CAUSAL VARIABLES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN CROSS RIVER STATE: A BASIS FOR COUNSELLING AND PROGRAMME PLANNING

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the causal variables (Child, Family, School, Society and Government) and academic performance of secondary school students in Cross River State: A basis for counselling and programme planning. The study adopted the descriptive survey method. It made use of two research questions and population of 850 Senior Secondary School Students. It used a sample of 200 students in SSII randomly selected from 20 public secondary schools. It made use of the five-factor inventory (AP5-F1) consisting of five sub-sectors of twenty items each. Multiple regression statistics was used to analyse the data. The result of question one (Q1) showed that the causal variables combined, impact significantly on academic performance of learners. The result of question two (Q2) showed that the relative effect of the causal variables is insignificant with the exception of the causation resident in the child or learner. A basis for counselling and programme planning was indicated to rejuvenate a good teaching-learning atmosphere in our schools for the benefit of the state and the nation at large.

KEY WORDS: Causal Variables, A Basis For Counselling, Programme Planning, Rejuvenation Of Teaching-Learning.

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation process exists in every teaching and learning situation. In other words, subject matters are taught and learners receive such instructions as well as undergo evaluation by the teachers to ascertain the outcome of such interaction. This has always been paramount in the minds of educationists, psychologists, researchers, planners, policy makers, parents and even the learners. It therefore means that the determining factor of teaching-learning outcome is certainly attributable to the quality of the instructions received by the learners.

The probable assumption here is that the causes of poor academic performance could be various and multidimensional in nature. The causes could be inexhaustible so long as teachers and learners interplay in the learning environment. For instance Marijoribanks (2005) opines that attitudes and aspirations of peers could affect an individual's effort and achievement in school. Steomberg (2004) on the other hand asserts that parents are more influential than peers on plans for future schooling, while peers are more influential than parents in the immediate daily aspect of education such as attitudes towards school and efforts on homework.

Aremu (2006) and Nwagwu (2000) stress the importance of home psychological climate on a child's emotional state and academic performance. Studies by (2005), Agbayihane (2004); and Baumrind (2001) also explain that anxiety affect students' academic performance. In the same vein, Marijoribanks (2007) and Rutter (2000) stress the importance of cognitive stimulation on academic performance. This, they indicate, could be better performed and enhanced through positive child-parent interaction. Bakare (2004) identifies six basic cognitive skills: perception, conception, memory, language, reasoning and creativity; and concludes that a child must sequentially acquire these skills in succession for him to do well.

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Thus, sufficient presence of these skills to a child's basic foundation cannot be down played. It is the pivot upon which other academic phenomena are built.

Outside the home environment of the child is the child himself. This, Aremu and Oluwole (2006), Odedele (2005) and Wuensch and Lao (2002) have submitted that the way and manner the child perceives himself could affect his academic performance. They concur that the locus of control; and examination anxiety, manifested by the child could affect his performance in academics. Walters and Bowen (2002) also note that a student's behavioural patterns have strong links to academic performance.

The environment in which the learner acquires knowledge should be reinforcing and learner-friendly. Nwagwu and Salami (2004), Fernster-Macher (2001), Onocha and Okpala (2001) and Bakare (2004) report that several factors including: teaching methods, interpersonal relationship among the school personnels, nature of curriculum and the school topography could affect the academic performance of the learners. Edmonds (2001) cited in Good and Weinstein (2003) say that effective teachers are those who like their students. On the same note, the National Commission on Children (2001) has it that effective teachers are those who are highly involved with students. Be that as it may, the influence of teachers on the learner's academic achievement cannot be over emphasized.

The influence of the society on academic performance should also be stressed. Obanya (2004) asserts that societal demands like political economy could determine the learner's readiness to meet his environment's expectations. Aremu (2006) and Bakare (2004), mention the following: social class influence, anti-intellectual value, inequitable distribution of resources, ethnic warfare etc. as some of the factors that could hinder good academic performance of learners. Arising from the above submission, Aremu (2006) highlights the following causative factors in government that could affect academic performance of learners: under funding of education, instability of educational policy, leadership and job losses. This study seeks to look at causal variables (Child, Family, School, Society and Government) and academic performance of students in Cross River State: A basis for counselling and programme planning.

Research Questions
To guide this study the following questions were raised.
The research questions were

(1)   What is the combined effect of causation in the Child, Family, School, Society and Government (causative factors) and academic performance of learners in English and Mathematics (dependent variable)?
(2)   What is the relative contribution of each of the causal variables to the academic performance of the learners?

Methodology
This study employed the descriptive survey method. The population of the study consisted of 20 public secondary schools enrolment of 850 SSII students and the sample consisted of 200 SSII students drawn from single sex and mixed sex public secondary schools randomly selected. The 200 SSII students comprised 105 boys and 95 girls age 12 to 15 (x=16. 9; Sd 2.13).

The instrument used was the five-factor inventory called AP5-F1 developed and validated by Aremu (2005) was adopted in this study. The instrument has a reliability co-efficient of 0.76 and consists of five sub-sections of twenty items each.

For the administration of the instrument, the researchers visited each school, discussed the purpose of the study with the principals of the schools and gave them copies of the inventory. In each school, students were made to sit comfortable and copies of the inventory were distributed to them and after completion, they were collected back immediately. The responses of the students were collated and analysed for results. Multiple regression statistics was used to analyse the data arising from the research questions used.

Data Analysis
Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.243[a]	.059	.009	9.89070

Independent variables: Government, school, family, society, causation resident in the child. Joint effect x_1. x_5 on academic performance (dependent variable).

Table 1: Multiple Regression Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	579.330	5	115.866	1.184	.323[a]
Residual	9195.630	94	97.826		
Total	9774.960	99			

(a) Independent variables: Government, school, family, society and causation resident in the child self perception, memory, language skill, reasoning and creativity).
(b) Dependent variables: Academic performance $P.323 > .05$ level of significance.

Table II: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Constant	21.689	10.663	11.026	2.034	0.45
Causation resident in the child	.183	0.85	.247	2.157	0.34
Family	-1.184E-02	.125	0.011	-.095	.924
School	2.178E-02	093	.024	.234	.816
Society	-2.855-02	.082	-.039	-.348	.729
Government	7.802E-03	.050	.017	.155	.877

(a) Independent variable: Child, family, school, society and government.
(b) Dependent variable academic performance.

RESULTS

Table 1: The result shows that the combined effects of the predictors are significant that is causal variables 1-5 could influence or predict academic performance.

Table II: The result shows that the relative effect of each was not significant except the causation resident in the child.

DISCUSSION

The result in question one is significant. This means the causal variables (causation in the child, school, family, society and government) can impact an academic performance of the learners. This result agrees with the finding of Aremu (2006a and 2006b) that academic performance of a child is dependent on the predictive factors as combined and subjected to empirical verifications in his studies. The findings were quite interesting which informed his causal academic performance and academic performance resultant model below.

Model

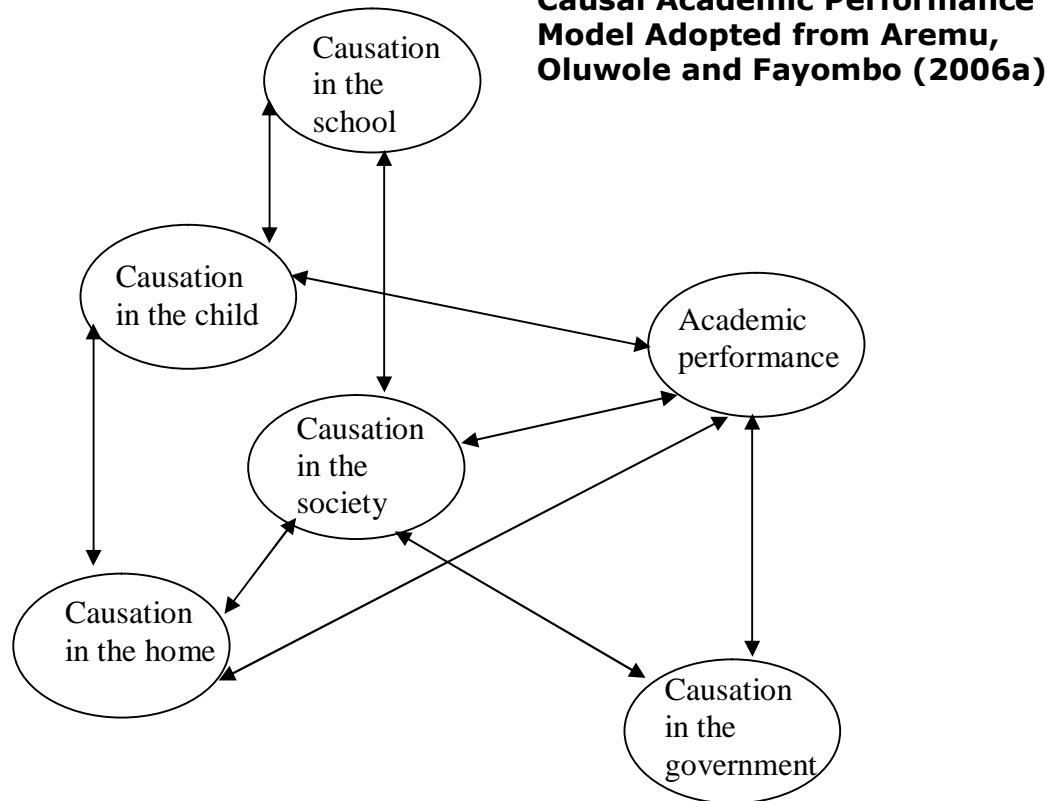**Causal Academic Performance Model Adopted from Aremu, Oluwole and Fayombo (2006a)**

Figure 1: Causal Academic Performance Model adopted from Aremu, Oluwole and Fayombo (2006a). This is an indication that a child's innate abilities as well as other predictive factors are relevant to the child's academic performance.

The result on the question of relative contribution of each of the causal variables to the academic performance of learners is not significant except the causation resident in the child. This findings is supported by Adeyemo and Oluwole (2006), Odedele (2005), Wuensch and Lao (2002), Walters and Bowen (2002) who opine that a student's behavioural patterns have strong links to academic performance. That is the more positive his self-perception, conception, retentive memory, language skill, reasoning and creativity, the more is the child's performance. This study agrees with the previous findings because the psychological variables are also prevalent in the students of Cross River State.

A Basis for Counselling and Programme Planning: To the Learners and other predictive factors.

(1)   From the findings, it implies that for learners to excel in their academics the state government, he school environment, parents, society, learners must be committed in their responsibilities to nsure successes.

(2)   The reading culture which used to prevail in the past must be brought to bear on the learners and the issue of examination malpractice must be stamped out of the school system by all and undry.

(3)   The aesthetics provision of the school environment and teaching-learning equipment should be one of the priorities of planners and policy makers to give the schools befitting teaching-learning atmosphere which will ensure good academic performance.

(4)   Government should provide for training and retraining of teachers to ensure sustainable academic performance.

CONCLUSION

The causations resident in a child are very necessary for effective learning and equally important are other predictive factors which help to sharpen the learnersq academic performance. Therefore, teaching-learning can only be meaningful where government, school, society, family and the learner work adequately in unison, with each other to bring out the best in the child (learner). A lot is needed on the part of teachers and parents to make the child learn effectively and perform maximally academic-wise. Planners and policy makers must be child or learner centred to ensure academic performance of our pupils and students in the overall interest of the state and nation at large, if the educational system must be what itq supposed to be.

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