Influence of Family Size and Family Type on Academic Performance of Students in Government in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *There has been continuous outcry from stakeholders against poor performances of students in Senior Secondary School Examinations in Nigeria. The study investigated the influence of family size and family type on students' academic performance in Government, in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. To achieve the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the six (6) public secondary schools and two hundred (200) SS2 students used for the study. The survey research design was adopted for the study. A self-constructed questionnaire and a students' achievement test in Government were the instruments used for data collection. The instruments were face-validated by three experts in Test and measurement before they were administered. The test re-retest method was adopted in testing the reliability of the students' achievement test items. The reliability co-efficient was 0.728 and this was considered high enough for use in the study. Data collected was analysed using One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The result revealed a significant influence of family size and family type on academic performance of secondary school students in Government in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on these findings, it was recommended that: parents should be adequately sensitized on how best they can assist their children irrespective of the size and type of family among others.*

Keywords: *Family size, family type, academic performance, SS2 students.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic attainment is an important parameter used in measuring students' success or failure in a particular subject in school. Success, in an educational institution is measured by academic performance.Poor performance of Secondary School students has become a common concern of parents, legislators, teachers, counsellors and psychologist. According to Bell (2002), parents devote a lot of resources to their children's education because they believe that good academic performance will provide a stable future for them. Uwaifo (2008) attributes the cause of poor performance of children to a combination of personal and institutional factors. The personal factors include the level of individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability while the institutional factors are family or parental influence.

Olayinka (2009) pointed out that the family is the bedrock of the society and reported that a stable and well developed childhood can be guaranteed by a stable family. The current poor economic status of

most parents and families in the country has exposed children to undesirable challenges that have negatively affected their academic performance in school.Whatever may be the reason for these poor performances should constitute a cause for concern because students' academic performance plays an important role in producing best quality graduates who will become great leaders and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development.

Several indicators such as study habits, self-concept, school environments, teachers' qualification and teaching strategies, government, parents' social class and parents' educational status, parents' inputs have been identified as factors responsible for students' poor academic performance (Ella, Akpabio & Samson-Akpan, 2015;Aremu&Sokan, 2003)Apart from the aforementioned, family type and family size have not been given adequate attention in various regions of Cross River State and these may contribute positively or negatively to a student's academic performance. Students in secondary schools are being encouraged to study government irrespective of which field of study the students wishes to pursue in future. This is so because this subject enables the student to be abreast with the country's policies and activates leadership potentials in students. Moreover, there is hardly any endeavour to any venture where government is not being practiced. It is needed for political and economic developments, which are the two main ideologies, in addition to technology that govern any nation.

There is documented evidence of influence of family size on students' academic performance in various subjects in school (Odok 2013). The studies of Odok (2013), Eamon (2005), and Eristwhistle (1986), attest that small family sizes are linked higher educational attainment. Family size in the context of this study refers to the total number of children in a child's family in addition to the child himself. Large numbered families whether rich or poor are difficult to maintain, they are characterized with a high number of children, rowdiness and this does not create convenience for learning. They also create in the upbringing of children some identified problems such as feeding, poor clothing, insufficient funds, and lack of proper attention for children, disciplinary problems and malnutrition which impact negatively on children academic performance Eristwhistle (1986), stated that studies carried out in Scotland found that, children with relatively small size families performed better in verbal and non-verbal tests, than children from large family size in the same test. This according to him is because children from large families have less frequent interactions with adults. Similarly, parental attention by parents declines as the number of sibling's increases and latter born children perform less well than their earlier born siblings.

Bysenk and Locksoh (2011), affirmed that, most extroverted children come from smaller homes and that they adjust more easily to school environment, can express themselves easily in the classroom therefore, they achieve a greater academic performance as opposed to introverted children of larger family size. Booth and Kee (2006) confirmed that children from larger families have lower levels of education and also perform poorly in academics. However, Powell and Stellman (2010) and Van-Ejick and DeGraaf (2012) argued that children's academic attainment depends on inputs of time and money from their parents, the more children there are in family the less of both inputs. These inputs are not money alone, but other essential things like attention, resource dilution and so on.

The family type that a child comes from either monogamous (nuclear), polygamous, divorced parents, re-married parents single parents, or step-parents usually has an impact on a child's academic performance. The nuclear family consists of two parents and children. It is held in esteem by society as being the ideal in which to raise children. Children in nuclear families receive strength and stability from the two parents' structure and generally have more opportunities due to financial ease of two parents. According to US census data, almost 70% of children live in nuclear families and statistics have also shown that children from such families tend to fare better on a number of cognitive, emotional and behavioural needs. Single parent's family consists of one parent raising one or more children on his/her own. Most times it involves a mother with her children. Although, it involves only fathers as well in some cases (Gabriel, 2013).

Billings (2012) stated that such children become delinquent because they are most often deprived of security, protection and love that should come from both parents and these impacts negatively on academic success of the child or children. Stone (2012) asserted that children from single homes are more likely to show to a great extent, the effect of under nourishment, illness, insufficient rest as well as negative attitude towards school, which manifest in infancy, which is a factor that can affect achievement and performance negatively.

In the same vein, Kessler (2013) blamed poor academic performance to another family type known as step family. Individuals who divorce most times choose to remarry. This type of family constitutes two separate families merging in to one unit (a new husband and new wife and their children from previous marriage or relationship). The researcher stated further that children from such families most often become depressed and would want to compensate themselves in acts of unrest and might go astray and loose academic focus. This is because the atmosphere at such homes is not likely to be conducive for the children to make decisions of their own. Perry (2009) observed that children of female- headed families (single mothers) are at a greater risk of poor academic achievement, because of mother having very low incomes and inability to provide the basic needs of the children which becomes responsible poor achievement of the children; but that poor performance could also occur even when income level is controlled.

A conducive environment is necessary to enhance the academic performance of a child. A stimulating home environment can spur up a potential mediocre into an intellectual giant while an inhibiting could turn a genius into a mediocre (Olakan, Osakinle, &Onijingin, 2013). Taking care of children and also making provision for their needs, especially educational needs, are very important in determining the academic performance of children. Contrary to the opinion that learning and reading begins in school, the first foundation of the child begins at home. A good and conducive home environment with adequate learning facilities would help to boost the intellectual and academic capability of the child. Small family sizes and Monogamous families will most often accelerate positive influence on children's academic performance.

The Poor performance of students in Government in pubic secondary schools has prevented several students from pursuing a career at the tertiary level of education that require at least a credit pass in Government. Researchers have attributed this performance by students to certain factors within and outside of the students' personality. It is therefore necessary to investigate if parental background of parents influences students' academic performance in Government in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State.

Hypotheses:

Two Null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study as follows:

- There is no significant influence of family size on students' academic performance in Government.
- There is no significant influence of family type on students' academic performance in Government.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive survey design was considered most suitable for this study. Participants were students of Senior Secondary School 2 from public secondary schools in the study area. The population consisted of942 SS2 students offering Government in public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality Crpss River State Nigeria. Simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting the eight public secondary schools and 200 respondents used for the study.Two self-designed instruments tagged Students' Family Background Questionnaire (SFBQ) and Students' Achievement Test were used to collect data. The instruments were face-validated by three experts in Test and Measurement. The second instrument was subjected to reliability test using split-half method. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.728, which showed high reliability of the research instrument. The items in the first instrument were constant and did not require a reliability test.Data was collected through personal visits to all the eightpublicsecondary schools selected for the study. In each of the selected school, the researchers obtained permission from the school principal. The class teachers helped in organizing the students. In all, two hundred (200) copies of the instruments each were administered and retrieved on the spot. One-way analysis of variance was used for data analysis.

3. RESULTS

Hypothesis one

There is no significant influence of family size on students' academic performance in Government. The independent variable in this hypothesis is family size while the dependent variable is students' academic performance in Government. One-way analysis of variance was used for data analysis. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 1

Table1. *One-way analysis of variance of the influence of family size on students' academic performance in Government in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State*

Family size		N	x̄	SD	
Low		112	11.4251	2.21486	
Medium		72	13.3196	2.19308	
High		18	10.4738	3.31628	
Sources of variance	SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Between groups	38.384	2	21.110	5.892*	.011
Within groups	1061.421	197	4.378		
Total	1099.805	199			

*Significant at 0.05; df = 199' critical f = 3.062

The result of analysis presented in Table 1 shows that the calculated F-value of 5.892 is higher than the critical F-value of 3.062 at 0.05 level of significance with 199 degree of freedom. This implies that family size significantly influenced academic performance of students in Government in Secondary schools in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

In order to determine which family size contributed highest to the significant difference, a Fisher's protected t-test was carried out. The result of this test is presented in Table 1B.

Table1B. *Fisher's protected t-test of the influence of family size on students' academic performance in Government*

Family size	(Joint)	Mean difference	Significance
Low	Medium	2.1896	0.847
	High	4.23810*	.001
Medium	Low	-2.1896*	0.847
	High	1.22667	.262
High	Low	-4.23810*	.001
	Medium	-1.22667	.262

*Mean difference is significant at 0.05 level

Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) was used to further identify where significant difference among the various family sizes range used in the study was highest in terms of mean difference. The result shows that the mean difference between low and medium, family size was 2.1896. The mean difference between low and high family size was 4.23810 the mean difference between medium and high family size was 1.22667

From the result presented in Table 1B, the mean difference is highest between low and high family size (4.23810) while the least mean difference is between medium and high family size (1.22667) respectively.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant influence of family type on students' academic performance in Government. The independent variable in this hypothesis is family type while the dependent variable is students' academic performance in Government. One-way analysis of variance was the statistical tool used for data analysis. The result of this analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table2. *One-way analysis of variance of the influence of family type on students' academic performance in Government in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State*

Family type		N	x̄	SD	
Monogamy		148	10.4730	2.19289	
Polygamy		40	9.7048	1.17157	
Separated		18	9.0203	2.44949	
Divorced		4	13.0006	3.21671	
Sources of variance	SS	df	MS	F	Sig
Between groups	54.484	3	18.161	4.115*	.007
Within groups	874.292	196	4.413		
Total	901.776	199			

Significant at 0.05; df = 199' critical f = 3.062

The result of analysis presented in Table 2 shows that the calculated F-value of 4.115 is higher than the critical F-value of 3.062 at 0.05 level of significance with 199 degree of freedom. This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a significant influence of family type on students' academic performance in Government in public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State.

In order to determine which family type contributed highest to the significant difference, a Fisher's protected t-test was carried out. The result of this test is presented in Table 2B.

Table2B. *Fisher's protected t-test of the influence of family type on students' academic performance in Government*

Family type	(Joint)	Mean Difference	Significant
Monogamy	Polygamy	.77297	.040
	Separated	1.47297	.168
	Divorced	-2.52703*	.019
Polygamy	Monogamy	-77297	.040
	Separated	..70000	.526
	Divorced	-3.300000*	. 003
Separated	Monogamy	-1.47297	-168
	Polygamy	-.70000	.526
	Divorced	-4.00000*	.008
Divorced	Monogamy	-2.52703	.019
	Polygamy	-3.30000	.003
	Separated	-4.00000*	.008

Mean significant at 0.05 level

Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) was used to further identify where significant difference among the various family types range used in the study was highest in terms of mean difference. The result shows that the mean difference between monogamy and polygamy was .77297. the mean difference between monogamy and separated was 1.47297. The mean difference between monogamy and divorced family type was -2.52703. The mean difference between polygamy and separated family type was .70000. the mean difference between polygamy and divorced family type was -3.300000 while the mean difference between separated and divorced family type was -4.00000.

From the result presented in Table 1B, the mean difference is highest between separated and divorced family type (-4.00000) while the least mean difference is between monogamy and polygamy family type (.77297) respectively.

4. DISCUSSION

The result obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis one showed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of family size on students' academic performance in Government in public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Booth and Kee (2006) which states that family size is one of the factors that determine the academic performance of students. Large family size creates in the upbringing of children some identified problems such as feeding-insufficient food, poor clothing, insufficient fund, lack of proper attention for children, disciplinary problem and malnutrition. However, the family that a child comes from either monogamous or polygamous family usually has impact on the child academic performance it is important to note that either of the family type (monogamous or polygamous) dictates the size of the family.

The finding obtained from analysis and testing of hypothesis two showed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This implies that there is a significant influence of family type on students' academic performance in Government in public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State. This finding is in agreement with the finding of Gabriel (2013) which asserted that the family type that a child comes from either monogamous (nuclear), polygamous, divorced parents, re-married parents single parents, or step-parents usually has an impact on a child's academic performance. The nuclear family consists of two parents and children. It is held in esteem by society as being the ideal in which to raise children. Children in nuclear families receive strength and stability from the two parents' structure and generally have more opportunities due to financial ease of two parents.

According to US census data, almost 70% of children live in nuclear families and statistics have also shown that children from such families tend to fare better on a number of cognitive, emotional and behavioural needs. Single parent's family consists of one parent raising one or more children on his/her own. Most times, single parenting involves a mother with her children. Although, it involves only fathers as well in some cases.

5. CONCLUSION

The essence of this study was to investigate and present findings on the influence of family size and family type on students' academic performance in Government in public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross Rivers State. Thefindings obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypothesis in the study revealed that there is a significant influence of family size and family type on students' academic performance in Government.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings obtained in the study, the researchers make the following recommendations:

- Parents should be sensitized on the need to raise small families in order to enable them provide for their educational needs that will motivate the children to learn effectively and perform satisfactorily in government

- Marriage/ Family counseling services should be intensified and expanded to cover a larger population in order to sensitize couples on the need to reduce the incidence of divorce and broken homes in the society so as to enable children benefit from intact family upbringing.

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