

Home Structure and Academic Performance of Students in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State: Implications for Counselling

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between home structure and academic performance of public secondary school students in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State. Three hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study utilized survey correlational design. The population of the study consisted of all public senior secondary school students in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State totaling five thousand, nine hundred and eighty three students. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 300 students. A self-constructed questionnaire titled "Home Structure and Academic Performance Questionnaire" (HSAPQ) was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The reliability of instrument was established using test- retest method and a coefficient of 0.72 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using Point bi-serial and Pearson product moment correlation statistical models. The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship among home structure, gender of parents, parental involvement and academic performance of students. On the basis of these findings, it was recommended that parents (single or intact) should be enlightened on the importance of the home structure on academic performance of their children, and the need to mobilize their resources in ensuring a high level of academic performance for their children/wards.

Keywords: Home structure, Academic Performance, Public Secondary School, Parental Involvement.

Introduction

Parents lay the psychological, moral and spiritual foundations for the overall development of their children. While the mother's significant role in this cannot be over emphasized, studies on father- child relationship suggest that the presence of a father in the home influences, significantly, the development of a

child. (Agulanna, 2000). Thus, parenthood is a responsibility requiring the full corporation of both parents who must ensure total development of their offspring. Structurally, a home is either broken or intact. A broken home or single parent home, in this context, is one that is not structurally intact for various reasons; death of a parent, divorce, separation, desertion and illegitimacy in which case, the family was never complete. Smith (2008) posited that conventionally, religious establishments, media and most of the government entities define the ideal family as that which comprises of two happily married, heterosexual biological parents living with their children. The above assertion implies that single parenting is deviant from what the society regards as an ideal family structure.

It has been critically observed that the structure of the home a child comes from can greatly influence his or her academic performance at school, in the view of Ajila & Olutola (2007), the structure of the home (single parent or intact) affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in an individual's life. This is because household background and its impact on the child may influence his or her reactions to life situation and his level of performance at school. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during school periods, yet parents and the individual's experience at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child. Nyakor (2011), in his study, believed that in order to help alleviate the problems that plague educational system today, the right parenting is crucial in developing the right human resources who can take part in the national development. He added that if the child's cognition develops positively or negatively and influence academic attainment, it is based largely on the structure of family the child is groomed, which implies that home structure may have some negative effects on the child's academic performance. It therefore, appears that there is a relationship between parenting structure and academic performance.

Education of a child comes in so many ways; through the parents, family, friends, and relatives. These are primary agents of socialization for the child to ensure that he or she becomes a responsible adult. It can also come through peer groups, church, etc. The child equally learns from the society about the right attitudes, norms and values of the people. Education, according to Don (2012), refers to a course of intellectual development, planning one's understanding and finding a diversity of trustworthy ways to ideal situation. He went further to identify three role players to include learners as the agent, teachers as the knowledge facilitator, learning situation which represents all the natural, emotional, traditional, societal and environmental elements which can interact

with the teacher and the needed experiences. It can, therefore, be appreciated that the education of a child starts from home by parents (mother or father). Parents are, no doubt, the key agents in the development of their children. A situation where this task is one-sided with either mother or father alone (single parent) it may affect the child's overall development.

Academic performance is the extent to which long term educational goals are achieved by the students, teachers or institutions. It is often measured by examinations (both internal and external) as well as continuous assessment. Nwokocha & Amadike (2005) defined academic performance as a yardstick for measuring a nation's quality of education. Hence, it is necessary that a high performance both in internal and external examinations is maintained at every stage of academic pursuit especially at secondary school stage because this level determines if the learner will attain further academic qualifications.

Over the years, reports of external examination bodies such as West African Examination Council (especially from 2012-2014) indicated poor performance of students in public examination, findings by Adeyemi (2008) and Asikhia (2010), and publications on the pages of punch newspaper (September 27, 2008), also supported the above claim. The progressive decline of students' performance is not only disheartening to students, but also to parents and the society at large. Since the family is regarded as the central agent of socialization from where education of the child starts, and the basis where future academic study is laid, it may be safe to infer that parents, therefore, have significant roles to play in ensuring high level of academic success.

Other factors that could determine academic performance of student include gender of a parent, parental involvement, and so on. Since the family is a potent measure in determining the academic success of students, there is urgent need to reappraise its structure, vis-a-vis the aforementioned factors, bearing in mind that the task of parenting requires child nurturing, care must be given in the area of providing expected moral standards of the particular society, economic consideration (finance), physical presence, guidance and tutelage, protection, motivation, as well as a host of responsibilities. These responsibilities are simply overwhelming for a single parent. Seemingly, inability to carry out these responsibilities may cause psychological distress in the children; this situation, at the end, may affect the child's attentiveness in school.

Gender of a parent has also been highlighted as one of the predictors of academic success due to its impacts on the formative years of the child. Data by Encyclopedia of marriage and family (2003) According to Roberts (2003), suggests that the highest percentage of single families are headed by women. Consequently, in a female headed household, there may be a likelihood of limited

parental control and support to the children as a result of the father's absence. Father's position is so significant that his presence in the life of the child may be of utmost advantage. Nasser (2000) provided a detailed distinction between the gender of single parents and its influence on the academic performance of students. She explained that the family has to carry out its duties and responsibilities as the principal educator and supervisor of morals. In this regard, if the family is headed by a single parent, it might be difficult for the parent to provide the required child nurturing as expected by the moral standards of a society. This is due to reasons beyond his or her biological make-up. Salami and Alawode (2000) also pointed out that both parents have roles to play in the child's education. It is the responsibility of the father to provide the tools needed for educational advancement while the mother is to supplement the effort of the father in this regard. Therefore, when the father is absent and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for all the basic needs of the child, as well as supervise their academic activities, the child's performance in school may begin to decline. The same thing occurs when the mother is absent and the father is not privileged.

Parental involvement in the child's academic pursuit may contribute towards the academic performance of students. Educational institutions link parental involvement to parental duties towards educational advancement and achievement of the child. Involvement, here, refers to the time and participation as well as level of motivation put in the child's education. Domina (2005) reported that various levels of parental involvement bear individual associations; in other words, parental involvement could be at school or at home. Whichever be the case, the amount of parental involvement is inexhaustible; it includes the amount of time a parent devotes in monitoring the academic activities of the child, encouraging them to perform better, providing them with the required materials needed to enhance learning, motivating them on the need to realize and pursue their innate potentials as well as protecting them from harm. The importance of parental involvement in their children's academic performance cannot be over emphasized; parents are to attend Parents Teachers Association meetings, discuss the child's academic progress, and assist them with their homework. Alike and Ohanaka (2013) examined the role of counselling and parental encouragement on re-entry of adolescents into secondary schools and found that there is a significant relationship between parental encouragement and educational attainment of adolescents. Parental encouragement here involves parental involvement. Sharing the same view on parental involvement and academic performance, Donkor (2010), stressed that lack of parental supervision and monitoring of progress in school leads to poor academic performance of their children. He further

emphasized that parents who actively engage themselves in the academic activities of their children are most likely to have a positive influence on their academic performance.

This study therefore attempts to investigate the relationship between home structure and academic performance of students in Ika North East Local government of Delta State with a view to assessing their relationship on academic performance of Senior Secondary school students.

Statement of the Problem

Academic performance is a major goal in education, hence, it continues to interest educational researchers and practitioners alike. Considering the outcome of results declared by some examination bodies like the West African Examination Council (WAEC, 2012, 2013 and 2014), it was revealed that in Delta state, only 48.06% of students who sat for the examination obtained a credit pass in Mathematics and English. In 2013, the performance reduced to 46.49 % while in 2014, a poorer statistics of 39.74% was recorded. In line with the research carried out by Adeyemi (2008) and Asikhia (2010) which revealed that students perform poorly in examinations, it became obvious that academic performance of students is assuming a downward trend. While the exact cause of poor academic performance is yet to be ascertained, scholars in the field of education observed that it could be attributed to so many factors of which home structure has been given little or no credence. There is a global awareness on the importance of home structure on students' academic performance. In Nigeria, while some homes are intact, others are not, as a result of divorce, separation, death of a spouse, and at times incompatibility of couples. This has led to separation of couples and their children. As a result of these changes in family structure, children may find it difficult to adjust in school, (Ajila & Olutola, 2007). There is dearth in statistics of single parented children as well as children from intact homes in Ika North East Local Government Area. Since education of the child starts from home (father and mother), it is intuitively appealing that both parents are to play complimentary roles to ensure the academic success of their children. It, therefore, becomes imperative for this study to investigate the relationship between home structure, as well as other intervening variables and academic performance of students in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between home structure and academic performance of secondary school students in Ika

North East Local Government Area of Delta State. Specifically, the study investigated if;

- Students' academic performance is attributable to their home structure (single or intact);
- Gender of a parent has a significant relationship with academic performance of students; and
- Parental involvement influences the academic performance of students.

Research Questions

To guide the study, the following questions were raised;

1. Is there any relationship between home structure and academic performance of students?
2. Is there any relationship between gender of a parent and academic performance of students?
3. Does parental involvement influence the academic performance of students?

Hypotheses

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

- There is no significant relationship between home structure and academic performance of students
- There is no significant relationship between gender of parents and academic performance of students
- Parental involvement has no significant influence on academic performance of students.

Methodology

This study utilized Correlational survey research design. Correlational survey is a research design that seeks to determine whether, and to what magnitude or degree a relationship exists between two variables or among groups of variables of a study. The purpose of correlational survey research design is to find out the relationship between quantifiable variables of a study. The population of the study consisted of all senior secondary school students of the public secondary schools in Ika North East Local Government Area of Delta State. Information obtained from Ministry of Basic & Secondary Education Owa Oyibu Delta State indicates that there are twenty public Secondary schools with a total population of 5,983 students (five thousand, nine hundred and eighty

three). The information also revealed that all the schools are mixed Secondary schools. Simple random sampling was used to select the participants for the study. The participants were selected from both single parents and intact homes. The sample size for this study consisted of three hundred (300) Senior Secondary School students. The respondents were randomly selected from ten public Secondary schools in Ika North East local government area. In each of the schools, 30 students were drawn.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled “Home structure and Academic Performance of Students Questionnaire” (HSAPQ). The questionnaire consists of sections A, B and C. Section A sought the demographic data of the respondents. Section B was meant to find out the home structure, gender of parents and parental involvement of the respondents. Section C is a pro forma on students’ academic performance in English Language and Mathematics from where the average scores were drawn. The academic performance of students was obtained from their performance in English Language and Mathematics in their previous academic record of the schools’ internal examination. Scores less than 50% was regarded as poor performance. Scores between 50% and 69% is regarded as good performance. Scores of 70% and above is regarded as very good performance. The above decision was derived from teachers as the current standard of grading student’s academic performance.

In order to ensure face and content validity, the initial draft of the instrument was validated by three experts in the department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology. The two researchers therefore, reconstructed the instrument based on suggestions and recommendations of the experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest method. Data collected from 20 respondents in the trial testing of the instrument was used in establishing the internal consistency which yielded 0.72. This result showed that the instrument was reliable, which means it is good for the study.

Methods of Data Analysis

Hypothesis 1 was tested using Point biserial correlation statistics. Pearson product moment correlation was used to test hypotheses 2 and 3. While Pearson product moment correlation measures the linear relationship between two or more variables of a study; Point biserial is used to determine the strength and direction of the association that exists between one continuous and one dichotomous variable. All research hypotheses were tested at 0.05, level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between home structure and academic performance of students

Table 1: Point biserial correlation between home structure and Academic performance.

	Home structure	Academic performance
Home Structure Pearson correlation	0.220	1
Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
N	300	300

As shown in Table 1, there is a significant relationship between home structure and academic performance of students which was statistically significant at alpha level of 0.05($r_{pb} = 0.220$, $p\text{-value} = .000$, $n = 300$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between home structure and academic performance of students was rejected. This implies that both students from single parents and intact homes perform poorly in academics. The conclusion is drawn that the structure of home a child comes from (single or intact) has a significant relationship with his or her academic performance.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between gender of parents and academic performance of students.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Analysis between gender of parents and Academic performance

	Gender of parents	Academic performance
Academic performance Pearson correlation	-.187	1
Sig.(2-tailed)	.001	
N	300	300

From the data in Table 2, there is a significant relationship between gender of parents and academic performance of students, which was statistically

significant at 0.05. ($r = -.187$, $p\text{-value} = .001$, $n=300$). Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between gender of parents and students' academic performance was rejected. It is, therefore, concluded that gender of a parent has a significant relationship with academic performance of students.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and academic performance of students.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Analysis between parental involvement and Academic performance

	Parental involvement	Academic performance
Academic performance Pearson correlation	.149	1
Sig.(2-tailed)	.010	
N	300	300

As shown in Table 3, there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and academic performance of students, which was statistically significant at alpha level of 0.05. ($r = .149$, $p\text{-value} = .010$, $n=300$). Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between parental involvement and students' academic performance was rejected. It is concluded that there is a relationship between parental involvement and academic performance of students.

Discussion of Findings

With regards to the first hypothesis, the findings showed that the structure of the home a child comes from (single or intact) is a contributory factor to students' academic performance. The above finding collaborates the findings of Ajila & Olutola (2007) who found that the structure of the home a child comes from affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in an individual's life. This is because household background and its impact on the child may influence his or her reactions to life situation and his level of performance at school. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during school periods, yet parents and the

individual's experience at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child. In line with the study carried out by Nyakor (2011) he concluded that in order to help alleviate the problems that plaque educational system today, the right parenting is crucial in developing the right human resources who can take part in national development. He added that if the child's cognition may develop positively or negatively and influence academic attainment, it is based largely on the structure of family the child is groomed, which implies that home structure may have some effects on the child's academic performance.

The result of the second hypothesis revealed that a significant relationship exists between gender of parents and academic performance of students. This is in conformity with Nasser (2000) who provided a detailed distinction about the gender of single parents and its influence on the academic performance of students. She explained that the family has to carry out its duties and responsibilities as the principal educator and supervisor of morals. In this regard, if the family is headed by a single parent, it might be difficult for him or her to provide the required child nurturing as expected by the moral standards of a society, this is due to reasons beyond his or her biological make-up. Salami and Alawode (2000) also pointed out that both parents have roles to play in the child's education. It is the responsibility of the father to provide the necessary tools needed for educational advancement while the mother is to supplement the effort of the father in this regard. Therefore, when the father is absent and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for the basic needs of the child, as well as supervise their academic activities, the child's performance in school may experience decline. The same thing occurs when the mother is absent and the father is not privileged.

With regards to hypothesis three, a significant relationship exists between parental involvement and academic performance. This is in agreement with the findings of Donkor (2010) who found that lack of proper parental monitoring and supervision of their children's progress in schools leads to poor academic performance. He further emphasized that parents who actively engage themselves in the academic activities of their children are most likely to have a positive influence on their academic performance. Similarly, Domina (2005) reported that various levels of parental involvement bear individual associations. In other words, parental involvement could be at school or at home. Whichever be the case, the amount of parental involvement is inexhaustible, it includes the amount of time a parent devotes in monitoring the academic activities of the child, encouraging them to perform better, providing them with the required materials

needed to enhance learning, motivating them on the need to realize and pursue their innate potentials, as well as protecting them from harm.

Counselling Implications

The findings of this study have implications for parents, students, teachers as well as ministry of Education. There is an urgent need for parents to strive to discharge their parental duties, so as to improve the children's welfare and academic performance, thereby lessening the workload of teachers, school authorities, counsellors, ministry of education, Government and the society at large.

Motivation and academic performance go side by side with each other. If a child is well motivated, the achievement is greater, which implies that the better the motivation, the better the academic performance. This study calls for the need for parents to be made to realize the importance of motivation in determining their children's academic performance in school, especially the realization that students at adolescent stage are already faced with developmental turmoil, storm and stress as well as indecisiveness relating to career/academic choices. Motivation here involves ensuring that adequate learning materials are provided for students, prompt payment of school fees, arranging for extra moral lessons, liaising with teachers to monitor child's progress in school and so on. Giving serious attention to students at home to ensure that maximum effort is put in their studies is also an indicative of parental motivation.

There is need for single mothers to be aware that enforcement of disciplinary measures at home is not limited to a father alone. Single fathers should equally strive to diversify their fatherly roles to include general child nurturing; this will help facilitate the psychological wellbeing of the children.

It is a general knowledge that students come to school from varying background, hence, knowledge of this will help class teachers scrutinize and study individual cases of students that are enrolled in the school and learn about their family backgrounds so that those that need special attention can be identified and referred to the school counsellors. School managers also need to make every effort to strengthen the relationship between the home and the school through active practical partnership such as Parents Teachers Association, the Guidance committee, visit to students' homes and so on.

It is important that external examination bodies such as WAEC and NECO as well as Ministry of Education realize that poor academic performance of students might be attributable to some other factors that could conflict with the student's individual knowledge; one of such is home structure. By implication, there is need for the Ministry of Education to deploy qualified guidance

counsellors to assist students from disrupted homes in making academic vocational and personal- socio adjustments.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was deduced that home structure and academic performance are positively related. This implies that the structure of home a child comes from (single or intact) has a significant effect on his or her academic performance. The fact established in this study has also brought about the conclusion that gender of a single parent has a significant relationship with their children's academic performance. It was also reported that low parental involvement in their children's academic pursuit leads to poor academic performance of students. Hence, parents should understand the importance of the home structure on academic performance of their children, and ensure a high level of academic performance for their children/wards.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations put forward as a result of outcome of this study.

- There is need to keep enlightening parents (single or intact) on the importance of home structure on the academic performance of their children. Hence they should mobilize their resources in ensuring a high level of academic performance for their children/wards.
- Single parents should strive to maintain a balance in discharging their parental duties, irrespective of perceived gender differences.
- Parents should apportion their time in such a way that they would be able to aid their children in doing homework, give them tidbits on becoming academically successful, visit their children's school to find out their performance in class as well as provide them with all materials they require for their studies.

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