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Full Length Research Paper

Influence of family types and parent's socioeconomic status on school dropout among female students in the Old Ogoja Zone of Cross River, Nigeria

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The researchers set out to assess the influence of family type and socioeconomic status of parents on female student's school dropout, the research location is within the old Ogoja zone of Nigeria which includes Obanliku, Obudu, Bekwarra, Ogoja and Yala Local Government Areas of Cross River State. Using stratified and systematic random sampling technique, 8 secondary schools were selected from the study area. A total of 400 students were randomly selected for the study using the school period between 2005-2012. The list of female students dropout used for the study was gotten from the school register including their residential addresses. About 24 students who dropped out of schools moved out of the neighborhood, but this did not include the sample finally selected for the study. Female students, parents and teachers were used for the study. A hypothesis was stated thus: parent's socioeconomic status and family type does not significantly influence female student's school dropout. Using a well structured questionnaire for data collection and analyzing the data gathered with Pearson moment correlation at 0.5% significant level, the researchers found no significant correlation between family types and female student's school dropout, but found a significant correlation between parent's socioeconomic status and female students' school dropout rates. The researchers concluded that despite the results of the analysis, there is a significant correlation between family type and socioeconomic status and female student's school dropout. Some recommendations were then made to solve the problem of female student's school dropout as influenced by parent's socioeconomic status and family types.

Keywords: Family types, parent's socioeconomic status, school dropout, academic achievement, learning environment and home factors.

INTRODUCTION

Scholars of education world over have continuously

asserted the efficacy of education as a veritable tool for the development of an individual, the society and the Nation at large. Based on this assertion, most nations are more concerned with the provision of very functional education to her citizens. Administrators of education in

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Nigeria, Africa, and world over are particularly convinced that development depends to a large extent on the type of education government can give to her citizens, because it is believed that the solutions to all nation's social, economic and technological problems could be unraveled and solved through the process of education of her citizens.

In pursuant to this, the Nigerian government since the late 50s have made very significant and progressive stride toward the achievements of the set objectives. These effort of the previous administrations is been complimented by those of the present governments. These appreciated efforts include the establishment of Yaba College of Technology in the 1940s, the establishment of the University College Ibadan, the university of Nigeria, Nsukka and Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. These are also followed by the establishment of the federal ministry of education in the early days. To achieve this educational status most desired by the government, the National Curriculum Conference was also organized by Nigerian Educational Research Council, with the recommendations of the conference leading to the formation of the National Policy on Education in 1978 which had severally been revised in 1990, 1998 and in 2004. This policy is the national document that states what is expected, the type of education Nigerians need and how such educational programs will be funded, administered and managed. The 1974 Education Act tagged Universal Primary Education (UPE) aimed at providing free and compulsory Education for all children of school going age from primary to all level of education in the western region of the country by Obafemi Awolowo. This machination was further taken to the educational programs like the 6-5-4 design, the 6-3-3-4 and the 9-3-4 programs also known as the Universal Basic Education (UBE). The UBE was to provide Free and compulsory Universal Basic Education, which promised to provide quality Education in teaching and learning. Despite the institutions of all these programs to meet the educational needs of Nigerians, there is gross failure of the programs greatly due to the non-preparedness of government to fund and monitor the programs, the failure of students of school going age to appreciate and participate in the programs and the gross shortage of staff to pilot the program. Besides, failure of the children to have interest in school, some parents practically engage their children during school hours to contribute to their survival needs as some of these parents believed that education has no benefit so no need allowing their children to go to school. These was further worsened by the cultural belief system that female children should not be allowed to go to school since any time wasted on their education will be useless. This belief is premised on the fact that since they will definitely be given out in marriage and their duty is that of child bearing and home making, education for the female children will be a waste of time, money and energy.

In recent times the education of women has been hampered by some cultural and social belief system which is detrimental to the total wellbeing and emancipation of the female children. This socio-cultural system has rather put the girl child in an educationally disadvantaged position the male child. This gender stereotyping has been observed in almost all human endeavors and has never produced any positive result wherever it rears its head. This also has impacted the female greatly in educational settings too.

The perception of family type therefore has influence in female school drop-out, because the type of family the school child comes from determines to a greater extent the ability to which pupil can complete their schools. The assumption is that most parents are not really interested in the education of their children especially the female children. For some parents, the love they have for their children will not allow them let their children pass through the burden of going to school. It is the researcher's belief that the socioeconomic status and the family type female school children come from to a larger extent determine the rate of school drop-out in Ogoja Nigeria.

Croft, (2002) was of the opinion that household income is an important factor in determining access to education; this is so because educating a child attracts some potential costs right from during the registration of the pupils to completion. The author further explained that such costs include school fees, cost of purchase of compulsory textual materials as introduced from the school, uniforms, travel, equipment and the opportunity costs of sending a child to school. Most studies have shown the link between household income and student's school drop-out (see UNICEF, 2005, Bruneforth, 2006 and Cardoso and Verner, 2007). Cardoso and Verner, (2007) whilst describing exclusions rather than drop-out painted poverty as 'the most common primary contributory factor for students school drop-out. Macionis, et al., (2005) observed that formal schooling especially learning that is not directly linked to work is mostly available only to wealthy people which are not easily available for the poor.

While confirming the position of Macionis et al., (2005) Cardoso and Verner, (2007) further noted that when it has to do with schooling, all low – income countries have one trait in common, they ration their education according to social stratification, where children from rich homes attain the best schools while students from poor home attain the worst schools. In most poor countries of Africa, less than half of all children ever get to school and for the world as a whole, just half of children reach the secondary grade. As a result 15% of Latin American, 39% Asians and 40% of Africans are illiterate. This assertion and finding led Hunter and May (2003) to call poverty 'a plausible explanation of school disruption. Directed by the position of Hunter and May, (2003), Dachi and Garrett (2003) asked a series of question to parents and guidance about the financial circumstances

surrounding children's education and schooling. In a study in Tanzania on children's enrolment in school by Renzulli and Park, (2000) the authors observed that virtually all households responding said the main barrier to sending children to school was financial and their inability to pay. Further on the study of gifted dropouts by Renzulli and Park (2000), they found out that the students they studied disliked school and felt disconnected from the groups in school. The further noted that in general, these students were from lower income families and had parents who were not as likely to monitor their school activities, and the gifted that had stayed in school were from high income families and had parents who were likely to monitor their school activities. Pryor and Ampiah, (2003) research on schooling in a Ghanaian village, found education as being regarded as a 'relative luxury' with many villagers considering education not worthwhile.

The perception people have about schooling and the importance placed on it at all times do shape interactions between schooling, household income and dropping out

Poor household tend to have lower demand for schooling that richer household. It is pertinent to understand that whatever the benefits of schooling, the costs, for them are more difficult to meet than is the case for richer household. Cocough (2000) describes the link between wealth and schooling retention in more detail. He noted that amongst those who had never been enrolled in any school; children at school were on average from better – off households than those who dropped out who were in turn from richer background than school-age children who had never enrolled. Children in rural areas, and children in poorer homes drop out of school earlier, in greater numbers, and fail to make the transition to junior high schools compared to their peers in richer homes (Cocough, 2000).

On the issue of family type, a lot of studies have been carried out. In their study, Olubadewo, and Ogwu, (2005) found out that children spend 87 percent of their time out of school under the influence of parents. As a result parents have greater influence on their and make most decisions for them. In recent times, the changing nature of the family types affects student's access to school. Because of this change in family type, Van Voorhis, (2003) was forced to believe that the number of single parent families has increased to a total of 9.7 million in America, almost all headed by women. This is likely to be more in Africa and Nigeria in particular. Okobiah, (2003) also lent a voice to this trend by positing that more than half of children born today will spend at least part of their childhood years in a one parent home. This was further confirmed by Davis (1991) who concluded that significant adults in many children's lives are not their biological parents at all, but surrogate parents: grandparents, aunts, uncles, brothers, sisters, or neighbors. According to Olubadewo, and Ogwu, (2005) one out of every six American families is a stepfamily and about one in three

children lives with a step family. He added that these families are created when divorced parents remarry. Step families consist of biological relationships with stepparents, stepsiblings, multiple set of grandparents and what often becomes a confusing array of relatives from old and new marriages; this has made communication and collaboration more difficult than ever and is a likely cause of school drop- out. Omebe, (2002) speaking on post divorce and single parent stated that, one of the major tasks facing parents in divorce is that of determining who the children should live with and making such an arrangement is always almost a herculean task, as family members separate into two households. Most decisions occur with little discussion between the parents. This put children at risk of dropping out of school. From their findings, the authors concluded that, divorced parents find it difficult to take time and explain trouble required to negotiate with children over task assignments and joint plans. Here children in this situation lack parental love and care, affection and motivation. Under these conditions of diminishing parental care, love and affection, children tend to become bored, moody and restless and feel misunderstood; these reactions lead to increase in behaviors that irritate their parent leading to lack of affection, care, love and motivation. Mallum, (2003) however, noted that, most children may cope with their new status and adapt well to the change in their parents marital status even though they may well have to cope with multiple adverse circumstances. Omebe, (2002) observed that when there is lack of love and appreciation, the children feel rejected and look at themselves as inferior before their colleagues especially among their peers when other will be discussing and continually mention how their parents bought them this or that. The resultant effect is the sense of belonging is lost in such children which begins to affect their academic performance and in most cases they see lives as not been worthy to live, or they want to go out and struggle to earn a living from other sources which is a faster means of making it in life, hence the need to drop out of school. Herbert, (2003) cited in Mallum, (2003) further observed that the family deficit theory views the nuclear or two parent families as the ideal family structure and their parenting as been good for children. The theory sees the absence of the other parent as a deficit to the family since his/her services would be missed, thus, presents a lot of challenges to the children and the other parent.

Fernel, (2010) stated that, research attention on step-parenting has increased dramatically in the past as divorce and remarriage rate have escalated and remain high. These authors further observed that, remarriage of a divorced parent creates a marriage of a spouse with children and this leads to the creations of a step family which comes with numerous expenses, disruptions and tradition. Where the financial burden becomes too much, may lead to children dropping out of school.

Ekanem, (2011) also noted that, complex parental histories and multiple relationships make adjustment difficult in a step family. Mau, and Bikos, (2000) also added that, children in divorced families are more likely to have academic problems than children in non-divorced families (like anxiety, depression, moody and self reclining behavior, acting out and the exhibition of delinquent behaviors). Children in this situation most often have social and relationship problems, they are always found in solitary places finding it difficult to mix and associate freely with peers. They often have personality disorder and the sense of inferiority. When situation like this arise, the children in this situation may not have any choice but to drop out of school. Even within the school settings, such children may begin become prone to and have tendencies to less intimate relationships, drop out of school, to become sexually active at an early age, to take drugs, to associate with anti-social peers and to have low self – esteem. While this is true, it must also be borne in mind that most of the children in divorced families do not have significant adjustment problems. In any case, studies have shown that children in step-families homes show more adjustments problems than children in non-divorced families (see Van Voorhis, 2003). Their adjustment problems are similar to those in divorced children academic problems and low self-esteem. Sweeney (2003) found out that, children's depressive symptoms increased in the early years after a step family has been formed but the longer they live in the step family homes, the less symptom of depression is seen or found. Omebe, (2002) discovered in his study that the family unit is a system in which no element can act independently; hence, the action of one individual demands the reaction of the other in the unit. Therefore, the absence of one element affects the functioning of the other elements. Single parenting implies that, the family does not function properly because of the absent of the other parent (Mallum, 2003).

Since this is the case, the authors design this research to assess how family types and parents socio-economic status can influence female school drop-outs among the people of the old Ogoja zone of Nigeria. A research question was asked : how can parents' socioeconomic status and family type influence female student's school drop-outs in the old Ogoja zone of Nigeria?, the authors further stated one hypothesis to guide the research thus: parent's socioeconomic status and family type does not significantly influence female students school dropout.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study the quantitative technique. Using survey inferential method was used to ascertain the extent to which family type and

socio-economic status of parents can influence female student's school dropout among the people of old Ogoja zone of Nigeria. Using a multi-linear regression design, which is capable of defining how much a factor influences the action of another variable (independent upon dependent variables). The population for the study is within the secondary schools in the old Ogoja zone which include Obudu, Obanliku, Bekwarra, Ogoja and Yala local government areas. The specific population includes female secondary schools students, teachers, parents and guardians of school children. Two schools were randomly selected for the study from each of the council area. A total of 400 respondents were selected from the 8 schools using stratified and systematic random sampling technique. Schools selected include: Government comprehensive secondary schools, Sankwala, Obanliku, Government Secondary Schools Obudu, Girl's Secondary School, Obudu, Bekwarra Secondary School and Community Secondary School Ukpah, Comprehensive Secondary School Igoli, Mary Knoll Secondary School Okuku and Comprehensive Secondary School, Igbeku, Okuku.

In the selection of respondents for the study, purposive sampling techniques was used; thus was done using the school register and checking for female students who are no longer coming to school from 2005-2012. After the collection of these student's addresses, there was a follow up visits to the students through the addresses on the enrolment register. In selecting the sample of dropout from within each selected school, the researcher requested for registers and cumulative records of pupils. Where these were not available, Agbeke and Denkyirah (1999) explained that, with snowball, you need to identify a small number of individuals who have the characteristic that you require. The researcher then used this group as informants to identify others who qualify for inclusion and these students too, in turn identify others.

The researchers used the self report questionnaire for data collection which was deemed most appropriate. The researcher designed a well structured two section questionnaire which was closed ended with items to which respondents were required to choose from. The items in section A sought to elicit information from the students why they dropped out of school. While section B was Parents questionnaire which sought to elicit information from parents on their children school dropout. The questionnaire was based on a four point likert scale to determine the direction of the responses in relation to variables of the study and to measure the level of the direction in relation to others. The questionnaire was personally administered to the dropped out students and their teachers, parents or guardians and same were collected back by the researchers. Correlation analysis was used to analyze the data so generated using the instruments from the field.

Table 1. Showing number of respondents selected for the study

Selected secondary schools	No of female students	No. of parents, guardian or teachers.
Government Comprehensive Secondary Schools, Sankwala, Obanliku	25	25
Government Secondary Schools Obudu,	25	25
Girl's Secondary School, Obudu,	25	25
Bekwarra Secondary School	25	25
Community Secondary School Ukpah, Bekwarra	25	25
Comprehensive Secondary School Igoli, Ogoja	25	25
Mary Knoll Secondary School Okuku, Ogoja	25	25
Comprehensive Secondary School, Igbeku, Yala.	25	25
Sum total	200	200
Grand total		400

Table 2. A Correlation Matrix of the factors (N = 400) on the Influence of Socio – Economic Status, Family Type on School Dropout.

	School Dropout	Parental Socio economic Status	Family type
Parental Socio economic status Correlation .375**	.031		-.168*
Significance	.666	.017	.000

*p < 0.05 (2- tailed)

**p < 0.001 (2- tailed)

Df=399

RESULT

Data analyzed is as shown in table two above.

Using Pearson moment correlation statistics to test the data at 0.5% significant level, two tail at a degree of freedom of 399, the result shows that the result is not significant. As shown in table one, the test revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between parent's socio economic status and school dropout. ($r = .031$, $p > 0.05$, NS), hence there is no statistical significance between parent's socio economic status and school dropout. Though there was a significant relationship between family type and school dropout, this can be observed from the table 2 that parent socio-economic status correlated or had a significant relationship with family type ($r = -0.168$, $p < 0.05$) and ($r = 0.375$, $p < .01$) respectively.

The negative correlation between parent socio-economic status and school dropout suggests that as parent's socio-economic status improves, there may be less school dropout among female secondary school students. The positive correlation between parent socio-economic status and family type also suggests that as the family relationship improves parent's socio-economic status also increases.

DISCUSSION

Based on the hypothesis stated for this study, which states that parent's socioeconomic status and family type does not significantly influence female student's school dropout in the Old Ogoja zone of Nigeria. Based on the result of the analysis, it was discovered that parents' socioeconomic status does not significantly influence female student's school dropout, but there was a significant relationship between parent's socioeconomic status and family type on female student's school dropout in the study area. This position has confirmed the findings of Hunter and May, (2003), who concluded that parent's socio-economic status was significantly related to pupil's dropout of school. The authors further asserted that poverty and family type are explanations for school dropout, while Dachi and Garret (2003) observed that low socio economic status, and low income was/is the main factor responsible for student's dropout in schools. This has also further strengthened the findings of Macionis, et al., (2005) and Anang (2007) who concluded that school dropout is significantly related to the parental socio-economic status of pupils and family type. Despite the result of this analysis, there is a strong indication that female student's school dropout is a significant function

of parents socioeconomic status and family type. This assertion is premised on the fact that some factors influence human learning, some of these factors according to Anang, (2007) include the mental age of the learner, the home front, the learning environment, the content of the instructional material, knowledge of subject matter by the teacher, instructional procedure and methods, peer influence among others. Most studies show household income and family type as a major determinant of children's education. This is indicated on Table 2, though there was no significant relationship between parent's socio economic status and school dropout, family type was observed to significantly influence school dropout. There was a positive correlation between parent socio economic status and family type, this correlation suggests that as family relationship improves, parent' socio economic status increases and the negative correlation between socio economic status and school dropout suggests that as socio economic status improves the rate of drop out will reduce.

Granted that this is the case in this study however, the empirical analysis shows that there was no significant relationship between socio economic status of parent's, family type, and school dropout. Even though the relationship was there it was not a statistically significant relationship according to the results of the analysis. A number of logical inferences can however be drawn from the scenario for which the analyzed result has presented here.

Despite the result from the analysis, so many female students have dropped out of school over the period under study, the factor that orchestrate these dropout is principally attributed to poverty which is a major determinants of parent's socioeconomic status, another factor which also contribute to the dropping of female children out of school is both cultural and customary in nature. These belief systems see the education of the girl child as a sheer waste of money and time. Presently in the study area, and the country at large, there have been a number of innovations within the school sector. Currently in the country there is the introduction of the universal basic education to address this abnormally, whereas most state government have introduced free education up to the secondary school level to enable children from poor homes benefit and achieve the necessary education that will enable them participate functionally and actively in the development of their community and the country at large. Education has been portrayed as the only vehicle to eradicate poverty in families and among individuals, believing this to be true then, it is the researchers believe that this has encouraged even the poorest and the worst financially handicapped parents to send their children to school so as to come out, or be liberated from the burden of poverty and contribute to the development of their family and the society at large.

Granted that the value of educating the female child has been captured by all the educational reforms that have taken place in the country, it is therefore the researchers belief that whatever amount spent on the education of the female child is never a waste but a lump sum investment that is worth the salt for society's emancipation and personal advancement. It is therefore pertinent to re-iterate that if you educate a man, you educate an individual, but if you educate a women, you educate a nation, because the women is the mother who nurtures, trains and care for the children, hence she will impact all the knowledge acquired to the child. This is therefore healthy for the society.

CONCLUSION

In summary therefore, it is the researcher's belief that parent's socioeconomic status and family type does significantly influence female student's school dropout. It was however observed that there was an insignificant relationship among the variables that dropout among female students is not only a function of parent's socioeconomic status and family type, but these two factors play a major role in the dropping out of female students from school. Despite all the laudable school programs that have been introduced to motivate students at the primary and post primary levels to complete their school programs. it is therefore concluded that these two factors influence female student's school dropout among the people of the Old Ogoja zone of Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is the urgent need for both public and private sector participation in the planning, provision, implementing, supervision, monitoring and funding of educational facilities within the study area.
- Schools and education authority should provide every school with guidance counseling services to counsel students with coping and adaptability problems from home to school
- There should public awareness campaign to parents so that they can give their children the best they can in terms of education including the promotion of other co-curricular activities.
- Both parents and guardians should be encouraged to visit their children/ward schools from time to time and interact with their children or ward teachers.
- Churches and schools should design programs that can assist children with difficult home situation, and also institute grants of bursary to assist students with difficult financial situation.
- Education is the weapon that breaks the bond of ignorance and poverty, if this is understood by the parents and guardian, and then it will encourage them to

do all within their powers to send their children to school despite all odds.

➤ Government and other private individuals should monitor the implementation of the UBE program to make sure students with difficult home front are properly covered and enrolled in the program.

➤ Education providers and teachers should have a channel where both parents and teachers can sit together and discuss the progress of their children in school. An example of this is the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meeting currently taking place in most Nigeria school even though the association's aim and objectives have been defeated.

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