

Family Factors and Community Agencies: Pathways to Students' Academic Performance in Nigeria

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Abstract

Academic performance of students is dependent on the various contributory factors that play major roles for quality output in human capital development in Nigeria. Therefore, this paper x-rayed the various family factors which are: parental attitude to education, parental occupation, family structure, parental educational background and parental involvement in education. Also community agencies are of two types which are: the registered and the unregistered agencies. The various pathways to students' academic performance are: time management, enrolment style, motivation, robust financial aids, and friendly academic curriculum. It was concluded that family, community and government are the major cardinal points to student academic performance. It was suggested amongst others that family factors that contributes to the success of students should be fully adopted for continuity of academic performance of the students. The various pathways and community agencies should always be allowed to play out in ensuring that students' academic performance is secured.

Keywords: family factors, community agencies, pathways, academic performance

Introduction

Students' academic performance is as important as education itself which is all about teaching and learning with the main focus on students' academic well being. Academic performance of students is dependent on the level of management of some factors like family factors, community agencies and educational resources that contribute towards the production of man power within the educational sector. In agreement to this, Aba (2019) stated that proper management of factors of production in education contributes positively to students' academic performance. Evaluation, assessment and judgment are the means by which a teacher, a mentor and a guardian can ensure that a student's academic performance is either positive or negative based on the level of knowledge acquired.

Furthermore, the functionality of every school for a productive outcome is based on the corporation and assistance given by both the community and the family. Akano (2017) opined that schools cannot function in isolation; therefore, all hands must be on deck. Educational resources which include financial resources, physical resources and human resources, all come together to achieve a common goal in education. Adequate provision, distribution and utilization of educational resources help to boost the understanding of the subject matter and the academic performance of students in a contemporary world.

According to Jones and Jack (2018), community agents are the foot soldiers and the eyes of every school. Most schools within the local communities rely solely on the community in solving their needs due to the failure of the government to intervene promptly. Banks (2015) described family factors as different economic, social and cultural beliefs that function within a family unit so as to influence an individual's development. Every student's life is being affected either negatively or positively by the kind of family factor that is surrounding him. A good and well structured family means a lot to the students in helping them pursue their academic goal and aspiration faster.

Banks (2015) stated that, occupational status, parenting style, family structure, family support and family history are the major family factors that contribute to any student's development. The type of occupation parents do, the parenting style of every family, the level of support (financial, morally and spiritual) family gives to a child, and the family history seriously affect the academic life of the student either for good or for bad. Although, it is an obligation that families should provide for their younger ones and failure to perform the basic functions, a faulty foundation with a wrong path will be laid which will in turn affect the academic performance of the child. Ogar (2015) stated that family is

a small section of a micro unit of a society, yet very strong and the oldest institution in the history of mankind. The molding of character and good behavior of every child begins from family and this is because family is the primary agent for socialization and development of every student as a basic fundamental social unit.

Family factors, to a large extent, contribute to the shaping of the life of students and their level of academic performance. Also community agencies play a major role in giving life to the educational institutions domiciled in their community so as to encourage quality academic delivery in school. Therefore, family factors and community agencies are the pathways to students' academic performance in Nigeria when properly managed.

The Concept of Family Factors

Family factors and family influence are very essential and germane for all students in Nigeria. Ogar (2015) defined family factors as different variables within a family that can influence the life and character of its members. In the same vein, Taiwo (2017) posited that family factors or family background is the machinery that puts the students' life on track. However, family factors remain the life wire and a channel through which students achieve their educational prowess for the betterment of the society. According to Ogar (2015), there are few types of family factors which are parental attitude to education, parental occupation, family structure, parental educational background, and parental involvement in child education.

1) Parental Attitude to Education: Parents' attitude to education has been a major issue in the educational sector, whereby parents do not care what goes on in school whether their child is doing well or not. Attitude of parents is of two dimensions: the positive attitude and the negative attitude. Positive attitude of parents to education include (i) performing a role at home with the child by teaching and rehearsing with the child for better mastery of work, (ii) giving emotional and mental sufficiency to the child for a balanced academic know-how, (iii) monitoring extra-curricular activities of the child and maintaining self discipline, (iv) ensuring of a conducive environment for reading and studying of the student within the home.

Negative attitude of parents to education include (i) lack of assistance and encouragement to the child, (ii) failure to provide a conducive environment for students at home, (iii) emotional and psychological disturbance of students.

2) Parental Occupation: The type of job parents engage in obviously shows the level of financial assistance parents give to their children based on his income. Mudassir and Norsuhaily (2015) categorized parental occupation into most prestigious occupation and lower ranking occupation. The most prestigious occupations are seen to be the juicy jobs of some parents with a high class positioned societal status and they include doctors, lawyers, engineers, lecturers, oil workers and other lucrative jobs with the inclusive of high class business men and women in the society. On the other hand also, lower ranking occupation by parents include: mason, labourers, taxi drivers sales, persons, cleaners, electricians, motor mechanics, shoe repairers and so on. Parents who are prestigiously occupied make more money and provide more for their family in ensuring quality academic performance of their children in school having provided all their needs. Also, the lower ranking occupation parents find it very difficult to provide and assist their family financially so as to boost the academic performance of their children; parental occupation significantly affects the academic performance of their children. This happens because the ways by which parents of different class train, discipline and pay attention to issues that concerns the children differs from the two class of parental occupation.

Tatah (2014) stated that, there is an obvious relationship between parent occupation and academic performance of students in school. Emotionally, mentally and psychologically children of the rich are more balanced and in most cases better than the children of a common man in the society. Also common narration shows that children at a younger age push to be like their parents by wishing to do or replicate the job of their parents. Therefore, there is need for parents to engage in a better occupation so as to influence the academic performance of their children and boost their mental thinking.

3) Family Structure

The composition of a family which comprised of either nuclear family or extended family is seen as family structure. Banks (2015) stated that family structure is the living together of one or more minors under the guardian of their both parents, single parents or the legal custodian of the minor in providing shelter for the child. The link between parenthood and academic performance of students are inseparable and it's a major factor in the development of every child. Aba (2019) stated that, family structure is made up of both parents, single parent, nuclear and extended family. A good family for the betterment of every student in the Nigerian settings remains the both parents' structure.

(a) Both parents: this is an act of both parents jointly putting resources together in order to train and give their children the best of the best in life. This type of parenthood helps the children in the following ways (i) it helps the students to be emotionally and psychologically healthy, hence thinks positively (ii) children in this cadre performs much better academically (iii) full resources are provided for students by their parents due to adequate surplus of financial resources (iv) children of both parents behave well in the society because of the joint or combine training from the both parents.

(b) Single parent: this is a situation whereby one parent is solely responsible for the training and upbringing of a child in the society. This happens mostly as result of divorce among the parents and in rare cases death of a partner and marital status. Single parenthood affects the children following ways (i) emotional, psychological and mental health in balance. (ii) Negative behavior as result of one sided advice and training. (iii) Low academic standard (iv) lacks the basic academic resources however, family structure is major factor in upbringing of a child both academically, socially and economically. Therefore, much focus and attention is needed by parents (both and single) so as to give every child a sound background for a better academic performance.

4) Parental Educational Background

The educational background of parents has much impact on the children and in most cases mere or mares their academic prowess. In a family where the two parents are educationally grounded, their children academic life and achievement are usually their priority and in so doing, the children performs very well academically. On the other hand, the children of a low level educationally background parents, rarely excel academically because their parents have no idea of what education means and its benefits. According to Ogar (2015), a research confirmed that both educators, parents, policy makers, government complained that lack of provision of essential needs of the students contributes heavily to low academic performance of student. Again, there are also some less educationally developed parents who ensures their children gets the best of the best academically despite having low academic background.

Therefore, parental educational background effect on students is of two ways (a) some educated parents do not come about their children's academic background and achievement thereby making the child to achieve less in school. This means that, it is not guaranteed that the child of a learned person must be educated also (b) in most cases, some literate parents strive so hard to ensure their children excel and perform well academically. A good number of successful persons in the world today all have low educational developed parents. More so, the future of every child is dependent on the willingness of the parents to show concern both academically and socially in the training of their children

(5) Communication: the style of communication adopted by the parents goes a long way in training of a child. The culture, life style interactive mode, hobbies and values adopted and implemented by parents in every family heavily influences the development of the children either positively, or negatively. It is through proper communication that messages, thought feelings and togetherness are conveyed. A good communication is instruction based which emanate from the sender (parents) to the receiver (children) which is geared towards solving family problems, relief of stress and anger and to ensure appropriateness in family structure.

Finally, all the factors of family structure play a major role in the development and upbringing of children within the family for a better academic performance of students. Good number of communities in Nigeria frequently and continuously plays important roles towards ensuring the

development of local schools within their vicinity. In addendum to the submissions earlier made on family above, school and communities work hand in hand in other to achieve a common goal of quality education amongst family and students in Nigeria. Nwadike and Godwins (2020) had established that organizations within the community contribute to a large extent good percentage of work in making sure schools progress. The primary function of a community to school is to provide security to school plants through community vigilante groups and also to assist schools through donations of financial aids, implementation of government policies within the school and to give directions or guidelines to school administrators.

Meaning of Community Agencies

Community agencies can as well be seen as community organizations whose contributions are very vital in community development and are usually a non-profit agent. Nwadike and Nwogu (2019) defined community organizations as a vehicle through which communities identify their problems and possible solutions to the problems. In achieving a goal within the community, both the government, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), security agencies all make use of grassroots organizations or agencies in achieving their goals. In the same vein, it is also seen to be a private or public organization whose services are geared towards preventing, developing and solving environmental, social and health problems that basically affects mankind within a community. More so, community agencies or organizations pose as a channel that links both the government and the school together for a smooth relationship, cooperation and understanding among themselves.

Types of Community Agencies

There are different or various types of agencies or organizations that works for every community. Azi (2021) opined that community organizations are of two types which are environmental community organizations and social community organization. The problems of the community usually are human problems which are resolved always under the two categories above. However, community agencies can also be categorized into two organizations which are:

- Registered or Recognized agencies
- Unregistered or Unrecognized agencies

Registered or Recognized Agencies:

In common terms, these types of organizations are wholly, clearly and purely recognized by the government which means they can sue and be sued in any law court. In the eyes of the law, they are seen as entities and not humans that are registered under the law of the nation.

Types of Registered agencies:

- a) International federation of women lawyers (FIDA),
- (b) International society for human rights and social justice,
- (c) Nigerian labour congress (NLC)
- (d) Nigerian medical association (NMA),
- (e) Civil society organizations (CSOs),
- (f) Academic staff union of universities (ASUU)
- (g) Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT)
- (h) Trade Union Congress (TUC)

Unregistered or Unrecognized organizations

Any organization, association, group, gathering that are not recognized or registered with the government is termed informal or illegal in the eyes of the law. This means that the group cannot sue or be sued as an entity in any law court.

Types of unregistered or unrecognized organizations in the community

- Clubs
- unions

- women meetings
- old boys associations
- churches
- fraternities
- youth organizations
- alumni associations
- age grade associations
- community development committee
- parents teachers associations (PTA)
- cliques

Functions of community Agencies

Agencies or organizations of the community aimed at ensuring a desired upgrade to the community's social health, economic and well being of the people. Both registered and unregistered organizations in the community have a common interest or functions which are established below. The functions include:

1. Empowerment: most Nigerian students, schools and other public learning institutions are being empowered, encouraged and assisted heavily by the community agencies. As a matter of fact, they contribute good percentage in the development of schools and individuals.
2. Mobilization: in protecting the interest of the community and the students, the agencies as listed above most times embark on strike or protest in order to attract the attention of the government in solving some basic problems within the community and the school at large.
3. Projects: the two organizations regularly embark on projects like building of schools, maintenance of school facilities, provision of resources both human and material etc.
4. Protection of school facilities: Community agents play a vital role in the protection of life and properties of the school through a local vigilante security outfit that is set up by the community
5. Scholarship to Student: most community regularly gives out scholarships to merited students within the community
6. Direction; Host community usually gives good direction to schools on how to manage some pressing problems and also avoid future problems within the community.

Challenges of Community Agencies

Organizational challenges are inevitable in every society. As a matter of fact, challenges are part of community agencies. On that note, here are some stated challenges facing community organizations.

- Embezzlement of fund: most leaders of the various organizations are not trust worthy. They embezzle the money under their custody which is meant for projects, empowerment, mobilization etc within the community that would have been used for the betterment of the students.
- Insecurity: due to the rising security challenges around Nigeria today, most communities and schools have been affected in terms of project execution. Both the government and groups finds it very difficult going down to the communities and schools to ascertain the problems and challenges schools and communities are facing.
- Lack of cooperation: group members in many occasion disagrees with each other either on the type of projects to deliver or a place (site) where such project will be sited. This is one of the major challenges that every community organization face in carrying out their statutory duties.
- Lack of fund: the only oil that lubricates the engine of every organization is fund. When there is no fund both the government, non-governmental organizations, community organizations etc all will fail to function thereby slowing their statutory functions down.

Path Ways to Students Academic Performance (PSAP)

Every student needs a footpath that can enable them smoothly excel academically, socially and otherwise. Kai (2018) opined that the road to academic success is gained through joint effort of academic stakeholders. Educational stakeholders include: parents (family), government (community) and students (academic performance) and the coming together of this stakeholders and performing joint task always add positive value to students academic performances. The various pathways to students' academic performance include;

(1) Time management: proper management of time by the stakeholders both at home and in school to accommodate the students, helps the child to have enough time to rehearse and know more things he never knew. Judicious application of time table programmes accordingly, obviously helps every student academically

(2) Enrolment style: Admitting students in a particular class based on the stipulated requirements of the class like age, height, intellectual capability also helps and contributes to every student's learning standard and understanding. Again, moderate enrolment of student, that is admitting students based on the number of teachers available and the class size helps to boost or fast track the performance of the student

(3) Friendly academic curriculum: Introduction of friendly and understandable courses in school gives the students an edge to understanding and knowing the purpose or reason why he is studying that course hence, the high performance of that student is assured

(4) Robust financial aid: provision and availability of financial assistance to students through donations, subsidy, scholarships, gifts etc gives the students additional strength in studying and focusing on the academic programme and thereby making him to succeed and perform better academically

(5) Motivation: Aba (2019) stated that a motivated mind is a progressive person. Students' motivation comes through their role models, parents, teachers and friends. Therefore there is need for students to be surrounded by people of good character and good intention that will encourage the student into doing the right thing so as to be on the pathway to academic performance in school.

Conclusion

Family, community and government are the major cardinal points to students' academic performance. Family factors plays essential role in the upbringing of every child, although single parenthood to an extent affects the performance of the student due to the absence of the other partner. Secondly, community agencies are also good machineries that compliments the functions of the family factors in ensuring that students follows the right pathways to their academic performance within the educational sectors.

Suggestions

- 1) The family factors that contributes to the success of the students should be fully adopted for continuity of academic performance of the students
- 2) Community agents and their functions should always be allowed to contribute their quota in ensuring that students' academic performance is secured
- 3) The success and performance of every student is dependent on the pathways chosen by the student. Therefore, there is need for students to follow positive pathways to academic performance.

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