

Assessment of the Financial Status of Parents as a Correlate of Students' Academic Achievement in English Language in Public Secondary Schools in Uyo Local Government Area

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Abstract: The study sought to find out how the financial status of parents relate to academic achievement of the students in English language. Correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in selected public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The population of this study comprised senior secondary two students in Uyo Local Government Area. There are 14 public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area and the estimated population of SS2 students was 3162. Simple random sampling technique was used to select eight public secondary schools where 303 SS 2 students were randomly selected for the study. The instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Students Factors Questionnaire (SFQ)". The instrument was vetted and content validated by the researcher's supervisor and two lecturers who are experts in language education in the University of Uyo to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.97, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The data were analyzed using t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels. The study found out that parent with lucrative occupations provide sufficiently for their children academic pursuit. This will motivate their wards academic achievement. But student whose parents have low occupation standing find it difficult to achieve academic excellence. The study concluded that students/learners whose parents are rich and provide most of their children's requisitions in schools would perform academically better than students/learners whose parents are poor. Financial capacities enhance academic achievement. One of the recommendations made in the study was that teachers should dialogue with low-income parents to look for additional good business to augment their earnings in order to provide minimum learning/study materials to their children.

Keywords: Financial Status, Parents, Students' Academic Achievement, English Language, Public Secondary Schools and Uyo Local Government Area

Introduction

a student is faced with many factors, which can promote or mar his academic excellence. Such factors, which can inhibit or accelerate academic achievement, include physiological factors, psychological factors and environmental factors. The factors influencing a student in his learning process as enumerated above are both internal and external factors. A student who shows great interest in any activity will strive hard to go about it. At least he would have to succeed. But a student who is disenchanted in any learning process would perform poorly. Interests are sources of motivation which drive people to do what they want to do when they are free to choose. By implication, interest in a particular subject enhances the level of performance by the student.

Age is an important factor in the acquisition and learning of a second language like English Language Progress in learning depends to a greater extent on how early or lately a learner is exposed to the learning task. Several research findings have confirmed the influence of age on learning process. To learn a second language like English Language, Larew (1961) comments on the age influence thus: There are four separate areas of the human cerebral context devoted to vocations. There is age when the child has a remarkable capacity to utilize these areas for the learning of a language, a time when several languages can be learned simultaneously

as easily as one language. Later with the appearance of capacity for reason and abstract thinking, the early ability is lost.

Larew's comment is very instructive to every learner of a language. It stresses that acquisition and learning of a language is affected by age. Pupils or students who are not early exposed to English language would find it difficult to internalize the principles governing the acquisition and use of that language. The individual's level of maturity determines the extent of his readiness to learn a given concept. Certain concepts cannot be learnt until an individual grows up to a certain age. A child, for instance, does not possess the same mental equipment as an adult. That is why he would not understand such abstract concepts as democracy, freedom and justice.

Home environment influences positively and negatively, the academic performance of a student. Students from poverty-stricken homes find it difficult to get educational materials that can boost their academic achievement. But some homes whose parents are rich would readily provide learning facilities to their children. This would contribute to their academic success. Onwuchekwa (1987) observes that the type of home a child comes from affects highly his mental capacities and emotional behavior. Where a child is poorly provided in terms of school requisitions, he might be emotionally disturbed especially on seeing his mates having enough of what he does not. He might appear inferior in the presence of his mates. This can affect his learning.

Statement of Problem

Students' performance in English language in Nigerian secondary schools, and students' interaction in spoken communication seem alarmingly disappointing. There seems to be a national outcry on poor output of students in English language. This dismal performance affects the social, economic, political and educational factors in Nigeria. The above fact is derived from the report of West African School Certificate English Language Examination Students' performances. Regrettably, the society passes the bug of poor performance by students on teachers. Student-learner himself might be the cause of his dismal performance in English language. Home and school environments are likely the cause of poor performance of senior secondary school students in Akwa Ibom State in particular and Nigeria in general.

Purpose of the study

The objectives of this study include:

1. To find out how the financial status of parents relate to academic achievement of the students in English language.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. What is the relationship between the financial background of a student and his academic achievement in English Language?

Hypotheses

Base on the research questions, the following null hypotheses were put up:

1. There is no significant relationship between the financial status of the students and his academic achievement in English Language.

Conceptual Review

Financial and occupational backgrounds and a student academic achievement

Home environment is an important factor which influences to a greater extent, the academic achievement of a student in English Language. Home situation can make or mar a student's academic performance. Where home condition is conducive, a student will be enriched and motivated to study hard to succeed. But where the condition of home is unfriendly and unfavourable, a student interest in education and inherent potentialities are dampened. Adeyemo (1970) stresses that for learning to be effective and for the desired achievement to be obtained; the learning environment should create room for freedom and flexibility.

Parents have a lot of influence on the academic performance of their children in schools. They are the first teachers at home. Their ability to groom them early in life at home would exert significant influence on their total output in school. That is why Ebeniro (1987) asserts that parents are the social agents for language acquisition and development.

The influence of home environment on academic achievement of a student in English is extensively illustrated by Akpan (1996). He explains that learning environment which may be home or schools have a role

of providing the needed materials and standards through which the desired achievement in learning may be reached. He therefore, listed factors in the home environment that may influence achievement in schools to include parents' educational attainment, economic status of the parents, facilities such as radio, television in the home and other supporting learning imports.

The learning facilities at home outlined by Akpan can only be effective and beneficial to the students with close monitoring by the parents. If not so, the students might learn negative part of what the watch on screen or spend time watching movies to their academic detriment.

Occupation undertaken by parents can affect the performance of a student in English Language. Parents who have lucrative work would provide sufficiently for their children's academic success. But parents who engage in menial work and earn meager allowance may not provide all the school requirements to their children.

Parents' occupation may have some decided influence on the children's vocational interest. He argues that in Nigeria, there is a competition for prestigious as well as lucrative occupation between the rich and the poor families. The rich families aspire to maintain the statuesque by encouraging their children to train for the prestigious and lucrative positions. But he goes on to observe that moves of the poor families put in a great deal of their resources on their children to see that they rise above the poverty circle that has engulfed their families.

Parents have interest and choice of future career for their children. They, therefore, strive to invest on their children education to realize their expectations. The occupation of the highly and lowly placed parents contributes to the academic achievement of their children.

Many researchers have confirmed that the financial as well as occupational status of parents exert great influence on the academic achievement of students. Dubey et al (1989) emphasize that the relationship of socio-economic status, achievement is always consistent, no matter whether the measure of status is occupation of the father, education of parents, income of the family or a combination of these. They argue that the father's occupation or socio-economic status tends to be strongly associated with the style of interaction between members of the family.

Other researchers who prove that financial, occupational and educational levels of parents, significantly determine academic achievements of students include Azikiwe (1985), Ayodele (1987), Uqwuoke (1990), Ndukah (1991) etc.

Methodology

Correlational survey design was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in selected public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State. The population of this study comprised senior secondary two students in Uyo Local Government Area. There are 14 public secondary schools in Uyo Local Government Area and the estimated population of SS2 students was 3162. Simple random sampling technique was used to select eight public secondary schools where 303 SS 2 students were randomly selected for the study. The instrument used in this study for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Students Factors Questionnaire (SFQ)". The instrument was vetted and content validated by the researcher's supervisor and two lecturers who are experts in language education in the University of Uyo to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.97, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The data were analyzed using t-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics analysis. The test for significance was done at 0.05 alpha levels.

Results

Testing of Hypothesis

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between the financial status of a student and his academic achievement in English Language.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used in testing the hypothesis and summary data for computing correction coefficient shown in table 1.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between the financial status and academic achievement of students in English Language.

Variables	Σ	Σ^2	Σxy	df	r	Sig of r
Financial status (x)	6094	1051768				significant
			240444	301	0.6415*	
Achievement (y)	10018	3176221				

Critical r = 0.88
df = 301

Since the computed r (.6415) was greater than the critical r (.88) at df of 301 and .05 level of significant; the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus financial status of students significantly relates to their academic achievement.

Discussion of Findings

The null hypothesis states that financial status does not significantly influence the academic achievement of a student in English Language. But the results prove that a student's financial status significantly influences the academic achievement of a student. These findings agree with the research result of Onwuchekwa (1987) who observes that the type of home a child comes from affects highly his mental capacities and emotional behaviour. When a child is poorly provided for in terms of school requisitions, he might be emotionally disturbed especially on seeing his mates having enough of what he does not. He might appear inferior in the presence of his mates. This can affect his learning. The results are also consistent with the findings of Oladele (1984) which states that children from socio-economic viable homes develop language facilities earlier in life than children from poor homes.

Conclusion

It is very obvious that parents with lucrative occupations provide sufficiently for their children academic pursuit. This will motivate their wards academic achievement. But student whose parents have low occupation standing find it difficult to achieve academic excellence. It is therefore concluded that students/learners whose parents are rich and provide most of their children's requisitions in schools would perform academically better than students/learners whose parents are poor. Financial capacities enhance academic achievement.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should dialogue with low-income parents to look for additional good business to augment their earnings in order to provide minimum learning/study materials to their children.
2. English teachers should encourage students who do not have English textbooks to make friends with English textbooks in the school library.

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