance and student family income is positive because money can buy you all the comforts that you need to concentrate on their studies but interestingly the result also shows that students belonging to more prosperous families do not give proper attention to studies, thus affluence cannot make a student necessarily serious about his/her studies. They recommended more research to explain this phenomenon (Hijazi and Raza Naqvi, 2016).

Memon, *et al.,*' (2017) examined the impact of parental socio-economic status on students' educational achievements at Secondary Schools of District Malir, Karachi. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 240 students using purposive sampling technique. Statistical

tables were used for data analysis. A significant relationship was found between family income and academic performance of students in matriculation examination. They also found a significant relationship between parent's occupational status and academic performance of the students at matriculation examination. They concluded that students whose family income was higher performed well in matriculation examination as compared to those students who belonged to low income families (Memon, *et al*., 2017).

Similarly, Raychaudhuri *et al*. (2015) examined factors affecting students' academic performance: a case study in Agartala Municipal Council area. Family income was one of the basic objectives of their study. Primary data was collected through random sample survey from students in the government and government aided schools and their households. Using regression analysis, they found that factors like students' attendance, mother's education and presence of trained teacher in the school have a positive impact of students' academic performance. They also found that academic performance of students' depend on a number of socio-economic factors. They concluded that students' economic status affects their performance and the risk of becoming a dropout.

Yousefi *et al.* (2016) examined the effect of family income on test-anxiety and academic achievement. Their paper focused on 400 Iranian high school students. Statistical analysis of ANOVA was employed. The findings showed that family income significantly affected academic achievement of students. It was recommended that in enhancing academic achievement in school setting, support strategies such as improving family income among families by government must be focused on. To decrease the rate of influence of family income on depression and academic achievement among students, the government should organize practical programs to help families and also students in the areas of food, money and the other supports (Yousefi *et al*., 2016).

Lacour and Tissington (2018) examined the effects of poverty on academic achievement in the USA. They concluded their study that poverty directly affects academic achievement due to the lack of resources available for students' success; thus low academic achievement is closely correlated with lack of resources, with emphasis on financial resources. They recommended that instructional techniques and strategies implemented at the classroom, school, district, and government levels can help close the achievement gap by providing students with necessary assistance in order to achieve high performance in academics.

Nyakunga (2017) explored the effects of cost sharing on students' academic performance in Mzumbe University, Morogoro Main Campus, Tanzania. In his analytical framework of six concepts were academic performance and financial factors. This study used qualitative case study. Semi-structured interview was used to collect data from six second year students and two teachers who were selected using purposive sampling technique. The results showed that the effects of cost sharing on academic performance seem to be complex and they may depend on the particular circumstance an individual is facing. The study concluded that cost sharing is likely to motivate some students to study hard and improve performance by reflecting on the amount of funds they invest in education. However, it can also lead to poor performance

due to lack of funds to cover educational expenses and other personal needs. The results implied that students from low-income families were more likely to perform lower because of financial hardship and poor schools they attended. Thus, there is the need for the government to ensure that all students receive better education. This result also indicated that some of the factors affecting academic performance in higher education also resulted from poor education background (Nyakunga, 2017).

Ali *et al.,* (2013) investigated factors affecting academic performance of graduate students of Islamia University of Bahawalpur Rahim Yar Khan Campus. Among variables examined against students' academic performance was father/guardian social economic status. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 100 students randomly selected. Linear regression model, correlation analysis, and descriptive analysis were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that father/guardian higher social economic (income) status significantly contribute to higher academic performance of graduate students. They proposed a linear model to improve the academic performance of graduate students at University level (Ali *et al*., 2013).

According to Lacour and Tissington (2011), multiple studies in the USA revealed interesting empirical results on third through fifth grade students from 71 high-poverty schools. They found that students who lived in poverty scored significantly worse than other students; schools with the highest percentages of poor students scored significantly worse initially, but closed the gap slightly as time progressed (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). A similar study conducted by Sum and Fogg (2009) found that poor students are ranked lower in performance than students from upper-income family. Similarly, low-income students' scores lower marks than upper-income students' scores (Rowan *et al*., 2014) and students from low-income families consistently score marks below average (Bergeson, 2016). Again, children from persistently poor families score lower than children from relatively rich homes (Smith *et al*., 2017). Similarly, a good number of scholars conducted some studies on students' performance in the context of economic circumstances and the risk of becoming a dropout that proved to be positive (Raychaudhuri *et al*., 2015).

Hill *et al*. (2014) asserted that socio–economic position of parents directly affects students' academic performance, improves low background students to firmly compete with those from high income families. Ogunshola and Adewale, (2012) argued that parental socio-economic status is a significant predicator of intellectual performance of children right from 8 years of age. Parental socio – economic status affects health and vitality status of children, which is a direct reflection on their academic performance. Ogunshola and Adewale, (2012) upheld that rural communities where nutritional status is relatively low and health problems are prevalent due to low income brackets of parents, children's academic performance is comparatively lower.

Family income becomes educational controlling factor globally. Kadushin (2017) argued that low income limits both educational attainment and academic performance of students. Good financial support for education is an essential stimulus in motivating students to perform

better. Low family income is a predictor of the level of academic performance, alienation and dropout of students (Beegle and Rice, 2015). In brief, the critical literature review shows that the relationship between family income and students' academic performance is a global phenomenon. Both developed countries, e.g. USA, emerging economies, e.g. Ghana and other developing countries face similar financial and academic performance challenges. Significant number of studies found that students from low-income families perform poorly than those from relatively richer families; however, this decision is not fully conclusive in research.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Epstein (1995) Framework of six types of parental involvement model developed from Epstein's theory of Overlapping Spears of Influence. Epstein developed a model that conceptualizes six major types of parental involvement that are common in school – home (parent) partnerships across home, school and community settings (Epstein, 1995; Epstein, 2011; Epstein et al., 2019). Epstein's (1995) theory focuses on the impact of parental involvement on students' academic performance. While it doesn't directly address the influence of parents' income on academic performance, it does touch upon factors that are often associated with socioeconomic status.

Assumptions regarding the impact of parents' income on students' academic performance within Epstein's framework might include: Higher income families may have greater financial resources to invest in their children's education, including access to tutoring, educational materials, and extracurricular activities that can enhance academic performance. Again, parents from higher income backgrounds may have higher educational expectations for their children due to their own educational attainment and socio-cultural factors. Higher income families may have access to better quality schools, resources, and educational programs due to their ability to afford housing in neighborhoods with well-funded schools or to pay for private education. Higher income families may have greater access to enrichment activities outside of school, such as music lessons, sports teams, and summer camps, which can contribute to holistic development and academic success, and Families with higher income levels may possess more cultural capital, including knowledge of educational systems, networks of support, and social connections that can positively influence academic outcomes. These assumptions suggest that while parental income is not the sole determinant of academic performance, it can influence various factors such as resource availability, parental involvement, and access to opportunities, all of which can impact students' educational outcomes within Epstein's framework of parental involvement. The contribution of this theory to this study;

Epstein's theory, proposed in 1995, focuses on the impact of parental involvement on students' academic performance. This theory emphasizes the importance of parental involvement in a child's education.

This involvement includes activities such as monitoring homework, attending school events, and communicating with teachers. Epstein argues that when parents are actively engaged in

their child's education, it can positively influence academic performance, and outlines six types of parental involvement: basic obligations (providing for the child's basic needs), school communication (maintaining contact with teachers), volunteering at school, home learning activities (such as helping with homework), decision-making (involvement in school governance), and collaborating with the community. By recognizing the importance of collaboration between families, schools, and communities, Epstein's theory has contributed to efforts aimed at promoting equity and excellence in education.

Empirical Review

Adzido, Dzogbede, Ahiave and Dorkpah (2016) investigated how family income influences the academic performance of tertiary students. The study employed a descriptive survey research design and used questionnaires to gather data from a sample of 480 students selected through a stratified-quota-simple random sampling technique. Data analysis techniques included frequency distribution tables and bar charts. The study findings suggested that family income positively affects students' academic performance. This study concluded that high parental income helps improve students' motivation and learning processes and hence leads to better academic performance. However, this study has several methodological limitations compared to the present study. Whereas the present study employed both descriptive and inferential data analysis techniques, the reviewed study used only descriptive data analysis techniques which included tabulating frequencies and bar charts. As such, this reviewed study fell short of establishing the association between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

Machebe, Ezegbe and Onuoha (2017) investigated the impact of parental level of income on students' academic performance in high schools. The study employed questionnaires to collect data. The study findings showed that parents' level of income had a positive influence on students' academic performance. Specifically, the study established that greater academic achievement for a student was attained by students from high-income families. This study however involved only 2 high schools while the current study involved a larger sample of 24 schools. Whereas this study involved only students, the current study sought opinions from more participants such as principals, teachers and parents representatives in addition to students.

Kiboi (2018) studied the effect of parental socioeconomic status on students' academic performance in secondary schools reported a positive statistical correlation between parent level of income and students' academic performance. The study randomly selected 120 students and purposively sampled 8 head teachers, 8 class teachers and 8 guidance and counseling staff. This study did not include responses from parents and therefore gathered parents' income data indirectly through other parties. The present study included parent representatives to fill that gap.

Owuor and Sika (2019) investigated how parental financing influences the academic performance of secondary schools. The study employed a descriptive survey research design

and included 18 secondary schools. All 18 principals of the participating schools were purposively sampled. In addition, the survey involved 108 teachers, 72 students and 72 parents. Questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents. The study reported a significant moderate relationship between parental financing and students' academic performance. Descriptive results revealed that it was only a small percentage of students paid school fees on time. The finding could suggest that parental income limited parents to pay fees and finance other school activities. This study did not seek to establish the parental income which was done in the current study.

METHODOLOGY

This study would use descriptive survey research design. The total population is 400 made up of H/Teachers, teachers and PTA members in FCT, Abuja, while a sample size of 250 was selected randomly from the population. Self-structured Questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire tagged "Parental Income Background Questionnaire" (PIBQ) was used in the study. The PIBQ contained 5 question items and it was administered to the respondents. The four Likert scale (strongly agreed, agreed, strongly disagreed and disagreed) questionnaire was adopted by the researchers, after experts ascertained the validity of instrument. The questionnaire was pilot tested and reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was obtained. The data was collected through personal visit to the head teachers, teachers of the selected public primary schools. Mean, standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while Pearson's product-moment correlation co-efficient was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 significance level. The decision rule for the results of data analysis was that a mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as positive response (accepted) and less than 2.50 was considered as negative response (rejected). In addition, the calculated probability (p-value) that was greater than the significant level of 0.05 was considered acceptable while the p-value that was less than the significant level of 0.05 was considered not acceptable.

RESULTS

Table1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

On the basis of respondents gender status, a total of 71 representing 30.2% are males and the rest 164 representing 69.8% are females. Based on age ranges, a total of 39 representing 16.6% are 20-25 years while 69 or 29.4% are within 26-30 as against 51 or 21.7% who are 31-35 years while 34 or 14.5% are between 36-40 years as against 12 or 5.1% within ages 41-45 and the rest 30 or 12.8% are from 45 years and above . On the basis of their educational qualification, while 8 or 3.4% possess primary education, 23 or 9.8% possess secondary school while 33 or 14.0% possess Diploma as against 73 or 31.1% possess NCE while 71 or 30.2% possess BED and the rest 27 or 11.5% possess MED. On occupation of the respondents, a total of 150 or 63.8% are civil servants while 21 or 8.9% are Business as against 3 or 1.3% that are bankers while 25 or 10.6% are traders as against 19 or 8.1% that are farmers and the rest 17 or 7.2% are in other occupations. On the Length of Employment/Experience in Current

Occupation, a total of 56 or 23.8% have between 1-5 yeas while 67 or 28.5% between 6-10 years as against 44 or 18.7% that have between 11-15 experience as against 27 or 11.5% that have between 16-20 years experience as against 16 or 6.8% with 21-25 experience and the rest 25 or 10.6% have over 25 year experience. On monthly income a total of 85 or 25012% of the parents said N30000 while 80 or 34.0% earn N50000 as against 40 or 17.0% that earns N100000 and the rest 30 opr 12.8% said N200000. On marital status, 53 or 22.6% are single while 150 or 63.8% are married as against 13 or 5.5% that are divorced and the rest 19 or 8.1% are widowed. On the number of children in school a total of 65 or 27.7% said between 11 -20 while 74 or 31.5% said 21-40 as against 52 or 22.1% said between 41-60 while 32 or 13.6% said 61-80 as against 11 or 4.7% said between 81-100 and the rest 1 or 0.4% said over 101 children. Showed that 111 or 47.2% has between 1-5 while 84 or 35.7% has between 6-10 as against 21 or 8.9% that each has between 11-15 and the rest 19 or 8.1% each has around 16-20 family size. On their relationship to the child, a total of 57 or 24.3% are parents while 155 or 65.1% re teachers as against 20 or 8.5% that are head teachers and the rest 5 or 2.1% are care givers to the child.

Question Three: To what extent does the annual income of parent affect the academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria?

s/no	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD
1	Higher family income positively correlates with better academic performance among pupils.	91	112	28	4	3.234	0.722
2	Financial resources available to parents significantly impact their children's educational outcomes.	60	140	31	4	3.089	0.670
3	Adequate access to educational resources due to higher income enhances pupils' academic success.	69	130	34	2	3.132	0.675
4	Economic stability in the household contributes to a conducive learning environment for children.	73	125	33	4	3.136	0.709
5	Financial constraints within families hinder academic progress among pupils.	80	109	43	3	3.132	0.747
	Cumulative Mean					***3.144***	

Decision Mean = 2.500

The extent to which the annual income of parent affect the academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria, is relatively high. Reason being that the respondents cumulative mean agreement level of 3.144 is above the 2.500 decision mean. For instance most are of the high opinion that Higher family income positively correlates with better academic performance among pupils, as this has the highest mean of 3.234 as details

showed that while 91 strongly agreed, 112 agreed as against 28 that disagreed and the rest 4 strongly disagreed. In the same vein, most believe that Economic stability in the household contributes to a conducive learning environment for children, as this attracted the second highest mean of 3.136 as details showed that while 73 strongly agreed, 125 agreed as against 33 that disagreed and the rest 4 strongly disagreed. In summary, The extent to which the annual income of parent affect the academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria, is relatively high *especially as* Higher family income positively correlates with better academic performance among pupils *and eco*nomic stability in the household contributes to a conducive learning environment for children.

Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between parent annual income and academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) statistics on relationship between parent annual income and academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria

Variables	*N*	*Mean*	*STD*	*Df*	*Correlation index*	*Critical r*	*P*
Academic Performances	*235*	78.2085	16.82220				
				233	*0.987***	*0.139*	*0.000*
parent annual income	*235*	15.7234	3.40376				

P = 0.000< 0.05, correlation index r value of 0.987 at df 233

Outcome of the above Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) statistics showed that significant relationship exist between parent annual income and academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria. Reasons being that the calculated p value of 0.000 is below the 0.05 alpha level of significance and the computed correlation index value of 0.987 is above the critical r value of 0.139 at df 333. The higher the parent annual income, the higher the academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level, and vice versa. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between P parent annual income and academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria, is hereby rejected.

Findings

Significant relationship exist between parent annual income and academic performance of pupils at pre-primary school level in Abuja, Nigeria at a computed correlation index value of 0.987 The higher the parent annual income, the higher the academic performance of pupils

at pre-primary school level, and vice versa. ***P = 0.000< 0.05, correlation index r value of 0.987 at df 233***

Discussion

From the analysis of data, the study revealed that the level of parental income background in relation to pupil's academic performance in pre-primary schools in Abuja, Nigeria was moderate. This means that parents could afford some education needs of their children in pre-primary schools in Abuja. This is in line with the discovery of Onabanjo (2000) who asserted that an average parents with such a small income can only take care of a small percentage of a child's education, such parents may only be able to pay school fees while the child is deprived of basic needs such as sandals, school uniform, textbooks and so on, which in turns make his performance in school very low.

Conclusion/Recommendation

Finding of this study is that parental income level has a great influence on students' academic achievement. For example, most cases, parental income is proportional to students finding which also determine to a large extent, the level of academic achievement of students. In this case, it is recommended that parents as a matter of importance should diversify their sources of income so that they can be able to provide fund their children in school for better academic achievement. Furthermore, governments should act as a designer for the entire process of educational system and the policy of fair education, to ensure the equitable distribution of educational resources in particular.

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