

Influence of Socioeconomic Status on Academic Performance: A Comparative Study of Public and Private Schools in Nigeria

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Abstract:- The study is aimed at investigating the impact of socioeconomic status on academic performance with focus being place on the comparison between private and public schools in Nigeria, bearing in mind the stratification that exist based on the privilege enjoyed between citizens of low and high socioeconomic status. A total of 211 students who had just completed their secondary school education participated in the study. The student were organised in a class and were lectured on a concept. After the lectures, an assessment test was conducted for the students. The students were further issued questionnaire to supply information as regards the level of their parent's literacy and occupation. The result of the study indicates that socio economic status of parents has an impact on the academic performance of their children; with the student from private schools background recording better grade as compared to their counterpart from public schools. The study concludes that the Government should ensure proper funding of public school and also engage in proper follow up of government policies across all public schools from the ministry of education to ensure that these schools meet up to standard.

Keywords: Socioeconomic; Private School; Public School; Nigeria.

I. INTRODUCTION

The financial earning of parents is significant to the privileges their children enjoy and one of such privilege is access to quality education that should better prepare them for their future. Education is not only significant in ensuring a child's access to quality job upon graduation but also the development of their mental capacity in problem solving and assimilation. Therefore, the question of the impact that parents socioeconomic status have on the academic performance of their children comes to mind with consideration being placed on the fact that financial resources is required to ensure that children are provided with facilities, nutrition and care that are necessary for their cognitive and mental well-being and more also, financial resources is required for access to quality education. These have made the study of the socioeconomic status of parents a sensitive and required for the development of quality education that meets the requirement of all socioeconomic status.

Bhat, Joshi and Wani noted that social economic status is a combination of an individual's financial earning in addition to other social factors such as the educational level, occupation and occupational status should be evaluated [1]. The author further noted the stratification of social economic status into three broad categories which includes the high, medium and lower social economic status. According to Rothstein [2] as cited by Machebe and Ifelunmi (p. 105), "Parents of different occupational classes often have different styles of child rearing, different ways of disciplining their children and different ways of reacting to their children. These differences do not express themselves consistently as expected in the case of every families, rather they influence the average tendencies of families for different occupational classes" [3]. The social economic class of parent impacts on the quality of education that a child receives.

Machebe and Ifelunni stress that education provides other values aside the traditional knowledge and skills which includes moulding of character, thus, developing children with right habits and attitude, as well as, inculcating proper values and instincts into students [3]. These show that role of education is quit immense in the overall development of students, therefore, showcasing how crucial it is in the development of any nation. The significance of education has prompted the Nigerian Government to inert several policies aimed at improving the quality of education for all and as such the introduction of public schools that is known for its low enrolment fees which was provided in a bid of the government to ensure that its citizens all have access to education, most especially in the rural areas. The low enrolment fee sure ensures that majority of parents with low socio-economic status enrolls their children into public schools. In recent years, a lot of private schools are beginning to crop out and with the growing Nigerian population and the public schools alone not adequate to meet up with the uptrend in population.

The teaming up of public schools with private schools to ensure that all Nigerian have access to education has brought about certain debates across the educational sector in Nigeria with one of such being the comparison between public and privates schools in terms of their influence on the academic performance of students. Studies have also shown the stratification of citizens base on the access their children have to one of the categories of schools, as such parents of children of high social economic status tends to send their

children to private school while those in low social economic status majorly send their wards to public schools. These showcase the significance of choice that parent's need to make to determine the future outcome of their children, with the choice influenced by socioeconomic factors as well as a need for schools that delivers excellent output which puts into focus the exertion of Gibbons and Silva [4]. They noted that the preference parents make on school type for their children is no simple task that requires investment of both time and resources. However, does the attendance of either private or public school impact on the academic performance of their children bearing in mind that several factors are associated with the academic performance of students.

Osonwa et al noted that academic performance has without a doubt become a central focus of many researchers in education, policy makers, and social workers among many more interested parties [5]. However, in their bid to evaluate the academic outcome of learners, they seem to be raising more questions than answers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of socio-economic status on academic performance with focus being placed on the comparison between private and public schools in Nigeria while bearing in mind the stratification that exist based on the privilege disparity enjoyed by citizens of low and high social economic status.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic achievement is significant not just to the student but also to the parents, and student failure carries the same impact on both parties, in addition to the community at large [6]. Aremu and Sokan (p. 231) noted that "Poor academic performance is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other significant as falling below an expected standard" [7]. Therefore, academic achievement carries tremendous importance in the development of skilled individuals for contribution to the development of the nation at large. Thus, factors that limit educational performance must be eradicated to bring out the best in Nigeria educational sector.

Osonwa et al carried out a survey whose central focus was on the impact of economic status of parents on the academic performance of students across secondary schools in Ibadan, Nigeria [5]. The result of their study indicates a strong relationship between the social economic status of parents and the academic performance of student. They gave a possible reason for their result as parents with low social economic status being more burden with financial responsibilities do not devote enough time and resources towards the academic achievement of their children.

Machebe and Ifelunni researched on the influence of "parent social economic status on academic performance of student" with their study being carried out in Enugu state of Nigeria, reveals that the social economic status of parent do not have any consequence on the academic achievement of their children [3]. The reason for their result could be attributed to the study area of their survey being in the rural

area as such there is limited disparity between social economic stratification of parents. However, the study further indicates that the educational level of parent had significant effect on the academic performance of their children.

Ehigiamusoe carried out a study on private sector participation in secondary education in Nigeria and its implications for national development [8]. One of the hypotheses of his study was a comparison between public and private schools in Nigeria and its impact on the academic performance of student. The result of the study indicated that students from private schools perform better academically when compared with those in public schools. His justification was based on the superior infrastructure that are available in private schools as compared to public schools.

Adebayo perspective on "Parents' Preference for Private Secondary Schools in Nigeria" shared similar view expressed by Ehigiamusoe [8, 9]. Her study indicates a high level of academic performance from student of private schools when compared to public schools. She further noted that private schools have robust curriculum and possess the ability to implement the curriculum.

Akiri and Ugborugbo research on the impact of teacher's effectiveness on student academic performance in public schools in Delta state indicates that the impact is minimal [10]. The study however reveals that parents of children in public schools are mostly illiterates or having low educational level, as such, children from such homes do have low intellectual ability and their attitude towards academic is usually poor. More so, he stressed that the school environment in public school setting are usually plagued with situation such as school class rooms being crowded, inadequate or dilapidated infrastructure and facilities, thus, making the environment challenging for proper learning to take place.

Omachonu study on "a comparison of the quality and efficacy of private and public secondary schools in Idah education zone of Kogi state, Nigeria" proves to obtain similar result as Akiri and Ugborugbo [10, 11]. His study reveals that there is no significance difference in the academic achievement between private and public schools in oral English. According to his study, the result indicates that when both private and public school students are exposed to the same class room experience, there would be no difference in their academic performance [11].

Ukpor, Ubi and Okon (p. 104) identified five major factors that influence parent's choice for private schools and some of these factors include: "prompt attention paid to students and parents when the need arises, effective teaching and learning, cost effectiveness, good results at senior school certificate examination level and pride of being school proprietors" [12]. Furthermore, Onuka & Arowojolu in their study in Abeokuta reveals that the availability of advanced facility in private school in the state inspires the patronage of private schools [13].

III. METHODOLOGY

➤ Study Area

The study area of this survey is Abeokuta, a major city in the south western region of Nigeria and the state capital of Ogun state. The state shares border to the south with Lagos state while to the north, the state shares border to Oyo and Osun state and to the East, the state shares border with Ondo State and to the west, it shares border with Benin republic [14].

➤ Design and Participants Surveys

The study is aimed at evaluating the impact of socioeconomic status on the academic achievement of students with emphasis being placed on the comparison between private and public schools, as such the study is qualitative study. The study targets student from different private and public school within the State that were assembled into a class for a controlled study on the achievement that both students from public and private background would obtain in a test that would be given after lectures have been given to the students. 211 students participated in the survey, however, majority of students had public secondary school background.

The students were issued questionnaires to obtain information as regards their parent's educational status, occupation and occupational status of parents. The information on their parent's occupational status would aid their classification into low, medium and high social economic status.

➤ Data Collection and Analysis

The student were organised in a class and were lectured on a concept. After the lectures, the student were examined by a test of 5 questions with two marks assigned to each question. The reason for this form of data collection was so that both the students from public and private secondary schools can possess similar experience and environmental condition.

The students were further issued questionnaires to supply information as regards the level of their parent's literacy, occupation, information about the secondary school they attended. The data obtained were organized and analysed using descriptive statistics.

IV. RESULT/FINDINGS

Table 1 Demography of the Survey

Item	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Parent's level of Education		
No formal Education	58	27.5
Primary School	72	34.1
Secondary School	51	24.2
Tertiary institution and above	30	14.2
Parent's Occupation		
Teaching/Lecturing	11	5.2
Public Servant	09	4.5
Trading	30	14.2
Artisan	90	42.7
Agriculture	61	29.0
Others	10	4.7
Secondary School attended		
Public	142	67.3
Private	69	32.7

Table 1 above shows the general information on student who participated in the survey. 34.1% and 27.1% of student involved in the survey reported their parents had a maximum of primary education and no formal education respectively. More so, the survey also indicates that 42.7% and 29% of students involved in the survey indicated that their parents work as either artisan and in agricultural production respectively. This clearly indicates that they

mostly belong to low socio-economic class when we put both their educational level and occupation into consideration. The level of their socio-economic status was reflected more with the number of student that have a background in public secondary school which stands at 67.3% of the entire sample of the survey while those that attended private secondary school is 32.7% of the total sample size.

Table 2 Parents Educational Qualification against their Choice of School

Item	Frequency	Percentages (%)
No formal Education		
Public	49	84.5
Private	9	15.5
Total	58	100
Primary School		
Public	55	76.4
Private	17	23.6
Total	72	100
Secondary School		
Public	30	58.8
Private	21	41.2
Total	51	100
Tertiary institution and above		
Public	8	26.7
Private	22	73.3
Total	30	100

Table 2 reveals the educational qualification of parent and their choice in sending their children to either public or private school. Despite the fact that parent's with tertiary certificate and above hold the lowest participant in the study, their percentage of 73.3% represent the highest percentage

that made the choice of sending their children to private school while the least percentage is seen parent's with no formal education with 84.5% of these parent choosing to send their children to public school.

Table 3 Student from Public School and Grade obtained

Grade	Frequency	X	FX	Percentage (%)
0-3	63	2	126	44
4-6	72	5	360	50
7-10	9	8	72	6
Total	142		558	100

Mean Score: 3.9

Table 3 shows the academic performance of student that had public school background in the test conducted sequel to a given lecture. The total mean score obtained stand at 3.9 with 50% of their population having an average score while very small percentage recorded an excellent

grade with just only 6% of the entire sample size that attended public school obtaining a score between 7 and 10. The percentage of those that obtained excellence grade could be link to the student's personal effort.

Table 4 Student from Private School and Grade obtained

Grade	Frequency	X	FX	Percentage (%)
0-3	15	2	30	22
4-6	30	5	150	43
7-10	24	8	192	35
Total	69		372	100

Mean Score: 5.4

Table 4 shows the grade obtained by students with private school background in the conducted examination. 35% of the students with private school background recorded an excellent score which is quit higher than the 6% that recorded such feat from their counterpart from public school background. More so, the number that recorded excellent grade (35%) is significantly higher than the number that actually failed which is 22% of the sample that attended private school. The average score obtained stands at 5.4.

V. DISCUSSION

The result obtained from this study is clear indication that majority of the student involved in the survey had attended public schools which is not far-fetched from the fact that public schools offer lower tuition rate which is affordable [9]. However, the affordability of public schools come at its own cost which is reflected in the falling standard of public education in terms of facilities, trained teachers, out-dated curriculum. The sum of this challenge is influenced by the government's lack of investment into these schools and also taking into consideration that it's the

major school in rural areas as such funding of public schools is not top of the government priority.

Therefore, this study proves the fact that student from private school background in their secondary school education perform better than those from public school which is evident in the mean score obtained with students from private school background having a mean score of 5.4 and public school obtaining a means score of 3.9 out of a total score of 10. This clearly reveal that the academic achievement of students in private school are more superior when compared to students in public schools. The performance of these students was conducted in a controlled environment which implies that students from both the private and public schools were subjected to the same environmental condition but the difference is their attitude and cognitive development. The result is in agreement with the study conducted by Omachonu in Idah educational zone, where he asserted that student from private school performs better academically than their counterpart in public school with his research also conducted in a more controlled environment [11]

The social economic status of parents carries a significant impact on the academic achievement of their children. The socio-economic status is the sum of their income, occupation and educational level. As indicated in this study, majority of parents that have no formal education made public schools their choice of school for their children. It could be attributed to the fact that they attached no significant importance to education or they do not have the financial capacity to send their children to private school bearing in mind the financial cost of sending children to private school. It's of no surprise that majority of students that attended private schools and achieve better academically have one or both parents that have at least a tertiary institution certificate. This proves the point of Machebe and Ifelunni (p. 109) "who had opined that children who raised by parents with higher qualification are more inquisitive toward learning toward learning compared to those children from low educational qualification" [3]. This is also consistent with the studies of Rothstein [2] and Hill et al. [15]. It is survey shows clearly that literate parents tend to invest more in the academic success of their children.

VI. CONCLUSION

Social economic status has a significant impact on academic performance. Student from high social-economic status background have access to resources, parental involvement, educational background, health and nutrition that can enhance their academic performance coupled with the necessary exposure needed for their thriving academically. In contrast, student from low socio-economic background may lack access to these resources and may have to take on extra job to contribute their quota to their family survival through street hawking or engagement in agricultural production, which can limit their academic performance. Therefore, it is imperative to address the disparity in socio-economic status for all students to have

equal opportunities to succeed academically. This can be done through policies and program targeted at providing support and opportunities for student from low socio-economic background while more can be done to address the disparity or gap in facilities, qualified teachers, and improved curriculum between private and public schools so as to bridge the gap between the academic performance of student from private school background and those from public school. This can be achieve through the proper funding of public school as well as proper follow up of government policies across all public schools from the ministry of education to ensure that these schools meet up to standard.

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