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Family Size and Students' Academic Performance in Social Studies in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined family size and students' academic performance in Social Studies in secondary schools in Ogoja Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, one research question and one null hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. Literature review was carried out based on the research variable. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. A sample of four hundred and seventy-three (473) students was used for the study. The selection was done through a multistage approach. The questionnaire titled Family Size Questionnaire (FSQ) and Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT) were used for data collection. The reliability estimate of the instruments were established through Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Independent t-test analysis was the statistical technique employed to test the hypothesis under study. The hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that there was a significant influence of family size on students' academic performance in Social Studies. Based on the findings of the study it was recommended that the small family size members/student always has the needed

	attention and resources needed for effective academic performance.

Introduction

The family, as a social institution which produces individual character, is the basis of a successful society. The family provides the first socializing experiences of the child. These experiences begin in infancy with the attempts to guide and direct the child. Some of these attempts take place at a conscious level, but most of the time parents are not aware that they are influencing behaviour at all. Probably, most of the interactions or training which they undertake deliberately and consciously is not as effective as those impressions made unconsciously. The socialization process of a child, a preparation for life tasks, begins at home and the parents provide a wealth of experience for role playing to transmit learning, behavior patterns, attitudes and value system which are basis to specific roles and performance. Participation and role performance are also learned in the home because knowledge about learning and performance for achievement is related to contact or information a person received with it, parents, relations, siblings and fiends provide materials for learning and role performance. The visibility of such role performance and learning to the young person may vary from one family to another.

The size of family is of great importance to this study because of the opinion that children from small size families have greater propensity to academic excellence than those from large size families. To this end, Eamon (2005) asserted that family size; large or small affects the academic performance of the child. Moreover, a child's intelligence is largely determined by the family circumstance. To him, measured intelligence does correlate with family size. He further explains that there is strong evidence that younger children in large family size tend to have lower intelligence quotient than an only child or elder children in a small size family. He also notes that the culture of a family and that of the school has to be in conflict since un-skilled manual workers tend to have the largest family size despite their lowest income. He therefore, concludes that family size and poverty adversely affect children's educational progress. Iheanacho (2002) on his part observed that family that is large in size may impede learning because the provision of adequate learning facilities may be lacking. He further affirms that the more closely spaced the family, the lower the test intelligence of the children. Parents with fewer children devote more attention to, and interact more with each child. Such children, he asserts, feel more, the warmth of family affection and are thus, motivated to perform better academically. He concluded that firstborns tend to be brighter either because some of them are single children and received all available parental attention or because they received 100 percent of the parent’s stimulation until the second child is born.

Isangedighi (2007) posited that large family is not ideal in language development because parents may not be able to interact with many children all at once. He further notes that, first born children receive more attention because they may be in a position to interact well with parents before the arrival of other children. Moreover, he observes that, the larger the size of the family, the lower

the children's educational activities. That socio-economic status accounts for about 16 percent of the variance average on the parents of lower socio-economic status. Parents, who were found to marry earlier than others, bear children rapidly and continue bearing to a later age. He interferes that because of such differential reproduction rate, the intelligence might be declining as much as two or three points per generation.

Families with fewer siblings are, likely to receive more parental attention and have more access to resources than children from large family size. The traditional attention and support leads to better performance at school. Eamon (2005) on the other hand asserted that family size has been linked with higher academic performance. Nsibiet (2011) has showed that the environment of a large family constitutes a handicap to the verbal development, consequently to general mental development. He explains that since the amount of verbal communication with adults is limited in a large family, children from such families are backward in language development. Moreover, that there is a strong evidence that a child who is equipped verbally is bound to score highly on intelligence test.

In another dimension, VanEjick and DeGray (2005) argued that children's academic attainment depends on inputs of time and money from their parents, the more children there are in the family the less of both inputs. These inputs, he noted are not money alone, but other essentials like time, resources, attention and so on. However, Booth and Kee (2006) confirmed that children from large families have lower levels of education than those from small size families. Children from large families are found to do worse than children from smaller size families who exhibit lower levels of education.

Literature review

Family size and students' academic performance

Coleman (2010) studied the possible influence of family size on student's performance of eighth and ninth graders. 120 students of age group between 13 to 16 years comprised the sample of the study. Self-made questionnaires for school students were administered. Data were analyzed in terms of percentage and t-test analysis. The statistical analysis revealed that family size significantly influences students' academic performance. It was recommended that the small family size members/student always have the needed attention and resources needed for effective academic performance in Social Studies.

Rothman (2004) also conducted a study on the effect of family size on the academic success of Hispanic students. The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of family size in high school activities, the amount and type of activities participated in (extracurricular or co-curricular), and gender on Hispanic students' GPA and graduation status. The research design for the study was quantitative. The sample was limited to 558 Hispanic students attending Emporia High School from the cohort classes of 2008-2009 to 2011-2012. Hispanic students were specifically identified

for this study. Data were collected to examine the participation rates of Hispanic students over four graduating cohort classes. A variety of sources was used to gather all the data necessary for the study. Data from the Kansas State Department of Education Dropout Graduation Summary Report was used to determine graduation status, ethnicity, state student identifier, and gender for the sample. Kansas High School Activities Association eligibility rosters for each of the four years were used to cross-reference student participants. The eight research questions concerning Hispanic GPA and graduation status were analyzed using one-and-two-factor ANOVAs, chi-square tests of equal percentages, chi-square tests of independence, and non-linear analysis. Results from the hypothesis testing indicated that students who are from large family size always fail in school activities due to lack of resources needed for effective studying of Social Studies.

Furthermore, Dermie (2007) conducted a study on family size as it related to students' academic performance among Mexican women in the United State. The purpose was to better understand the social factors relating to the media and it influence on premarital involvement of youths. A quantitative instrument was developed and tested. A convince sample of predominantly Mexican-American adolescent and young women from the west of Chicago was enrolled. A total of 271 participants were included in the analysis. Bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted to determine factors associated with age of first intercourse. It was found that the size of family influences students' academic performance as large family find it difficult to carter for the family need.

Similarly, Asikhia (2010) examined the disparity between family size and students' academic performance in Dahi, India. In this study, the population consisted of all available adolescents in Dahi. The survey included 390 children chosen from 30 junior schools in Dahi. For the analysis, quantitative data were extracted using a formal questionnaire. Using expert judgments, the instrument was subjected to face-to-face content validations. The study's reliability was obtained by a test-retest process, with a coefficient figure at 0.72. The real variables were analyzed systematically using one-way analysis of variance. The outcome showed a substantial effect of family size on academic performance of students. It was recommended that parents should give birth to the size of family they can provide for because of its influence on Social Studies students' academic performance.

In the same vein, Nwafor and Ango (2007) conducted a research in the University of Ado Ekiti to find out the influence of family size and family birth order on academic performance of adolescents in institutions of higher learning. The sample for the study was 102 pre-degree students of both genders questionnaire was the only instrument for data collection while survey research design was adopted. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results show that family size and birth order have no influence on academic performance of Social Studies student.

Esseme (2004) in a related study in Akwa Ibom State was out to find out whether there is any relationship between family size and academic performance of students in secondary schools. A total of 500 students constituted the sample for the study while one way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed in analyzing the data collected from the respondents. The result shows a significant correlation between family size and students' academic performance. Essien (2012) conducted a research on the, psychological variables and students' academic performance in Social Studies in tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria. His sample for the study consisted of six hundred and seventy-three (673) students randomly selected from two tertiary institutions. Expost facto research design was adopted for the study while One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical technique was adopted in the analysis of the data. The result of the analysis reveals that family size has a significant relationship with students' academic performance in Social Studies.

Statement of hypothesis

Family size has no significant influence on students' academic performance in Social Studies.

Methodology

Design

The research design adopted for this study is Ex-post facto design. Kerlinger (1986) asserted that Ex-post facto research design is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the researcher does not have direct control of the independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or inherently not manipulable. Inferences about relations among variables are made without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables.

Population

The population of the study comprised 8,651 public Junior Secondary School two (JSS 2) students in the 86 public secondary schools in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.

Sample

The sample for this study was 473 Junior Secondary Two (2) students drawn from the five public secondary schools in the three Local Government Areas in Ogoja Education Zone. The 473 sampled respondents represented 10% of proportionate sample of the total population in the three (3) selected Local Government Areas in the education zone.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were used for data collection in the study. The first instrument was a questionnaire was titled: Family Size Questionnaire (FSQ). The second instrument was Social Studies Performance Test (SSPT). The instrument was made up of section A and B. Section A used the questionnaire to sought for respondents' personal data such as gender, age and parents'

socioeconomic status while section B made of 50 Social Studies based questions with option A-D for respondents to promptly select among the options.

Result and discussion

Ho1:

Family size does not significantly relate to students' academic performance in Social Studies. Independent variable is family size (small and large). Dependent variable is students' academic performance in Social Studies. Independent t-test analysis was adopted to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Independent t-test analysis of the influence of family size on students' academic performance in Social Studies (N=473)

Family size	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-value	Sig.
Small	279	35.2186	3.06739		
				-8.000*	.000
Large	194	37.4124	2.72867		

* Significant at p<.05 level, P-value =.000, df = 406.

The result in Table 14 revealed that the t-value of -8.000 at p=.000. Since the p (.000) is less than p (.05), the null hypothesis is rejected. With this result the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of family size on students' academic performance in Social Studies was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of family size on students' academic performance in Social Studies.

Discussion of findings

The result of the fourth hypothesis indicated that, family size significantly influenced students' academic performance in Social Studies. The findings are in line with the view of Coleman (2010) who revealed that family size significantly influences students' academic performance. It was recommended that the small family size members/student always have the needed attention and resources needed for effective academic performance. Rothman (2004) also conducted a study on the effect of family size on the academic success of Hispanic students. The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of family size in high school activities, the amount and type of activities participated in (extracurricular or co-curricular), and gender on Hispanic students' GPA and graduation status. The research design for the study was quantitative. The sample was limited to 558 Hispanic students attending Emporia High School from the cohort classes of 2008-2009 to 2011-2012. Hispanic students were specifically identified for this study. Data were collected to examine the participation rates of Hispanic students over four graduating cohort classes. A variety of sources was used to gather all the data necessary for the study. Data from the Kansas State Department of Education Dropout Graduation Summary Report was used to determine graduation status, ethnicity, state student identifier, and gender for the sample. Kansas High School Activities

Association eligibility rosters for each of the four years were used to cross-reference student participants. The eight research questions concerning Hispanic GPA and graduation status were analyzed using one-and-two-factor ANOVAs, chi-square tests of equal percentages, chi-square tests of independence, and non-linear analysis. Results from the hypothesis testing indicated that students who are from large family size always fail in school activities due to lack of resources needed for effective studying.

Dermie (2007) also found that the size of family influences students' academic performance as large family finds it difficult to carter for the family need. Esseme (2004) also shows a significant correlation between family size and students' academic performance. Essien (2012) conducted a research on the, psychological variables and students' academic performance in Social Studies in tertiary institutions in Cross River State of Nigeria. His sample for the study consisted of six hundred and seventy-three (673) students randomly selected from two tertiary institutions. Expost facto research design was adopted for the study while One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical technique was adopted in the analysis of the data. The result of the analysis reveals that family size has a significant relationship with students' academic performance in Social Studies.

Conclusion

This study investigated family size and students' academic performance in Social Studies in Ogoja Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings obtained from the analysis of the data revealed that there was a significant influence of on students' academic performance in Social Studies.

Recommendation

Based on the finding obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis in the study, it was recommended that:

1. The small family size members/student always has the needed attention and resources needed for effective academic performance.

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