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Parents' Occupational Background and Student Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Osogbo Metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study examined the effects of the occupational background of parents on the academic performance of public secondary school students in the Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria. The simple random technique was used to select 200 students from 18 high schools in the metropolis. The results of their state government conducted promotion examinations to the final grade were used to measure academic performance. The findings revealed a significant relationship between parents' occupational background and the academic performance of students in the Osogbo metropolis. Students with working parents who earn regular salaries and work in offices, especially within the school setting, perform better than those with parents who are not working or who earn an irregular income. Also, students whose parents work in offices and in school settings perform better than those who have parents working outside of office or school settings. Students whose parents' work closes late or are always away on long journeys showed lower performance than those whose parents are always available at home. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government schools ensure regular payment of salaries and emoluments to various categories of income earners so that they could complement government efforts by providing schools' student needs.

Keywords: Regular salaries, irregular salaries, working parents, non-working parents

Introduction

Parents serve as first teachers for children. Consciously and unconsciously, children learn from their parents and environments. Parents lay the foundation for the desired social, moral, emotional, spiritual and intellectual wellbeing of their children. The training a child receives from home is of greatest importance in their total personality formation and their academic performance. It is of note that the pattern of life in the home, the economic and social status of the family in the community and many other conditions which give the home a distinctive character can influence the academic performance of a student at school. The family is the child's first place of contact with the world, and as a result, children acquire initial education and socialisation skills from parents and other significant persons in the family (Ajila and

Olutola 2000). The child's capacity to succeed in school depends on how successfully they are managed by their parents in the home environment (Vellymalay 2012).

In the last eight years, the Osun state government has paid great attention to public school development: building state of-the-art schools, engaging quality teachers and providing modern instructional facilities. However, this encouraging progress in physical school development has been dampened by an inability to pay state workers regularly during the past 36 months due to the economic recession experienced by Nigeria in 2015. Poor school facilities have been mostly isolated by stakeholders as reasons for poor student performance in schools when raised for discussion.

Judging from the government efforts at building over 150 schools across the state (State of Osun 2015) and the seemingly marginal progress in academic performance of students in public examinations (WAEC 2016), one is inclined to look beyond school facilities and teachers (quality and quantity) as causes for poor performance in public examinations. Parents of students in the state who are mostly state government employees have difficulties performing their roles at home to complement their school efforts. Government has been paying workers using a modulated salary system, where low salary earners are paid full salaries, with middle- and high-income earners being paid a proportion of their full salary every month since 2015.

The examining bodies in Nigeria, the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and the National Examination Council (NECO), release results from May/June Senior School Certificate Examinations annually. State-by-state ranking of performance has been a unique feature of this yearly exercise. Results from the State of Osun have not been encouraging, and the state has not improved by much on the performance rankings used by these institutions (WAEC 2016). This has therefore led to much argument regarding who is to blame: the teachers, the government or the students? Looking at the massive capital and human resources committed to the secondary education sector by the government over the last eight years, there is therefore a need to look elsewhere for solutions to the problem.

The study investigates the influence of parental occupational background on the academic performance of students in Osun state secondary schools, specifically in the Osogbo metropolis. The study sets out to identify the various parental occupational backgrounds of 11th Grade students in four government high schools within the city. It further looks at the level of students' performance in the government-conducted examination allowing admittance into the 12th Grade in preparation for these externally conducted certificate examinations.

Review of Related Literature

Aremu (2011) refers to a home as a place where every member of the family finds solace. He adds that a complete home constitutes a father, mother, children, and includes others living with them. A home can therefore be a conducive, convenient and supportive environment where family members interact with one another with love and affection. The home of a child prepares the ground for their social, moral, emotional and spiritual development. The home actively influences the life of a child through social engagements, care and protection as well as providing emotional and social support. The socio-economic status of a child's parents is best assessed through their parents' occupation. Parents with better paid jobs, such as lawyers, doctors, engineers, top civil servants and those with a high socio-economic status tend to be more forthcoming and efficient in providing the necessary school materials for their children than parents with a lower socio-economic status. This has a high probability of affecting the performance of students in school.

Ogunshola and Adewale (2012), in a study which examined the effects of parental socio-economic status on academic performance for students in Kwara State is of the view that

parents from different occupational background often have different parenting styles, different ways of disciplining their children and different ways of reaching out to their children. In a four-factor study which considered the socio-economic and educational backgrounds of parents, the educational qualifications of parents and students' health status, they conclude that socio-economic status and parental educational background do not significantly influence student academic performance; whereas, the educational qualifications of parents and student health status have a significant influence on students' academic performance.

Julians (2002) submits that the nature of parent occupations can affect the performance of a student significantly. Financial resources availability to provide for children's needs has a great impact on young people's mind and their readiness to learn. A family which can scarcely afford food, shelter and clothing can hardly muster enough resources for their children's school needs and such students are generally forced out of school very early. Saifullahi (2011) finds a significant relationship between parental occupations and student achievement. He finds higher performance by students whose parents are government employees than those whose parents are private job holders. This could possibly be because government job holders have more job security and are more likely to be at peace than those working in private-sector employment.

Akinboye (2006) identifies the collective effects of other factors, such as parent interests, occupations, encouragement, home circumstances and quality of teaching, which can affect the academic performance of students in homes characterised by disturbance, stress, tension and insecurity, culminating in a persistent struggle between family and poverty which can cause failure in individual academic performance in Nigerian public secondary schools. Zhang (2012) measures income level as the total monetary earnings of parents available for spending on goods or services, rent or other investments. According to Zhang (2012), children of low-income parents exhibit lower levels of cognitive linguistic skills, lower verbal interaction and lower phonological awareness, and generally lower academic performance in both internal and external examinations, than their counterparts from middle- and high-income families.

Zhang (2012) adds that children from high-income families are more proficient in reading skills than those from low-income families. The reasons behind this are posited by Sean (2013), who maintains that parents with higher incomes enrol their children in schools earlier than their lower income counterparts. They can also afford to take their children through pre-school learning, buy uniforms, pay for fees/tuition and home lessons, as well as catering for their children's academic needs on time. These efforts have greater impact on children's later educational outcomes in both internal and external examinations (National Examination Council, West African Senior School Certificate Examination and their equivalents) since they provide them with the required cognitive and social development. Low income parents, who may not be able to afford pre-school learning for their children, however, prefer having their children commence learning from class one or its equivalent onwards.

Pamela and Kean (2010) observe a higher performance of students whose parents have a tertiary level of education in sciences, reading and mathematics than those where both parents have only basic schooling. Thus, across these three disciplines, the average grades achieved by students with well-educated parents ranged from seven percent higher than those achieved by students with poorly educated parents in developing countries to 45 percent higher in most developed countries. Odoh, Odoh and Odigbo (2017) studied the effects of levels of parental education and occupation on the academic performance of accounting students in Nigerian universities. The study revealed that parental occupational and educational levels significantly influence students' academic performance in accounting studies in Nigeria. Highly educated parents are more likely to show greater interest in their

children's schoolwork progress and are always ready to go the extra mile to provide all that is required for their children to succeed in school.

Parents who work and are engaged in offices and office-related work environments, especially within schools, are more likely to be involved in educational development programmes in their wards. Such parents will monitor their children's school activities, check their work and monitor assignment completion rates. In a study by the Harvard Graduate School of Education (2018), the consistent parental educational assistance rendered to children contributes greatly in aiding their academic success at school. Ogunsola and Adewale (2012) note that communicating with children regarding their academic performance, being present at children's schools, and attending parental occasions all have a positive influence on children's learning outcomes. It is the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling and their child's life that is significant, and involves parent-teacher interaction, school visitations, home supervision of schoolwork, monitoring of academic progress, parent engagement and involvement in homework and assignments, and regular participation in school meetings, as well as the provision of a secure and stable environment.

Parents must also engage in activities which stimulate their children intellectually through good discussions, constructive model building as well as the delivery of constructive social and educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment, contact with schools to share information, participation in school events and schoolwork and school governance (Desforges and Abouchaar 2003). The academic performance of students relies heavily on parental involvement in their academic activities if they are to attain higher levels of academic success; this assists in the outcomes of examinations, both internal and external.

Parents' occupation and efforts enable children to become more productive in life. As such, occupations of parents, to an extent, also determine the level of resources which parents will be able to invest into their children's education (Ajayi, Lawani and Muraino 2011). The authors add that parental occupation is thus considered to guarantee or determine access to learning opportunities and resources. In the same study, it was discovered that students with high academic performance often come from families with high occupational status. Higher occupational levels of parents indicate better economic conditions, and this results in material support for the education of their children. It was observed that students who are higher achievers have parents who are engaged as professional administrators and in higher clerical occupations, unlike their counterparts who are lower achievers and whose parents are mostly traders, semi-skilled and unskilled workers.

Saifullahi (2011) finds a significant influence from parental occupations on student achievement in the Gujarat district of India. He notes a higher performance by children of government employees than private job holders because of the certainty and reliability of their jobs. Also, parents with different occupational classes tend to have different impacts on the levels of their children's educational achievements. Parents with different occupational classes tend to adopt different styles of child rearing. Parents' occupational classes are considered on three levels: the unemployed; self-employed; and civil/public servants (Amazu and Okoro 2014). Usaini and Abubakar (2015) find a strong relationship between parental occupation and students' academic performance in Terengganu, Kuala in a study which showed a strong positive influence; ($r^2 = 0.63$) which means parental occupation accounted for a 63 percent variance in academic performance. They concluded that respondents whose parents have better occupations score higher marks than those respondents whose parents have lesser occupations. Also, parents from formal occupational settings were in a better position to assure the helping of students at home than those from informal occupational settings. Usaini and Abubakar (2015) further conclude that since parents from formal

occupational settings have regular income, which is relatively higher, they are able to spend more on their children's education in buying books and stationery.

Conceptual Framework of the Study: Parental Occupational Background

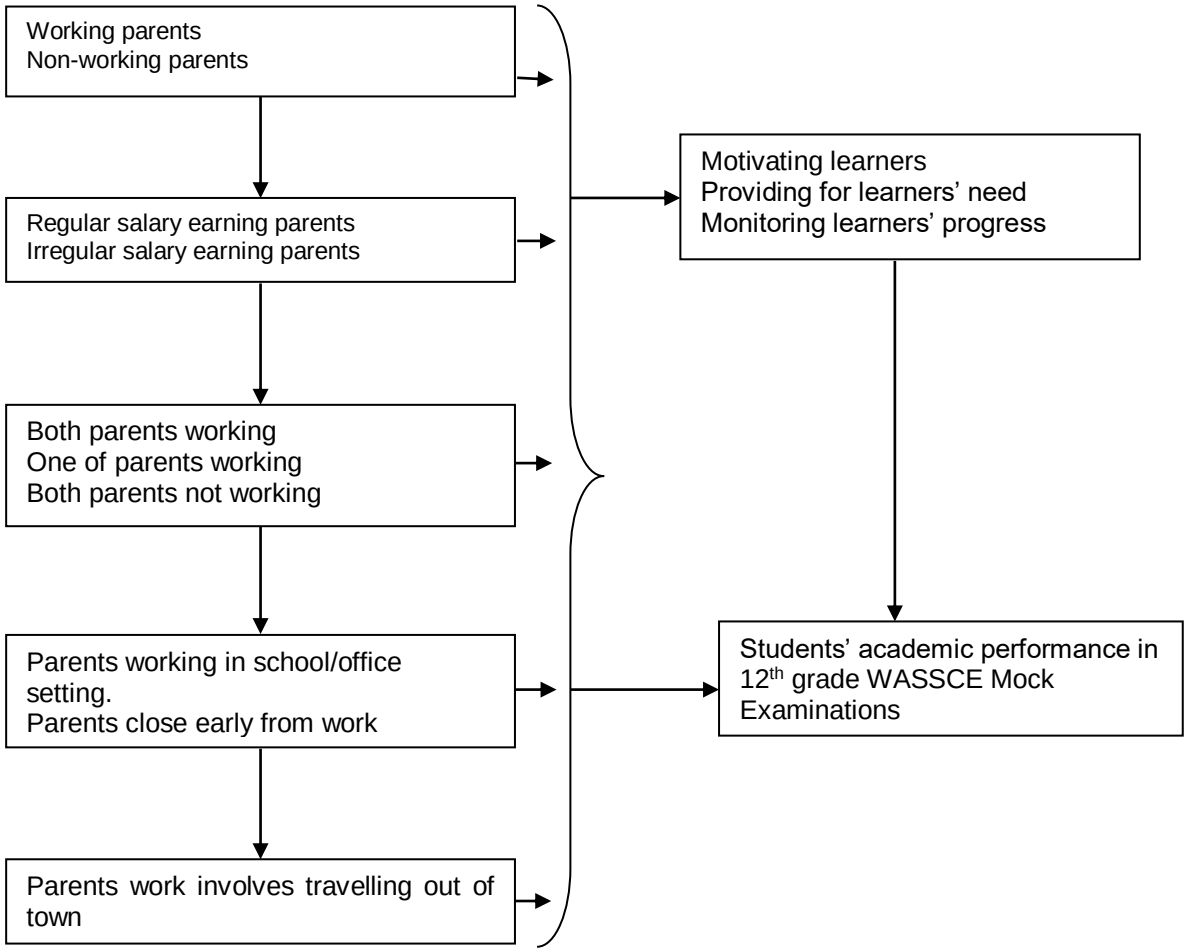

Figure:1 Conceptual Framework (Adapted from Murithi 2015: 47)

Academic performance is a function of many factors. Many of these factors are school based, environment based, home based, and student based. The home is an important factor in the overall behaviour of a child at school and the outcome of such behaviour hinges on how parents handle their children's schooling and school activities. Frequently, parents do not fully involve themselves in their children's school activities, citing many reasons for their failure to be active participants in their child's education. Amongst such reasons is the nature of their occupation, which determines the amount of time and resources parents can devote to child education.

Many parents have different occupational backgrounds which exhibit a level of influence on their thinking, readiness and management of time and resources regarding the educational needs of their children. Many working parents do not have enough time to go over their children's schoolwork and monitor their educational progress. Similarly, most parents who are salary earning workers have been experiencing difficulties in receiving regular salaries over the last twenty months, especially those in the Nigerian public service sector. The result is that most parents can no longer provide for the basic needs of their children in schools. Over the years, parents have been augmenting government provisions in terms of textbooks, uniforms, midday meals and transportation. The situation is made worse where both parents are public sector workers of the state who depend fully on monthly salaries which have not been paid regularly in the last twenty months.

Parents who are engaged in office and school settings employ the opportunity to be closer to their children's schools and school activities. Most of them act as home lesson teachers and do what they have hitherto employed teachers to do for them: monitoring their children's schoolwork, participating in homework and school assignments and being parental counsellors on school matters. When considering all of these occupational variables and how each affects the amount of time and resources parents devote to their children's schooling, it can be seen that they could significantly affect the learning achievements of their children as students. If these variables impinge positively on parents' time and resources, they are most likely to devote more of their time to monitor their children's progress in school, provide for their basic educational needs and have enough time to motivate and advise them towards higher school achievements.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research method meant to gather information about occupational variables of the students' parents and the students' performances in their 11th Grade in the state-conducted examinations. The population of the study consisted of all 18 public secondary school students in Osogbo metropolis. The study is limited to the four (4) high schools in the city. A proportional sampling technique was used to select 200 of the 1 032 students in these four high schools. A researcher-designed instrument entitled "Parents Occupational Background and Student Learning Outcome Questionnaire" was used to collect data on parental occupational backgrounds from the sampled students.

The instrument was validated by experts from the University of Ilorin and Osun State University, Osogbo. It was also subjected to a reliability test using the split half method, and the result was subjected to Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient Statistic tool, yielding a 65.0 reliability coefficient. The study used the results of students in the state government conducted promotion examinations in the final term of their 11th Grade classes. The examination prepares students for the 12th Grade which is the final class before the students write their external certificate examinations. The results of the 11th grade examination (also termed "mock examination") were used to assess students' performance because it availed the researchers the opportunity to link students' performance in the examination to their parents' occupational backgrounds which they had provided in the questionnaire administered to each of them.

In keeping with ethical considerations, each questionnaire was coded, and respondents were given code names which were matched with coded results from the examination, thereby protecting the identity of individual student respondents.

Research Questions

Table 1: Percentage distribution of answers to the research questions 1-5

S/N	Research Questions	Number	%
1	What is the proportion of the students whose parents are working/non-working parents?	Working =155 Non-working = 45	77.5 32.5
2	How many of the working parents work in offices and how many are self-employed?	Office worker = 134 Self-employed = 21	79.4 20.6
3	How many of the students have both parents working?	Both parents working = 123	61.5
4	How many have both parents not working?	Both parents not working = 28+	35.6

		45=73	
5	How many of the working parents close early and return home early?	Parents close early =97	62.6

The contents of Table 1 indicate that 77.5 percent of the sampled students have working parents while 32.5 percent have non-working parents. Of the working parents, 79.4 percent work in offices and the rest are self-employed. About 61.5 percent of the students have both parents working, although many of the working parents finish work and return home early (62.6 percent).

Research question 6: What is the academic performance of students in the State conducted promotion examinations to Grade 12 in the Osogbo metropolis?

Table 2: Academic performance of students in the state-conducted promotion examinations in Osogbo metropolis

Year	Number	5 Credits with (Eng & Maths)	5 Credits with one (of Eng or Maths)	5 Credits no (Eng or Maths)	4 Credits in (any subject)	Below 4 Credits
2017	200	37	41	32	44	46

To achieve success in the examination, the government has set a standard of 5 credits as a minimum requirement to be qualified for promotion to the 12th Grade. Table 2 shows that 78 students met the minimum requirement, while an additional 32 others are on probation. The implication is that 90 out of the 200 students have passed the exam and are qualified to be promoted to the final grade.

Research Question 7: What is the performance of students with various parental occupational attributes?

Table 3: Analysis of the result by parental occupation attributes

S/N	Research Questions	Number among the 90 with 5 credits and above	%
1	What is the proportion of student parents who are working parents/non-working parents?	Working = 60 Non-Working = 30	66.7 33.3
2	What is the proportion of the sampled students who have parents with regular/irregular salaries?	Regular salaries = 55 Irregular salaries = 35	61.1 38.9
3	How many of the working parents work in offices and how many are self-employed?	Office worker = 79 Self-employed = 11	87.8 12.2
4	How many of the students have both parents working?	Both parents working = 60	66.7
5	How many have only one of their parents working?	One parent working = 30	33.3
6	How many have both parents not working?	Both parents not working = 28	31.1

7	How many of the working parents close early and return home early?	Parent close early = 57	63.3
8	How many of the students have both parents closing work late?	Both close late = 20	22.2
9	How many of the students have both or one of the parents working in a school setting?	60	66.7
10	How many of the students have one or both parents' work schedules involving long travels which may take them out of town?	15	16.7

The data presented in Table 3 show that of the 90 students deemed to have passed the examination, 60 of them have parents working and 30 have non-working parents. Those whose parents earn regular salaries are 55 while the remaining 35 are students whose parents have irregular salaries or are not working. About 67 percent of the 90 students have both parents working, while 87.8 percent have their parents working in office environments, 31.1 percent of them have both parents not working and 33.3 percent have only one of their parents working.

Students whose parents close early and return home from office performed very well (63.3 percent) and those who have their parents working in and around school settings also performed very well (66.7 percent).

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between parental occupational background and academic performance in Osogbo metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Relationship between parental occupational background and academic performance in Osogbo metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	Calc. r-value	Critical r-value	Decision
Academic performance	200	16.540	1.58	198	0.644*	0.116	Rejected
Parental Occupational Background	200	13.850	1.767				

Based on an analysis of the results, it is indicated that the calculated r-value of 0.644 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.116 at a 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is thereby rejected, meaning that there is a significant relationship between parental occupational background and academic performance of students in Osogbo metropolis.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between the nature of parental income and academic performance in Osogbo metropolis, Osun State.

Table 5: Relationship between nature of parental income and academic performance in Osogbo metropolis, Osun State, Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	Calc. r-value	Critical r-value	Decision
Academic performance	200	16.600	1.61	198	0.280*	0.116	Rejected

Nature of Parental income	200	10.570	1.63

The figures presented in Table 5 show the relationship between students' parental income nature and academic performance. The calculated r-value of 0.280 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.116 at a 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is therefore rejected, implying that there is a significant relationship between parent income levels, regularity of income and students' academic performance in Osogbo metropolis.

Families with a particular set of job characteristics, such as public job employees, salary earning jobs and jobs with the certainty of wages at the end of every month have a tendency to affect a commitment to their children's education. Families which are able to provide for their children are likely to impact positively on children's academic performance. This is in line with the submission of Murithi (2015), where she posits that parents of students living in a household with income above the poverty line are more likely to be involved in school activities than parents of children living in a household at or below the poverty line.

Discussion of Findings

The results given in Table 1 show the distribution of answers to research questions 1 to 10. Most parents of students in the study are working class, and work in offices; about 62 percent of students have both parents working and closing early from work. Amongst the sampled students, 81.9 percent of their parents work in school settings.

The data in Table 2 show that 45 percent of the students have 5 credits and above in their 11th Grade examinations, while 16 percent have five credits and above, with both English and mathematics, thereby securing the benchmark requirement for admission into university.

Table 3's information shows that of the 90 students with 5 credits, 60 of them had working parents, 79 of the 90 students are children of parents working in offices, while 60 of them are students with either one or both parents working in a school setting. The implication is that students whose parents work in offices and within school settings perform better than those whose parents are not working, self-employed or work outside of the school setting. Also, the information shows that students whose parents close late from work or have a job which takes them on journeys out of Osogbo perform lower than those whose parent close early and work within the metropolis.

The study results presented in Table 4 show a significant relationship between parental occupational background and academic performance. Parental occupational attributes significantly affect students' academic performance, in that parents who are working and earn regular incomes and those whose jobs centre around offices and schools and who do not close late are more likely to devote enough time and financial resources to their children's learning needs. Working with children to assist with homework, buying school needs to complement what government provides, and monitoring students use of their time at home could significantly help in improving on students' academic performance.

This finding is in line with the works of Ogunshola and Adewale (2012), Aikhutaba (2013) and Usaini and Abubakar (2015), where they point out the effects of different occupational classes and parents' socio-economic factors on the emotional and socio-economic state of students. This is also in line with Ali Shah and Anwar's (2014) findings on the impact of parents' occupations and family income on children's school performance. The study found that mothers and parents who devote time to their children by helping them in their studies and monitoring their academic progress have a significant impact on their education.

Table 5's figures show that parental occupation determines the nature and level of income earned. Parents with formal jobs tends to have regular income in the form of salaries at the end of each month. Regularity of income implies that parents will be able to plan their expenses for child education. When parents' income is regularly absent, this may impact negatively on students' performance in school. This is in line with the findings of Usaini and Abubakar (2015), where they find that parents in formal occupations with regular, relatively higher income can spend more on child education by buying books, stationery and hiring home tutors.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study found a significant influence of parental occupational attributes on students' academic performance. It can thus be concluded that students whose parents have regular jobs and income perform better academically than those with non-working parents. Also, students whose parents work in offices and within school settings perform better than those whose parents are engaged in non-office work. Students whose parents usually close early from work and return home to help them in schoolwork perform better than those whose parents close later from work. Students whose parents' work entails long journeys away from home perform more poorly than those whose parents have jobs which do not involve long journeys away from home.

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

- Government should ensure regular payment of salaries, pensions and all forms of emoluments to government employees so that they can successfully provide school needs for their children, since no government can completely provide for students' school needs.
- Parents whose jobs do not entail closing late and long travels away from home should cultivate the habit of returning home early to monitor their children's after-school time usage.
- Parents should be more involved and concerned with their children's academics. They should create time to work with them and know how they are performing academically.

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