

INFLUENCE OF FAMILY BACKGROUND ON STUDENTS PERFORMANCE IN HOME ECONOMICS IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ABAKALIKI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE, NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of family background on students' performance in home economics in senior secondary schools in Abakaliki LGA of Ebonyi State. The specific objectives were to: determine the influence of family socio-economic and family educational status, (low, medium and large) on home economics students' performance in the study area; identify the influence of family size (small, medium and large); determine the influence of birth order (first, middle and last born) and assess the influence of family/school location (urban/ rural) on home economics students' performance in the study area. Simple random sampling technique was used in the selection of sample sizes. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The sample size was four hundred (400) respondents. The result of the study indicated that all the variables from socio-economic characteristics of the respondents assessed in this study had significant influence on the performance of students in home economics. Based on the findings, it was recommended among other things that appropriate government agencies should give bursary and scholarship to students from low-socio-economic background. The same government at all levels should intensify campaigns against large family size and also pay special allowances to teachers in rural schools to motivate them for higher productivity.

Key words: Effect, Family Background, Home economics, Abakaliki LGA.

INTRODUCTION

The family is a unit within the large society. According to James, (2001) the socialization of a person begins at home under the smallest human community called family and every mother must be concerned about how each child can positively be influenced in the society. It therefore follows that since parents have conferred life on their children, they have a most solemn obligation to educate them. Family exerts a great deal of influence on a child's academic performance (Onwuka, 2002). The family is an important agency of education and has been exercising an everlasting and immediate influence on the behavior, character, conduct, achievement and personality of its members (Olaitan and Akpan, 2003). Education of children is not the exclusive responsibility of the school (Onwuka, 2002). Parents too must play important role in shaping and building the career of their children. According to Apoyin (2001), family is the original social institution of all social organizations. The child comes to have the first lesson of citizenship on the mother's knee and on the father's kiss (Apoyin, 2001). Family is the place where we learn our first lesson of living together, working together, helping each other, learning lesson of mutual help and adjustment (Olaitan and Akpan, 2003; Epstein and Sheldon, 2000; Davis, 1996). The family is the center for character molding and formation offering of love,

care, affection attention, motivation, security, understanding, supervisions, discipline as well as education. As the families differ, so do the levels of families' involvement in the education of their children. These lead to this study on the influence of family background on students' performance in home economics in Senior Secondary Schools in Abakaliki LGA of Ebonyi State. The specific objectives were to: determine the influence of family socio-economic and family educational status, (low, medium and large) on home economics students' performance in the study area; identify the influence of family size (small, medium and large); determine the influence of birth order (first, middle and last born) and assess the influence of family/ school location (urban/ rural) on home economics students' performance in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Abakaliki LGA of Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Abakaliki is bounded in the North, East, West and South by Izzi, Ezza South, Ezza North and Ekumenyi Local Government Areas respectively. About 60% of the area is typically in rural setting while 40% is in urban area. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 400 students from 12 secondary schools offering home economics in Abakaliki LGA. Simple balloting technique was adopted for the selection

respondents. Ballot papers were prepared with 400 “Yes” and 268 “Nos” making a total of 668 which was the size of the population. Prospective respondents who picked ballot papers with yes were automatically used in the study. A total of 400 participants formed the sample for the study. The instruments used for data collection include; students’ Family Background Questionnaire (SFBQ) and the Students’ Home Economics Achievement Test (SHEAT) were developed and used to gather data for the study. The instruments were designed and built around the objectives of the study. Data generated in the study were analyzed using descriptive statistics and students’ t-test ratio while Scheffe’s multiple comparison test was employed for the post hoc analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptive of Students’ Home Economics Achievement Test (SHEAT): The Students’ Home Economics Achievement Test (SHEAT) show the descriptive statistics associated with different levels of family background across the dependent variable (academic performance). The result in table 1 shows that the mean performance scores of students with parents of high socio-economic status ($x=39.05$) was greater than the mean performance score of students with parents of average socio-economic status ($x=34.41$) which was in turn greater than the mean

performance scores of students with parents of low socio-economic status ($x=28.88$). The survey revealed that the mean performance score of students from small family size ($x=39.11$) was greater than the mean performance score of students from medium family size ($x=33.56$) which is in turn greater than the mean performance score of students from large family size. The survey further indicated that the mean performance score of students who are first born ($x=40.1$) was greater than the mean performance score of students who are last born ($x=36.44$) which is in turn greater than the mean performance score of students who are middle born ($x=29.32$).

The result also showed that the mean performance score of students with families of high educational status ($x=38.07$) was greater than the mean performance score of students with families of average educational status ($x=34.65$), which in turn was greater than the mean performance score of students with families of low educational status ($x=28.69$) and revealed further that the mean performance score of students from urban school ($x=37.42$) was greater than the mean performance score of students from rural school ($x=31.80$). This implies that families with high educational status enable the family to understand better and utilize effectively and efficiently available educational resources

Table 1: Summary of mean and standard deviation of performance scores by levels of family background

Variables	Levels	Frequency	Mean(x)	SD
Socio-economic status	High	119	39.05	4.25
	Average	131	34.41	4.11
	Low	150	28.88	4.10
Family size	Large	143	29.39	4.31
	Medium	138	33.56	4.84
	Small	119	39.11	3.90
Birth order	First	98	40.01	3.51
	Middle	808	29.32	3.96
	Last	100	36.44	3.02
Educational status	High	141	38.07	3.90
	Average	114	34.65	4.82
	Low	145	28.69	4.05
Family/ School location	Urban	200	37.42	3.95
	Rural	200	31.80	3.67

Source: Field survey data, 2018.

The mean performance scores were subjected to Scheffe pairwise comparison post hoc analysis on socio-economic status as shown in Table 2. The table revealed that the mean difference between high socio-economic status and average socio-economic status was 8.19; between high and low was 11.61; and between averages was 2.89. This implies that high socio-economic status was the most effective in facilitating students’ performance in Home Economics, followed by average socio-economic status while low socio-economic status was seen to be the least effective in facilitating students’

performance in Home Economics. This might be due to the fact that higher income is associated with better nutrition from childhood, greater educational opportunities, higher intelligence and more motivation to work and achievement. Also, students from deprived socio-economic status may lag behind in most aspects of school learning as families are unable to provide financial and materials aid for their education and this affect their achievements in school. The result is supported by the findings of Bakare (1986) that the family resources, infrastructure and nutrition aid the learning of the

school child. The result is also in agreement with the findings of Obidi (1988) that the Nigerian children from high income homes have higher educational

attainment and adjust easily to school life than those from low income homes.

Table 2: Scheffe's performance test scores for multiple comparison of socio-economic status on students' performance in Home Economics.

Dependent variable: Performance Test Scores							
(I)Socio-Economic status	(J)Socio-Economic status	Mean (I-J)	Difference	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
High	Average	8.19*		0.427	.000	6.95	11.94
	Low	11.61*		0.522	.000	10.14	15.59
Average	High	-8.19*		0.427	.000	-11.94	-6.95
	Low	2.89*		0.550	.000	1.34	6.94
Low	High	-11.61*		0.522	.000	-15.59	-10.14
	Average	-2.89*		0.550	.000	-6.94	-1.34

Source: Field survey data, 2018.

* = The mean difference is significant at .05 level.

The mean performance scores were subjected to Scheffe pairwise comparison post hoc analysis on family size as shown in Table 3. The survey showed that small family size was most effective in facilitating students' performance in home economics. This was followed by medium family size while large family size was seen to be least effective in facilitating students' performance in home economics. Hence, children from small family size are provided with more learning materials and also receive more attention from their parents than children from large family size and this may enhance their performance in school. The result is in

agreement with the findings of Majoribanks, Welbery and Bengen (1999) that children intellectual ability is dependent on the amount of parental attention and number of children in the family. Families with small number of children are able to provide sufficient learning facilities and enhance effective learning in schools whereas in medium and large families, the provision of these materials are not always easy because of the number of children waiting for care. Thus, the unfortunate situations hinder effective learning activities that may result in low academic performance in Home economics.

Table 3: Scheffe's performance test scores for multiple comparison of family size on students' performance in Home economics

Dependent variable: Performance Test Scores						
(I) Family size	(J) Family size	Mean difference (I - J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Small	Medium	3.69*	0.134	.000	2.48	5.32
	Large	10.05*	0.100	.000	8.93	11.59
Medium	Small	-3.69*	0.134	.000	-5.32	-2.48
	Large	4.89*	0.129	.000	3.69	6.50
Large	Small	-10.05*	0.100	.000	-11.59	-8.93
	Medium	-4.89*	0.129	.000	-6.50	-3.69

Source: Field survey data, 2018

* = The mean difference is significant at .05 level.

The mean performance scores were subjected to Scheffe pairwise comparison post hoc analysis on birth order as shown in Table 4. The survey revealed that the mean difference between the first born and last born was 2.88; between first born and middle born was 10.28; and between the middle born and last born was 3.44. This implies that students that are first born performed significantly better than students that are last born which in turn performed significantly better than students that are middle born in Home economics. This might be due to the fact that the first born has better opportunity than their counterparts who are middle in birth order. They also

enjoy the attention of other families and available resources before other children are born. Moreover, the demands of the first born in terms of material needs for effective learning in school are readily met before the others. The result is in agreement with the findings of Omebe and Mgboro (2010) that the impact of the birth order is due to the diminishing attention and parental care given to children as they increase. Also, Miner (1986) supports this finding by stating that first born children have the opportunity of achieving higher education than children whose birth order are in the middle or last.

Table 4: Scheffe's test scores for multiple comparison students' of birth order on performance in Home economics

Dependent variable: Performance Test Scores						
(I) Birth Order	(J) Birth Order	Mean difference (I - J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
First	Last	2.88*	0.525	.000	6.60	11.59
	Middle	10.28*	0.531	.000	9.79	15.24
Last	First	-2.88*	0.523	.000	-11.59	-6.60
	Middle	3.44*	0.533	.000	0.99	6.59
Middle	First	-10.28*	0.531	.000	-15.24	-9.79
	Last	-3.44*	0.533	.000	-6.59	-0.99

Source; *Field survey data*, (2018) * = The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

The mean performance test scores were subjected to Scheffe pairwise comparison post hoc analysis on family educational status as shown in Table 5. The survey revealed that the mean difference between high family educational status and medium family educational status was 4.29; between high and low was 11.69; and between averages was 4.85. This implies that educational status was the most effective in facilitating students' performance in Home Economics. This was then followed by medium educational status while low educational status was seen to be the least effective in facilitating students' performance in Home Economics. This result is in agreement with the findings of Ewona (2000) that

family level of education which determines the occupation and social class jointly enhance students' performance. This result is also in agreement with the findings of Uka (1997) that families with literate minds ensure that their children start school early in life and have all the necessary facilities for learning. When these facilities are not available, they strive to provide and organize extra-lectures at home. Debey (1980) in supporting this finding states that children of the elite are better fed, and consequently healthier and smarter than the rest of the population. Children who suffer from malnutrition will suffer from mental retardation.

Table 5: Scheffe's performance test scores for multiple comparison of family educational status on students' performance in Home Economics.

Dependent variable: Performance Test Scores						
(I) Socio-Economic status	(J) Socio-Economic status	Mean Difference (I -J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
High	Medium	4.29*	0.304	.000	7.31	12.30
	Low	11.69*	0.310	.000	10.50	15.95
Medium	High	-4.29*	0.301	.000	-12.30	-7.31
	Low	4.85*	0.312	.000	1.70	7.30
Low	High	-11.69*	0.310	.000	-15.95	-10.50
	Medium	-4.85*	0.312	.000	-7.30	-1.70

Source: *Field Survey data*, 2018 * = mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The t-test analysis of mean performance scores of students from urban and rural schools is presented in Table 6. The survey revealed that the school location effect was significant at $P < 0.05$ alpha level with calculated t-value of 1.96. This implies that there is significant difference in the mean performance of home economics students from urban and rural schools. The table also indicated that students from urban schools performed significantly better than students from rural schools. This might be due to the fact that some interplay existed between the learning process and the learning environment which is directly related to the location of school. Learning is more effective and maximized if the learning environment has adequate learning facilities. This

finding is consistent with the research of Hanafin and Lynch (2002) that a child who lives in a one room apartment (without reading facilities) with his parents, normally finds the home situation unconducive for studying. In essence while such a child is somehow deprived of some educational opportunities by the home situation, another child who lives in a very big spacious house with his parents and has study facilities. This result is in agreement with the findings of Ghate and Ramelia (2002) that students who make use of libraries constantly are those who live and attend schools in urban areas and their performance are also higher than those from rural areas who do not have these facilities.

Table 6: T-test Analysis of the Mean Performance Score of Students From Urban and Rural Schools.

School Location	N	X	SD	Df	T-Cal	T-Critical	Decision at P<.05
Urban	200	37.42	3.95	398	14.79	1.96	*
Rural	200	31.80	3.67				

Source: Field survey data, 2018.

* = significant at P<.05 alpha level

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that family socio-economic status, family size, birth order, family educational status and family/school location had significant influence on the academic performance of senior secondary school students on Home Economics. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: Bursary and scholarship should be given to the students from low socio-economic background by government, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Governmental agencies should intensively campaign against large family size and emphasis should be on its implication on the future education of the children, parents should limit the size of their families by avoiding rearing so many children that they cannot cater for in schools, parents should encourage their children to perform better in schools by providing conducive environment and learning materials irrespective of their educational status, Government (Federal, state and local), Parent Teachers Association (PTA), philanthropists and the communities should help in funding rural schools and also provide adequate facilities to rural school, qualified teachers should be employed evenly distributed to both urban and rural schools. Also, special allowances should be paid to teachers in rural schools to boost their morale for high productivity and finally parents should encourage their children appropriately and lay aside birth order syndrome in the family when it comes to academics.

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