

Moral and Religious Affiliation of Families and Pupils' Academic Performance in English Language in Cross River State

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Abstract

This paper examined the influence of family morals and religious affiliation on academic performance of pupils in English language in Cross River State. Two research questions and corresponding hypotheses were formulated to give direction to the study. The sample of the study consists of 136 Primary five (5) pupils systematically selected across three primary schools in Cross River State. Two research instruments were used for data collection in this study. These include a 5-item questionnaire titled "Parental Influence Questionnaire" (PIQ) and "English Language Achievement Test" (ELAT) administered to primary five pupils. Simple linear regression was employed to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that there are significant influences of family morals and religious affiliation on pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that parents should instill good moral values on their children and wards before sending them to school which is a wider society, as this will go a long way in shaping their relationship in the school and by extension their academic performance.

Keywords: moral, religious, affiliation, academic, achievement

Introduction

Family is one of the most influential parts of children's life. Thus, in accordance with research on language learning, parents' attitudes about a foreign language have a big impact on their kids' language performance. As a result, owing to the fact that increasing numbers of previous studies have testified to the importance of parents' engagement, whether it is positive or negative, it is of utmost importance to clarify to what extent parents' involvement can have an impact on their children. The parents' English proficiency sets up obstructions to their engagement in their children's English absorbing procedure. Considering the education and economic level in various regions

and whether English is necessarily used in their entire life, most non-native English speakers do not master English as a second language and many of them stop contacting with it since they graduate. In this way, there is a great possibility that people have no confidence in their English proficiency when they become parents.

Besides, parents with different academic backgrounds have different English proficiency. Studies have revealed that the more education the parents receive, the more proficient they are in their vocabulary, which affects their kids' English level. But people having access to higher education are not the majority in society. Parents who graduated from fundamental, middle or high school have no significant difference in their vocabulary, despite the fact that they received different levels of English education (Hosseinpour et al., 2015). Whatever the trigger is, these parents who lack English skills show a low willingness to participate in their children's English study. According to the research survey, more than 60 percent of parents find it hard to back up their children in learning English, in cases where most parents assert that their English level is poor and fair (Forey et al., 2016). Since English is recognized as an international language in the trend of globalization, language learning has become a heated topic in the education area. Nowadays, parents' engagement has cognitive, social, and emotional roles in children's achievement in learning English. When it comes to language learning, younger learners tend to have a better outcome (Cheng et al., 2018). Admittedly, when people begin studying English in an academic setting, professionals have admittedly justified English language education in primary schools; so this paper will focus on primary school students.

The family is a basic unit of social structure and a locus of much of a person's social activities. Family can be defined in various ways depending on the culture of the people. The responsibility of training a child always lies in the hands of the parents. This is congruent with the common assertion of sociologists that education can be an instrument of cultural change which is being taught from home (Ogunshola & Adewale, 2012). The family is always the first point of contact for the child; it lays the foundation of education before the child goes to school and the personality that the child takes to school is determined by the home. Therefore, it is not out of place to imagine that parents' socioeconomic background can have possible effects on the academic performance of children in school. Whatsoever affects the development environment of children would possibly affect their education. The home environment has a great influence on the child's psychological, emotional, social and economic state hence his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. Enriching experiences in the home can contribute up to one and a half of the measured achievement in verbal skills, reading and mathematics (Akinsanya et al., 2011).

It is against this background that the researchers were poised to study the influence on moral and religious affiliation of families on pupils' academic performance in English

language in Cross River State. Considering that English is not the native language of indigenes of Cross River State, the researchers considered some factors that may influence the performance of pupils in English language as the variables to include family morals and family religious affiliation.

Family morals are assumptions, both conscious and unconscious, about what is right and important. Some set of values forms the love of every culture. The fundamental characteristics of any culture is the relationship of its basic morals; example includes value placed on education, marriage, material wealth, among others. Robinson (2002) highlighted family factors that predict students' academic performance to include family size, family type, socio-economic factor, family value and family prestige. The author continued that among these factors, family moral is considered as the most accurate prediction of students' academic performance. Chekki (2006) equally discovered that a good parent's moral is important indication of students' academic performance as it goes a long way in shaping the child's behaviour and inclination to academics. Uwaifo (2008), in a study on family life and students' academic achievement, discovered that parent's values influence student's academic achievement significantly.

Akibo (2015) characterized morals into three which, according to him, include ultimate value, intermediate value and specific values. Ultimate values are mostly abstract and largely unattainable. These are values which touch one on the core of human life. They give meaning to social life and largely taken as something inherent in natural order of things. Examples are the belief regarding nature and the universe relation of man, the goal of peace and harmony, happiness and fulfillment. Intermediate values are reformation of ultimate value into concrete and attainable terms. This is done through the norms of the society which guide behaviour and actions, and by extension, pupils' education. While specific values are derived when individuals or groups apply the intermediate values in terms of objectives, experience and relationship which individual prefer in various activities in situations

Deton (2016) conceives religion as a fixed relationship between the human and non-human entities, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute or simply, God. According to the author, religion is such a wonderful universal phenomenon that is found in every society, developed or underdeveloped, black or white race, which has enormous force in what humans do, have or learn especially in education. Pratt (1996) agrees that religion is a social behaviour associated with individuals or communities directed towards the power or forces which they conceive as having lasting and ultimate control over their life especially in learning environment.

Ali et al. (2019) carried out a study on the impact of religious practices and values on academic achievements of students at secondary school level. The objectives of this study were to find out the perception of teachers about religious practices and values,

to explore the views of students about religious practices and values, and to find out the impact of religious practices and values on the academic achievement of students. This study was a descriptive type. All students and teachers of Read Foundation high schools in district Bagh comprised the population of this study. The sample consists of students and teachers of 10 schools which were selected on convenient basis. 400 students and 200 teachers were selected randomly as respondents for data collection. A questionnaire was used for data collection. The data was collected personally by visiting schools of Read Foundation and analyzed by tables showing frequency and percentage through SPSS-23. Findings show that majority of the teachers agreed that giving knowledge of religious practices and values should be obligatory for a teacher. Similarly, the majority of the students agreed that students should seek knowledge of religious practices and values for their educational achievement. The result has been discussed with the relevance of previous researches. It was observed that almost all students and teachers agreed with the researcher's views that Islamic religious practices and values have more distinct impact on students' academic achievement.

According to Eliade (2010), religion is the most substantial bond of humanity. The fear of the unexplainable phenomena of the universe and some superstitious beliefs compel men to enter into a bond or pact with such unknown forces. Numerous studies have proved that the students are bolder and do better intellectually by teaching religion.

Statement of the problem

The challenges of poor pupils in English Language examinations have generated a lot of concerns for decision-makers and all stakeholders in the education sector. The low-level academic performance has been linked to several factors including parental influence. Parental expectation of children's academic performance without necessary support and involvement can create pressure in students, leading to stress and anxiety which can adversely affect their academic performance in English language. Inculcating good moral values could help students build a positive character, boost the self-confidence of students and help them to be positive in life, channel their energy properly, make a positive impact in the society and equip students with tools to resolve conflicts in a peaceful and respectful manner. The enormous challenge that religious affiliation has brought in Cross River State primary and preprimary schools has a significant influence on the choice of knowledge and learning children indulge in, especially as the indigenes have different religions and cultural affiliations. Based on the aforementioned, this study therefore, seeks to ask the question: is there any influence of family morals and religious affiliation on academic performance of pupils in English Language in Cross River State?

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this paper are to examine:

1. How family morals influence pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State.
2. The extent to which family religious affiliation influences pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State.

Research questions

1. To what extent do family morals influence pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State?
2. How does family religious affiliation influence pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State?

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant influence of family morals on pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of family religious affiliation on pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State.

Methodology

The study adopted survey design. Survey design involves collections of quantitative information that can be tabulated along a continuum in numerical form, such as scores, or it can describe categories of information such as gender or patterns of interaction when using technology in a group situation. Descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection. The population of the study comprises the entire primary five pupils in public primary schools in Cross River State.

The sampling techniques used for this study are the purposive and simple random sampling technique. By purposive, the researchers used Calabar municipality because it is the headquarters of Cross River State and hence have the different ethnic, social and religious characteristics of the state. Secondly, by simple random sampling, the names of all the government primary schools in Calabar Municipality Local Government Area of Cross River State was written in pieces of paper, folded and kept in a container. Using Hat-And-Draw method, the researchers selected three (3) public primary schools on blindfold that were used for the study. In the selected sample, the researchers used only primary 5 intact classes which summed up to 134 primary five pupils in the sampled primary schools in Cross River State for the administration of the questionnaire, while the teachers helped the students in responding to one of the instruments by explaining the meaning of the individual items present in the research instrument.

Questionnaire titled "Parental Influence Questionnaire" (PIQ) and the English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) were employed for data collection. For the questionnaire, Section "A" was designed to collect the respondents' personal demographic information such as gender and religion. Section B contained 5 items measuring family morals. The instrument was constructed on a modified 4-point Likert scale with Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). This instrument was given face and content validation by three experts. Two experts in Measurement and Evaluation and one expert from Curriculum and Teaching Department, all from the University of Calabar. The researchers included some important information to aid the experts in validating the instrument. This information includes the title of the study, research questions and the hypotheses. The instrument had 15 items, but at the end of the validation, 10 items were dropped excluding the family religion that form part of the demographic data, bringing the number of the items in the questionnaire to 5.

To ascertain the reliability of the PIQ, a pilot test was carried out using fifty (50) randomly selected primary five pupils that were not used in the actual study. Cronbach alpha reliability estimate was used to determine the reliability coefficient of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was 0.88. This value was considered reliable enough for the instrument to be used for the study. The "English Language Achievement Test" (ELAT) was a 20 item English Language test meant to find out the performance of the pupils in English Language. The reliability coefficient of the ELAT was determined using Kuder Richardson KR20 analysis and the coefficient was .76

The questionnaire was first administered on the primary five pupils under the supervision of the class teachers. It was administered on the primary five pupils to measure their level of family morals and their religious affiliation. At the end of the questionnaire's administration and retrieval, the "English Language Achievement Test" (ELAT) was administered to the same primary five pupils to measure their performance in English Language. Simple linear regression analysis was used for data analysis, to test the influence of the independent variable (family morals and religious affiliation) on the dependent variable (pupils' academic performance in English language).

Presentation of results

Ho1: There is no significant influence of family morals on pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is family morals while the dependent variable is pupils' academic performance in English language. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression was used and the result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Simple regression analysis of significant influence of family morals on pupils' academic performance in English Language in Cross River State (N=134).

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F-ratio	Sig.
Regression	19.247	1	19.247		
Residual	2486.569	132	4.417	12.358*	.037 ^b
Total	2505.816	133			

*Significant at .05 level; R = .088; R² = .008; Adj R² = .006

The analysis in Table 1 showed that the Adj R² is 0.006. This implies that 0.6% of the variance in the dependent variable (pupils' academic performance in English language) could be accounted for by family morals. However, though the percentage contribution is small, a close look at the table showed that F=12.358 (p<.05) is significant. Also, since p (.037) is less than .05, it implies that there is a significant influence of family morals on pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State. Therefore, the stated null hypothesis is rejected.

Ho2: There is no significant influence of family religious affiliation on pupil's academic performance in English language in Cross River State.

The independent variable in this hypothesis is family religious affiliation while the dependent variable is pupils' academic performance in English language. To test this hypothesis, simple linear regression was used and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Simple regression analysis on influence of family religious affiliation on pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State (N=134)

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F-ratio	Sig.
Regression	265.757	1	265.757	66.793*	.000 ^b
Residual	2240.059	132	3.979		
Total	2505.816	133			

*Significant at .05 level; R = .326; R² = .106; Adj R² = .104

The analysis in Table 2 showed that the Adj R² is 0.104. This implies that 10.4% of the variance in the dependent variable (pupils' academic performance in English language) could be accounted for by family religious affiliation. However, though the percentage contribution is small, a careful observation of the table indicated that F-value of 66.793 (p<.05) is significant. Equally, since p(.000) is less than .05, it implies that there is a

significant influence of family religious affiliation on pupil's academic performance in English language in Cross River State. Therefore, the stated null hypothesis is rejected.

Discussion of the findings

Results on Table 1 showed that there is a significant influence of family morals on pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State. The finding is in line with the study of Robinson (2002) who highlighted that family factors that predict students' academic performance include family size, family type, socio-economic factor, family value and family prestige. The author continued by saying that among these factors, family morals is considered as the most accurate prediction of students' academic performance. In line with the above discovery, Chekki (2006) equally discovered that a good parent moral is important indication of students' academic performance, as it goes a long way in shaping the child's behaviour and inclination to academics. Uwaifo (2008) in a study of family life and students' academic achievement, discovered that parents' values influence students' academic achievements significantly.

Table 2 analysis showed that there is a significant influence of family religious affiliation on pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State. The finding from this hypothesis is in line with Ali et al. (2019) who carried out a study on the impact of religious practices and values on academic achievements. The objectives of the study were to find out the perception of teachers about religious practices and values, to explore the views of students about religious practices and values, and to find out the impact of religious practices and values on the academic achievement of students. Findings show that majority of the teachers agreed that giving knowledge of religious practices and values should be obligatory for a teacher. Similarly, the majority of the students agreed that students should seek knowledge of religious practices and values for their educational achievement. It was observed that almost all students and teachers agreed with the researchers' views that Islamic religious practices and values have more distinct impact on students' academic achievement.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, it was concluded that there is a significant influence of family morals and religious affiliation on pupils' academic performance in English language in Cross River State.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations were made by the researchers:

1. Parents should instill good moral values on their children and wards before sending them to the school, which is a wider society. This will go a long way in shaping their relationship in the school and by extension their academic performance.

2. Parents and educators should help to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment where students can thrive academically while expecting and valuing their cultural and religious affiliation. This can be done by welcoming pupils from all religious background.

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