

**SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DETERMINANTS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN THE FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA,
NIGERIA: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS.**

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Abstract

This study examined the socio-demographic determinants of academic achievement among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. The study is premised on the foundation of Vision 2030 and its priority for education as a major component of the social pillar of the world economy. This is also, coupled with its highlight on socio-demographic factors as major component of academic achievement among adolescents who made up the secondary school population. Descriptive design method was employed for the study, with a sample of 150 participants, which comprise of 74 (49.3%) male and 76 (50.7%) female students who were selected through a simple random sampling technique. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire developed by the Researchers, and Parent Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) developed by Buri (1991) respectively. Three hypotheses were tested using t-test for independence and multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. Results demonstrated significant parenting styles difference on academic achievement [$t(148) = 3.89; P < .05$]. Additionally, result revealed a significant gender difference on academic achievement [$t(148) = 3.21; P < .05$]. Lastly, findings shows a significant joint prediction of demographic variables on academic achievement $\{R = .26; R^2 = .06 F(3, 146) = 3.47; P < .05\}$, and independently, socio-economic status $\{\beta = -.23; t = -2.792; P < .05\}$, and $\{\beta = .01; t = .04; P < .05\}$ was found to have significant independent prediction; and family background shows insignificant prediction on academic achievement $\{\beta = .12; t = 1.43; P < .05\}$. The study concluded that parenting styles and demographic factors have impact on academic achievement among adolescent students in Nigeria. It is recommended that the Ministry of Education should organise guidance and counselling programmes in the communities to sensitize and educate parents on various parenting issues.

Key words: Parenting Styles, Adolescent Students, Demographic, Academic Achievement, Federal Capital Territory, Secondary School

Introduction

The development of any society is directly connected with students' academic performance. This is because student academic performance plays a crucial role in bringing qualitative graduates who will move a country to the right path of achieving one of the main Sustainable Development Goals that African countries including Nigeria needs to achieve by the year 2030. Owing to this, academic achievement has been pointed out as an instrument for eradication of poverty and inequality and as well as a tool for economic development (World Bank, 2002). In particular, the Nigeria Vision 2030 has further echoed this by identifying academic achievement as a major component of the social pillar of the vision. Conversely, poor student academic achievement is not only frustrating the students and parents, its effects are equally grave on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics (Aremu & Sokan 2003).

On this note, academic achievement has been defined by many authors. For instance, academic achievement to Iwundu (1995) is the degree or level of success attained at the end of an academic endeavour. Other scholars conceived academic achievement as the successful attainment of goal, requiring a certain effort in a discipline or a subject or the degree of success attained in an academic pursuit or endeavour (Onyejiaku, 1987). In the context of this study, academic achievement can be seen as a yardstick for measuring one's level of academic prowess by assessing the academic performance of the individual through test and systematic observation. A lot of psychosocial constructs are said to influence students' academic achievement of which Mushtaq & Nawaz (2012) stated that academic achievement is affected by social, psychological, economic, environmental and personal factors, and that student's academic achievement could be either positive or negative, and it varies from one society to another.

Parenting style is considered to have influence on students' academic achievement. In furtherance to this, parenting is a complex activity that includes many specific behaviours that work individually and together to influence child outcomes. Although specific parenting styles, such as authoritative, authoritarian or permissive, may influence child development, looking at any specific behaviour in isolation therefore may be misleading. Many writers have noticed that specific parenting practices are less important in predicting child wellbeing than is the broad pattern of parenting (Watkins, 1996; Adunola, 2011). Most researchers who attempt to describe this broad parental setting rely on Diana Baumrind's -concept of parenting style. The construct of parenting style is used to capture normal variations in parents' attempts to control and socialize their children (Baumrind, 1991). Research has also shown that interaction between children and parents and how parents communicate with children are considered to be the most important and fundamental factors among the various factors that affect children' fostering and healthy character (Kimble, 2014). As a result, this construct of parenting style can be defined as a set or a system of behaviours that describes the parent and child interactions over a wide range of situations and creates an effective interaction atmosphere (Kimble, 2014). In this context, it refers to the manner in which parents raise their children i.e. the methods of bringing up a child as well as the style of discipline and home training that the parent's utilize to enforce their expectations on that individual especially during childhood to adulthood. Parenting is considered to be an important determinant of several aspects of children's outcome (Gadeyne, Ghesquiere, & Onghena, 2004), optimism (Baldwin, McIntyre, & Hardaway, 2007), motivation (Gonzalez & Wolters, 2006), confidence (Strage & Brandt, 1999), externalizing problem behavior and attention problems (Gadeyne, Ghesquiere, & Onghena, 2004), psychopathology and growth (Baldwin, McIntyre, & Hardaway, 2007).

Gender is another variable consider in this study. As such, gender as personal variables have been related to the differences found in motivational functioning and academic achievement. Different researches have demonstrated the existence of different attribution patterns in boys and girls, such that while girls tend to give more emphasis to effort when explaining their performance (Georgiou, 1999), boys appeal more to reasoning ability as cause of their academic achievement (Burgner & Hewstone, 1993). Gender is the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioural characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between the feminine and masculine (female and male) population. Many researchers have also pointed out that girls usually make external attributions for successes and failures, and that when they make internal attributions, these refer not so much to effort, but to ability (Dev, 2016). However, boys usually attribute successes to stable internal causes like effort, thus showing an attribution pattern which enables them to enhance their own image of themselves (Smith, Sinclair & Chapman, 2002; Klein, 2004).

Previous studies on students' academic performance indicated that there exist several factors that influence students' academic achievement; but students and lecturers' attitudes, students' academic self-efficacy and students-lecturers' interaction remained the key determinant of academic performance (Maina, 2012; Adeyemo, 2007; Fan, 2012; Ganyaupfu, 2013). Similar findings, despite their scope and perhaps depth, only examined through univariate approach; the relationship between one and a combination of two variables as a correlate of academic achievement. This background emphasized the need to bring into focus a research

approach which examined three psycho-social variables, gender and parental styles influence in improving academic achievement among adolescent students. To fill this gap, it is the researchers' contention that a better understanding of these variables would be of considerable help in improving intellectual functioning for better academic achievement in Nigeria with a view to improving adjustment for high academic achievement. Hence, the present study examined socio-demographic determinants of academic achievement among students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Previous findings on the related subject matter have been inconsistent. Given this, some studies informed that, economic position of parents is one of major factors that can influence greatly the educational upbringing of a child. Orhunger (1990) adds that a low-income family with plenty of feeding problems may produce children whose physical and mental development poses real challenges to the schools' effort at optimum development of the child. Similarly, Uche (2010) stressed on the parental socio-economic status of the children of literate and high income parents perform better in school than those from poor and uneducated parents. He stressed further that children from high socio-economic homes eat balanced diet, enjoy good health and facilities that stimulate their intellectual activity and make them perform better academically than their counterparts who indulge in smoking cigarette, India hemp which have scattered their brain which may result to poor performance. He asserts that adolescent who come from homes regarded as having good or high socio-economic status may tend to do better than those who have poor homes. Study by Musgrave (1977) revealed that insufficient parental income; family type and lack of funding by government are factors influencing student's academic performance. The finding also suggests that, students from lower income, lower educated families are less likely to succeed academically in high school.

Objectives of the study

The study sought to achieve following objectives:

1. To find out significant parenting style difference (permissive and authoritative styles) on academic performance among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
2. To assess the significant gender difference on academic achievement among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.
3. To examine the significant joint and independent prediction of demographic variables (Family background, socio-economic status and parental educational qualification) on academic performance among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

Given the review of extant studies, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Adolescent students who experienced authoritative parenting style will record higher academic achievement than adolescent students who experienced permissive parenting style.
2. Female adolescent students will significantly report higher academic achievement than their male counterparts
3. Demographic variables (Family background, socio-economic status and parental educational qualifications) will have significant joint and independent prediction on academic achievement among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Significance of the study

This study is relevant in measuring students' academic achievement by taking into consideration certain factors such as gender, socio-economic status and parenting styles. In addition, the research will go a long way to explore how one segment of the population differs or is similar to the other population in the level of academic achievement. More importantly, the research findings will be helpful in identifying the factors that affect students' academic achievement, including providing information for making students experience more satisfaction academically and subsequent high performance. More so, the study will also contribute substantially, policies which to be adopted by stakeholders in the areas of students' academic performance

and its parameters and indicators. Lastly, the findings will be of tremendous help to other scholars and researchers on the subject matter especially in academic settings in Nigeria.

Methodology

Research Design

The research was conducted using descriptive research design. This design was adopted because it described the phenomena under study in its natural settings. It was also used because the data collected was generalized to the entire population under study. The dependent variable is academic achievement and the independent variables are demographic factors (gender, socioeconomic background, parental style and education, and family background).

Setting

The study was carried out among five (5) selected secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. The Area Councils where the schools were selected comprise of Bwari, Gwagwalada and Municipal Area Councils. The Councils have over 40 public secondary schools which are either categorised as girls or boys' schools or mixed day schools.

Participants' Sampling and Sampling Techniques

The samples for this study were selected through simple random sampling technique. This was to ensure that each of the schools was given a fair chance of being selected for the study. Five (5) secondary schools were randomly selected and thirty (30) Senior Secondary Students 1 (SSS1) from each of these schools were also randomly selected, which gave a total sample of one hundred and fifty (150) students.

The participants comprise of 74 (49.3%) male and 76 (50.7%) female students. From this study, a larger proportion of the sample population of 112 (74.7%) indicated to be from a monogamous family, while the remaining 38 (25.3%) were from a polygamous family. Also, frequency distribution for highest parental educational qualification revealed that 8 (5.3%) parents are primary school leavers, 17 (11.3%) indicated their parents to be SSCE holders, 58 (38.7%) signified that their parents are OND/NCE holders, 47 (31.3%) parents are BSc/HND holders, 19 (12.7%) parents are MSc/MBA holders, while the remaining individuals have other degrees not indicated in the option. Finally, socio-economic frequency shows that 53 (35.3%) of the study participants indicated to belong to the low socio-economic class, 75 (50%) belong to the medium class, while the remaining 22 (14.7%) signified to belong to the high socio-economic class.

Research Instruments

The first source of data was derived from a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of six items measuring the socio-demographic variables of the participants, such as gender, family background, highest parental educational qualification, ethnic background, religion and family socio-economic status. Participants were required to provide personal information on those items.

The second source of data, which is the scores of students' academic performance, was measured using the students' previous performance. This was sought from the school authority. The study only concentrated on certain general subjects offered by all students in the schools. These were: economics, mathematics, English and biology. Each students score on each subjects were rounded to 100%. However, the average score of each student on the four subjects was gotten and made all over 100%.

The third source of data was collected through the Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) developed by Buri (1991). It has been used to measure the control dimension of parenting style. The PAQ likert-type of questionnaire designed to measure the permissive and authoritative parenting styles. PAQ assesses the magnitude and manner in which authority is exercised. Each item of the questionnaire is stated from the point of view of an individual evaluating the patterns of authority exercised by his or her parents. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Each part comprise of 30 items and yields permissive and authoritative

score. Responses to each of these items were made on 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). It has a reliability estimate of $\alpha = .86$ and $.75$ for the two parenting style subscales respectively. However, this study reported a general Cronbach Alpha of $\alpha = .79$.

Procedure

The instruments were administered to the participants on days approved by the school authorities for the exercise. The researchers were assisted by school guidance and counsellors in the administration and collection of the instruments. In each of the selected schools, the instruments were administered and collected on the same day of the administration. On the whole, data collection lasted for two weeks. Out of the two hundred (200) questionnaires distributed, only 150 were properly filled and considered useful for research purpose.

Data Analysis

Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse questions relating to the demographic characteristics of the participants. While t-test was used to analyse the data to test hypotheses 1 & 2. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test hypothesis 3 at 0.05 level of significance

Results and Discussions

First hypothesis of the study states that adolescents' students who have authoritative parenting style will record higher academic achievement than adolescents' students who reported permissive parenting style. This was tested using t-test for independent samples and the result is presented in table 1.

Table1: Summary of t-test for the independent samples showing the difference between authoritative and permissive parenting styles on academic achievement among selected secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria.

DV	Parenting style	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	p
Academic performance	Authoritative	70	58.56	9.88	148	3.89	<.05
	Permissive	80	52.09	10.39			

** $p < .05$.

Table 1 of the study presents the difference between authoritative and permissive parenting styles on academic achievement. Going by the result outcome, parenting style had significant effect on academic achievement [t (148) = 3.89; $P < .05$]. Additionally, the mean result of the two parenting styles shows that respondents with authoritative parents reported higher academic achievement ($\bar{X} = 58.56$; $SD = 9.88$) than those with permissive parenting style ($\bar{X} = 52.09$; $SD = 10.39$). This confirms the stated hypothesis, which earlier stated that adolescents' students who have authoritative parenting style will record higher academic achievement than adolescents' student who reported permissive parenting style. Hence, this hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis 2

Second hypothesis states that female adolescent students will report higher academic achievement than their male counterparts. This was tested using t-test for independent samples and the result is presented in table 2

Table 2: Summary of t-test for the Independent Samples Showing the Gender difference on Academic achievement among selected secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

DV	Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	df	t	p
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	Male	74	52.38	9.82			
Academic achievement					148	3.21	<.05
	Female	76	57.77	10.78			

** p< .05

Table 2 presents the difference of gender on academic achievement. The result revealed a significant gender difference on academic achievement [t (148) = 3.21; P<.05]. In furtherance to the result, the mean shows that female participants reported higher academic achievement ($\bar{X} = 57.77$; SD= 10.78) than their male counterparts ($\bar{X} = 52.38$; SD= 9.82). This implies that female adolescent students reported more academic achievement compared to male counterparts. This confirm the stated hypothesis, hence, this study hypothesis is retained.

Hypothesis 3

Demographic variables (Family background, socio-economic status and parental educational qualifications) will have significant joint and independent prediction on academic achievement among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. This was tested using multiple regression analysis and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Multiple Regression showing joint and independent predictions of demographic variables (family background, socio-economic status and parental educational qualifications) on academic achievement among selected secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

Variables	Beta	t-value	Sig	P	R	R ²	F
Family background	.12	1.43	>.05				
Socio-economic status (SES)	-.23	-2.79	<.05	<.05	.26	.06	3.47
Educational level of parents	.01	.04	<.05				

** p< .05

Table 3 presents the joint and independent predictions of demographic variables (family background, socio-economic status and parental levels of educational qualifications) on academic achievement among adolescent's secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Result shows that all the demographic variables had significant joint prediction on academic achievement {R= .26; R²= .06 F (3, 146) = 3.47; P<.05}. This implies that jointly, demographic variables (family background, socio-economic status and parental educational qualifications) predicted about 6% variance on academic achievement. Independently, socio-economic status { $\beta = -.23$; t= -2.792; P<.05}, and parental educational qualification { $\beta = .01$; t= .04; P<.05} were found to have significant independent prediction. While, family background shows insignificant prediction on academic achievement { $\beta = .12$; t= 1.43; P<.05}. This confirms the stated hypothesis, hence, was retained in this study.

Discussions

The current study has investigated socio-demographic determinants of academic achievement among secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

The first hypothesis which stated that there would be significant difference between authoritative and permissive parenting styles on academic achievement was confirmed. This implies that students who received authoritative parenting style score higher than their counterparts with permissive parental style on academic achievement. The plausible reason for this could be that over the years, one parenting style has being a guide and support to children in every situation, especially their academic successes. This finding is consistent with some previous works on this subject matter. Notable among them is the work of Strage & Brandt (1999), who examined the role of parenting styles in the lives of college students and found that

authoritative parenting behaviours continue to be important in the lives of college students as it provide them with confident and good performance. Also, results agrees with Baumrind (1991), who opined that adolescents who are reared in an authoritative environment “consistently score higher on measures of psychological competence and school achievement and lower on measures of internal distress, problem behaviour, than do adolescents from non-authoritative families” However, results totally disagree with other extended research findings that, students from a wide range of background tended to get lower grades when their descriptions of parental behaviours indicated more authoritarian, more permissive or authoritative Dornbusch et al. (1987), and of course parenting styles and college students’ grade point average (GPA) are not related (Joshi, Ferris, Otto, & Regan, 2003).

The second hypothesis states that there would be a significant gender difference on academic achievement. The results demonstrated that there is a significant difference between female and male students on academic achievement. The reason for this could be because girls and boys approach achievement situations differently. As such, girls are more likely to view their performance in academic settings as a direct display of their abilities, while boys approach achievement situations as a challenge and do not view these situations as a reflection of their abilities. This result is in line with some of the research findings which were of the opinion that gender difference in science achievement has disappeared (Bilesanmi-Awoderu, 2006; Din, Ming, & Esther, 2004; Erinoso, 2005; Freedman, 2002; Samuel & John, 2004). This also conform with other study that females performed better than males due to different factors like better class attendance, study skills and motivation (Dayiolu & Türüt, 2004). However, the findings of this study contradict the findings of Aguele & Uhumniah (2008); Billings (2000); Hyde & McKinley, (1997); Kolawole, (2007), who found in their studies, at various times, that male students achieved significantly better than female students in science subjects. Also, result disagree Meece & Jones (1996) who examined the fifth-and sixth-grade students enrolled in a science class revealed that no gender differences in students’ standardized test scores.

Lastly, the third hypothesis which stated that demographic variables (Family background, socio-economic status and parental educational qualification) will have significant joint and independent prediction on academic achievement was confirmed. On this note, the results of the hypothesis revealed that the three independent variables have a joint effect on the academic achievement of the participants. The magnitude of the effectiveness of the three independent variables was reflected in the value of $R = 0.483$ and R^2 (adjusted) = 0.224. The result thus demonstrated that 22.4% of the variance in the academic achievement of the fresh students is accounted for by the linear combination of the three variables. The result was further strengthened by the value of F – ratio ($f = 24.944$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that the capacity of the three independent variables to predict academic achievement could not have happened by chance. However, the finding is in consonance with the work of previous researchers (Adeyemo, 2007, Schnk & Pajares, 2001, Torubeli, 2004). Similarly, the study findings further agree with other extended study by Bean (1985), who suggested the importance of demographic aspects such as socio-economic status, influence the students’ socialization process at university, which in turn affect their academic performance. Conversely, the study disagreed with claims by Hawkes (1995), who says that student performances do not necessarily depend on parents’ professional competency or educational attainments. Results further contradict other research evidence that found that student performance is not a strongest predictor of overall academic success (Kaighobadi & Allen, 2008)

Conclusion

Conclusions are drawn based on the research findings. Therefore, the following could be concluded from this study; there is significant gender difference on academic achievement; hence, female adolescents are concluded to be high performers academically than their male counterpart. Furthermore, combination of demographic variables had significant joint and independent prediction on academic achievement, while

only family background was insignificant in prediction of academic achievement. Lastly, parenting style is significant determinant of academic performance among adolescents' students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja; it could further be concluded that adolescents who experience authoritative parental style are significant high academic performers than others whose parents are permissive.

Recommendations

Base on the findings, it is recommended that the Federal and State Ministry of Education should organise guidance and counselling programmes in the communities to sensitize, educate and empower parents on various parenting issues. For example, teach parents to set limits and control for their children while still maintaining a warm and supportive relationship; neglectful parents becoming more engaged in the lives of their children, permissive parents setting more rules for their children and authoritative parents becoming more flexible with their children. The Teachers' Service Commission (TSC) and Teachers Registration Council (TRC) should also train teachers on ways of handling children from various parenting styles for good academic performance for all. This is because the study reported that parenting styles influence academic achievement. School Counsellors should seek ways of strengthening their relationship with the children and their parents in order to gain a better understanding of their parenting styles and then handle each child according to the parenting style applied. This would help them understand the various adjustment problems of individual students and then help the students to perform well in academics. Parents should build more on the application of the authoritative parenting styles. They should also visit the schools and make enquiries about the academic performance of their children. This would help reduce cases of school dropouts and increase the academic performance of the students.

Limitations of the study

Although this study had made a lot of contribution, however, certain shortcomings were noticed which includes the following; the first limitation to this study was the obstacle in obtaining permission to conduct the study from the school authority/management. The process was time consuming and many schools within this the catchment area rejected the invitation to participate in this study. Thus, the opinions of students from these schools who rejected the invitation to participate are lacking.

The sample population used in this study is such that generalisability of the findings will be limited as the study only considered a few number of respondents. Also, the instruments used in data collection limits the extent to which the researcher can explore other certain determinant of academic performance. Lastly, the survey concentrated on particular aspects of variables that could impact on the study experience, providing only a snapshot into student experiences at school.

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