

Mothers' Employment, Marital Status and Educational Level on Students' Academic Achievement in Business Studies

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Abstract - *The mother's personality is a build-up of demographic factors among which employment, marital status and educational level are prominent in shaping child's abilities and aspirations. This study therefore, determines the influence of mothers' employment, marital status and educational level on students' academic achievement in Business studies. Ex-post facto survey design and stratified random sampling technique were adopted for the study. Structured Questionnaire (MEMSEL Scale, $r = .76$) and Business Studies Achievement Test ($r = .80$) with a section for demographic data were administered on a sample of Two Hundred and Fifty students from five (5) schools in Ijebu-Ode, Nigeria. Multiple regression statistics was used for data analysis at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there was a significant but negative relationship between mothers' marital status and academic achievement of student's ($r = -.195$; $p < .05$) and employment and educational level ($r = -.228$; $p < .05$). Moreover, no significant relationship existed between academic achievement of students' and mothers' employment ($r = -.007$; $p > .05$); academic achievement and educational level ($r = .091$; $p > .05$); employment status and marital status ($r = -.033$; $p > .05$) and marital status and educational level ($r = .079$; $p > .05$). However there was a significant combined contribution on the independent variables on students' academic achievement in Business Studies (Adj. $R = .037$; $F(3,237) = 4.111$; $P < .05$). Thus, it was recommended that parents should provide positive home environments for their children, while school operators should respond favourably and focus attention on the children's needs.*

Keywords: Business Studies, Educational Level, Marital Status, Mothers' Employment, Students' Academic Achievement.

INTRODUCTION

The importance placed on junior secondary school students' academic achievement cannot be overemphasized. This assertion is premised on the objectives of junior secondary education as stipulated in section 2, Sub-section D22 of the National Policy on Education among others that; graduates are expected to develop diverse basic knowledge and skills needed for educational advancement and the performance of their civic responsibilities [1].

Academic achievement of the junior secondary school students will either determine the progression to the next level of secondary education and subsequently into tertiary institutions or go into the world of work. The seemingly persistent poor academic achievement among these school children

has raised the concern of all stakeholders in the education industry including, researchers, policymakers, parents, teachers and governments to continually re-examine and analyse the teaching-learning process. This is to thoroughly understand the numerous factors that can affect students' performance and as well identify appropriate solutions that could assist in enhancing performance.

Students' academic achievement is not only affected by school-related factors such as learning environment, school infrastructure, teachers' dedication to duty, qualified teachers; but some others factors outside of school that are related to academic achievement of students. [2]for instance, identified the family, individual learner, social incentives, society and socio-economic conditions as factors affecting

students' success. Ojerinde [3] classified causes of low academic achievement to factors such as: school environment, home background, economic, political and intellectual capability, social and entry qualification. Also, incidence of school dropout, truancy, cheating, bullying and juvenile delinquency had been related to poor academic achievement [4] [5].

The concept of motherhood and its features have been found to be of great influence on students' academic achievement. Researches have reported a correlation between mothers' (maternal) employment and child's academic achievement [6]. Parcel and Menaghan [7] argued that mothers' employment can have favourable effects on child's outcome. It was argued that daughters of employed women have higher academic achievements than daughters of stay-at-home mothers. Also, children who grow up in single-parent families are less likely to complete high school or even attend college than the children who grow up with both parents. This beams a searchlight on the influence of mothers' marital status on their children academic achievement; as effective parenting towards children's outcomes in life seems to require involvement of the parents. On the contrary, Hoffman [8] showed that some studies examined the mothers' sensitivity in interactions with their infants and found no difference between the employed and non-employed mothers.

According to Magnuson and Shager [9], social scientists often attribute academic achievement gap of students to the mix of economic and social advantages afforded by higher levels of parental education. It was reported that children of more highly educated parents enter school with higher levels of academic skills and continue to perform better than other children [10],[9]. This avails the curiosity to know the influence of mother's (maternal) educational level on student's academic achievement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to investigate the contributions of mothers' employment, marital status and educational level on academic achievement of junior secondary school students in Ijebu-Ode Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study aimed to suggest the strategic approaches of improving students' academic achievement on the part of the school operators, parents and guardians. Also, the researchers intend to

enrich the literature on the importance of mothers' demographic variables on the academic performance of their children. Hence, the following null hypotheses were specifically formulated to guide this study.

HO₁: There is no significant relationship among mothers' employment, marital status and educational level on students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

HO₂: Mothers' employment, marital status and educational level combined together will not significantly affect students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

METHODS

Design

The study adopted ex-post-facto research design. Stratified random sampling technique was used, having five (5) schools randomly selected from twenty-one (21) Junior Secondary Schools in Ijebu-ode Local Government Area. Twenty-Five (25) students each whose mothers are working in formal and informal sectors were selected respectively; making it Fifty (50) respondents (mothers of the students) selected from each of the five (5) Schools. In total, Two hundred and fifty (250) respondents were selected to participate in the study.

Instruments

Two research instruments were used in this study. A structured questionnaire (MEMSEL Scale) and Business Studies Achievement Test (BSAT) were employed. MEMSEL scale was divided into two sections with Section "A", dealing with the demographic data of the mothers, while the section "B" elicits responses on the influence of mothers' employment, marital status and educational level on students' achievement in Business Studies. It consisted of twenty-four (24) items with inter-item correlation of .116 and an odd-even reliability of .76. Its measurement was based on 4-points Likert scale with 1 demonstrating "Strongly Agree" and 4 demonstrating "Strongly Disagree". BSAT measured the students' academic achievement in Business Studies consisting of twenty questions from major modules in Business Studies such as Book-Keeping, Typing and Shorthand. The scale was validated using

test-retest method of reliability with a resultant correlation co-efficient of 0.78 and 0.80 respectively.

Procedure

The questionnaires were administered personally by the researchers through the teachers. The questionnaires were taken home to the parents of the students and Two Hundred of Forty (240) were collected after some days, having attrition of Ten (10) questionnaires of which the concerned respondents were exempted from the study. The achievement test was administered on the students and retrieved immediately. Data resulting from the instruments were analysed using correlation matrix, analysis of variance, independent t-test and multiple regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship among mothers' employment, marital status and educational level on students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

The result in Table 1 showed that there was a significant but negative relationship between mothers' marital status and academic achievement of students ($r = -.195$; $p < .05$) and employment and educational level ($r = -.228$; $p < .05$). However, no significant relationship existed between academic achievement of students' and mothers' employment ($r = -.007$; $p > .05$); academic achievement and educational level (r

$= .091$; $p > .05$); employment status and marital status ($r = -.033$; $p > .05$) and marital status and educational level ($r = .079$; $p > .05$). The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship among mother's employment, marital status and educational level on students' academic achievement in Business Studies was rejected for relationship between mothers' marital status and academic achievement of students; mothers' employment and educational level; and the same hypothesis was accepted for other relationships. The implication of this is that the higher the commitment of mothers in employment the lower the academic achievement of students and vice versa.

Hypothesis Two

Mothers' employment, marital status and educational level taken together will not significantly influence students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

The results in Table 2 indicated that putting all the predictor variables (mothers' employment, marital status and educational level) into the regression model at once, there was a significant prediction of students' academic achievement in Business Studies ($R = .222$; $R^2 = .049$; $Adj R^2 = .037$; $F_{(3,237)} = 4.111$; $P < .05$). This showed that all the variables accounted for 4.9% of the variance in the students' academic achievement in Business Studies. This implies that there is a significant combined contribution of mothers' employment, marital status and educational level on students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

Table 1. Correlation Matrix for the Relationship Among Mother's Employment, Marital Status and Educational level on students' Academic Achievement in Business Studies

		Academic Achievement	Employment	Marital Status	Educational Level
Academic Achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	-.007	-.195(**)	.091
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.919	.002	.159
	N	241	241	241	241
Employment	Pearson Correlation	-.007	1	-.033	-.228(**)
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.919		.606	.000
	N	240	240	240	240
Marital Status	Pearson Correlation	-.197(**)	-.033	1	-.078
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.002	.606		.226
	N	240	240	240	240
Educational Level	Pearson Correlation	-.091	-.228(**)	.078	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.159	.000	.220	
	N	240	240	240	240

**correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2. Model Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis for the Combined Contribution of Mothers' Employment, Marital Status and Educational Level Factors to the Prediction of Students' Academic Achievement in Business Studies

REGRESSION		ANOVA				
Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
R=.222	Regression	68.617	3	22.872		
R Square=.049	Residual	1318.486	237	5.563	4.111	.007(a)
Adjusted R Square= .037	Total	1387.104	240			

- a. Predictor: (Constant) Mother's Employment, Marital status, Educational level
- b. Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement

The correlation matrix on the dependent and independent variables revealed variance in the level of relationships among mothers' employment, marital status, educational level and students' academic achievement. The significant but negative relationship between mothers' marital status and academic achievement of students could have been as a result of the mother's level of involvement in their children's academic achievement. [11]reported adverse effects of maternal employment on middle-class boys when their mothers started working in the first year of life. It was also reported that there was a negative effect of maternal employment as the mother start working when the child is older. Hence, the correlation between mother's employment and student's academic achievement may have been the effect of timing and intensity of the engagement.

The result however, showed that no significant relationship existed between students' academic achievement and mothers' employment, academic achievement and educational level; employment status and marital status and educational level. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship among mothers' employment, marital status and educational level on student's academic achievement in Business Studies was rejected for relationship between mothers' marital status and academic achievement of students; but there was a relationship among mothers' employment, educational level and students' academic achievement. The implication of this is that the higher the commitment of mothers in employment, the lower the academic achievement of students and vice versa. Mothers' contribution to the academic achievement of their children is categorized as the most important values in a child's career. Parents, most especially mothers play an important role in shaping the adult life of their

children [12]. Although, time and money are invested in activities that affect their offspring wellbeing, mothers should endeavour to balance their commitment towards employment and children academic pursuits. Intimate interactions also foster the relationship between mother and child. This enhances free and open mindedness in the children to express their feeling at any given time to warm parents who will in turn proffer necessary solutions to their problems. Thus, mothers' employment therefore is totally dissociated from having effect on a child's upbringing but not totally determines whether or not a child succeeds in his/her educational career.

It was also revealed that educational level of mothers will not affect the academic achievement of children in Business Studies. Though, mothers' academic level is permissible but, it is not a major determinant of academic achievement of children. Burtless [13] posited in his study that parental education accounted for as low as twenty four percent (24%) of the variance in the students' test scores. Indeed, there are many psychosocial factors that determine students' academic achievement among which parental education is quite infinitesimal. Thus, mothers' educational level could not relatively influence students' academic achievement. This tends to be at variance with the norm that children of more highly educated parents tended to have higher educational attainments and a lower probability of being economically inactive as a young adult. It seems maternal education is quite beneficial to the child's educational attainment because the mother typically spends more time with the children than the father; while the quality of interaction is increased. Also, mother's education tends to affect her personality which could be a major influence on parenting style

among other factors that influences child's academic achievement.

It was established that academic achievement of students in Business Studies would be influenced by their mothers' marital status. The influence of mothers' marital status is a significant causal of children academic achievement. It was supported by Vellymalay [14] that children in the other types of family, even when they have the same academic abilities, children in single parent families are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two parents' families. Also, Tenibiaje [15] noted that it is widely believed that children from broken homes have higher incidence of academic, emotional and behavioural problems than other children from intact homes. It was avowed that in case of divorce, separation or death of a parent, children are at somewhat greater risk for symptoms of poor psychological adjustment, behavioural and social problems, low self-esteem and poor performance in school.

It was revealed that children whose mothers are formally employed and those whose mothers are informally employed have the same level of academic achievement in Business Studies. In fact, children from both divides are exposed to the same academic opportunities. In comparing the impact of formal and informal mothers' employment on their children, there is still no evidence that parenting style of formally employed mothers are better than informally employed mothers [16]. Moreover, Hoffman and Youngblade [17] reported that full-time employed mothers spend less time with their infants and pre-schoolers than part-time and non-employed mothers, but this effect diminishes with maternal education and with the age of the child. Also, poorly paid, stressful jobs with long hours can jeopardize the quality of parenting by their demands on parents' time, energy, and attention [18]. Rumberger [19] asserts that the family background is the most significant contribution to a child success in school. He explained further using the socio-economic status, parent education, mothers' involvement and parenting style are requisites and concluded that it is the quality of commitment of the parents that determines the academic success of the children. Parents with low economic income and less attention towards education are likely to experience poor academic achievement of their children.

Having discovered that there was a significant combined contribution of mothers' employment, marital status and educational level on students' academic achievement in Business Studies, Jacobs [20] concluded that many variables are embedded in the family background which have strong (direct and indirect) associations with student's success throughout school and in young adults, eventual educational and occupational attainment. Such variables include family structure, (socio-economic status, and intact/single-parent family status) parent educational level, parenting involvement and parenting styles. It was reported that in Pakistan, employed and educated mothers are better able to make positive investment in their children, thus increasing the children's likelihood of school attendance [20].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In the study, the influence of mothers' employment on the academic achievement of a Business Studies students showed that it is not totally the determinant of academic achievement of students. Although, could play a significant role in children's upbringing. Other findings also show that mothers' educational level and marital status sometimes have effects on a child's outcome but in terms of academic achievement, it is quite insignificant. Thus, mothers' educational level and students' academic achievement in this study are not correlated, as students' academic achievement might depend on the achievement motivation of the students towards academic success. Mothers' education in this area is only useful to the child upbringing but not the academic performance of a child.

The findings also showed that mothers' marital status does not determine the academic achievement but could influence the upbringing of a child. A divorced (single) mother could strive greatly in providing necessary supports for her child's academic excellence to justify her ego and current marital status but she might sometimes be frustrated with much responsibilities or commitment than being married. No matter how educated or highly placed a single mother is in her chosen profession, the effects of the missing partner always show in some cases. Hence, the influence of mothers' employment, marital status and educational level on students' academic achievement in Business Studies does not only

determine the academic achievement of students but also shape their upbringing.

In the researchers' minds the following recommendations are preferred for better academic achievement of the students. In a child's life, home environment is a very important agent of shaping a better future; it also signals to the child what he stands for at least in terms of cognitive, emotional and physical dimension. It is therefore appropriate to place responsibility on the parents for providing a positive home environment for their children. Parents (Husband and Wife) and Guardians should realise that it is their responsibilities to guide their children through their educational achievement. Although larger societal forces surely shape the conditions under which parents create home environment. Moreover, the public and private school operators should respond favourably and focus attention on the children's needs, while encouraging their parents to be supportive.

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