

Homework Type, Parental Occupational Status and Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in English and Mathematics in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract. The practice of giving home work to students has become common. However, there have been several controversial submissions on the influence of homework on the academic performance of primary school pupils. This study examined homework type, parental occupational status and academic performance of primary school pupils in English and Mathematics. A sample of 200 pupils was randomly selected from primary schools in Ijebu North local government in Ogun State Nigeria. Data were collected using Homework type questionnaire (HWTQ) and Parental occupational status Questionnaire (POSQ) and School Achievement Records (SAR). Simple Linear Regression indicated that homework type has significant influence on pupils' academic performance in English and Mathematics which accounted for 21.0% of variance in the academic performance of primary school pupils. Also, parental occupational status did not significantly determine pupils' academic performance. This result is at variance with assumptions, results from interviews and researches indicate that parent's occupational status should affect pupils' academic performance. It was recommended that there is the need for parents to be alive to their responsibilities on their wards and children and see to it that they ensure that home works given to children are all done and done promptly.

Keywords: Homework Type, Parental Occupational Status, Academic Performance.

1. Introduction

In this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered very significant for every human development. It plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living (Battle & Lewis, 2002). It ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to increase their productivity and improve their quality of life. This increase in productivity also leads towards new sources of earning which enhances the economic growth of a country (Saxton, 2000). The quality of pupils' academic performance remains at top priority for educators. It is meant for making a difference locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Educators, trainers, and researchers have long been interested in exploring variables contributing effectively to pupils' academic performance.

According to Adesemowo (2005), poor academic performance has been observed in school subjects especially Mathematics and English Language among Primary school pupils. Aremu (2000) stresses that academic failure is not only frustrating to the pupils and the parents, its effects are equally grave on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics. Poor academic performance is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other significant as falling below an expected standard (Aremu & Sokan, 2003)

Butler (1987) has also found homework to be a correlate of academic performance. He stated that homework bore a positive relationship with learning outcomes when it is relevant to learning objectives, assigned regularly in reasonable amounts, well explained, motivational and collected and reviewed during class time and used as an occasion for feedback to students. Most educators believe that homework can be an important supplement to in-school academic activities (Henderson, 2009). Homework is seen as any task assigned by school teachers intended for students to carry out during non-school hours (Cooper, 2009).

Homework assignments rarely reflect a single purpose. The purposes of homework assignments can be divided into instructional and non-instructional objectives (Epstein & Van Voorhis 2010). The most common instructional purpose of homework is to provide the pupils with an opportunity to practice or review material that has already been presented in class (Becker & Epstein, 2010).

Resse (2005) opined that homework has other purposes in addition to enhancing instruction. It can be used to: establish communication between parent and child; fulfil directives from school administrators; and punish students. To this list might be added the public relations objective of simply informing parents about what is going on in school.

Despite the ubiquity of homework assignments in schools, their value has been questioned and debated over many decades in the Western world, and has prompted the educationists to conduct a meta-analysis of the Educational Research Literature (2009). Equally, the Ministry of Education recently saw the need to provide clear policy guidelines on homework to primary school teachers.

Variations in homework can be classified according to its amount, skill area, purpose, degree of choice for the student, completion deadline, degree of individualization, and social context, (Resse, 2005). Variations in the amount of homework can appear as differences in both the frequency and length of individual

assignments. Assignments can range over all the skill areas taught in school.

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The degree of choice afforded a student refers to whether the homework assignment is compulsory or voluntary. Related to the degree of choice, completion deadlines can vary from short term, meant to be completed overnight or for the next class meeting, to long term, with pupils' given days or weeks to complete the task, (Epstein, 2001).

The influence of parents on children school achievement is well documented in numerous studies. Gadsden (2003) says greater parental involvement at early stage in children's learning, positively affects the child's school performance including higher academic achievement. Harderves (1998) revealed that family whose children are doing well in school exhibit the following characters:

- Establish a daily family routine by providing time and a quiet place to study with the children and assigning responsibility for household chores.
- Monitor out-of-school activities, for example setting limits on television watching, reduce time of playing, monitor the groups of friends the pupils walk with.
- Encourage children's development and progress in school; that is maintaining a warm and supportive home, showing interest in children's progress at school, helping him or her with homework, discussing the value of a good education and future career with children.

Parental occupation is thus considered to guarantee or determine access to learning opportunities and resources that play significant role in learning outcomes (Akinsanya, Ajayi & Salomi 2011). In the same studies, it was

concluded that students that usually attain high academic achievement often come from families with high occupational status. The Canadian PISA report (2006) also shows that parents' occupation appear to influence the level and direction of children's academic achievement (OECD,2006). However, parents of low occupation status and low income level tend to lay little emphasis on the provision of facilities in the homes for children's learning and they tend to lay relatively less emphasis on organized learning activities (Laurean 2003)

However, homework is often a source of friction between home and school. Accounts of conflicts between parents and educators appear often in the popular press (Loveless, 2003). Parents protest that assignments are too long or too short, too hard or too easy or too ambiguous. Teachers complain about a lack of support from parents, a lack of training in how to construct good assignments, and a lack of time to prepare effective assignments. Pupils protest about the time that homework takes away from leisure activities (Coutts, 2004). To this extent, the researcher intends to investigate homework type and parental occupational status on academic performance of Primary School pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The differential scholastic achievement of pupils in Nigeria has been and is still a source of concern and research interest to educators, government and parents. Researchers have observed that there is poor academic performance in school subjects especially Mathematics and English language among primary school pupils. It is against this constraint that the researcher sees the subject matter as an empirical problem worthy of investigation.

1.3 Hypotheses

H₀1: Homework type does not have significant influence on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State.

H₀2: Parental occupational status does not have significant influence on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State.

2. Methodology

A descriptive research design was employed in this study. The population for this study consists of all the primary School pupils in Ijebu North Local Government Area of Ogun State. A sample of two hundred (200) respondents was drawn from ten (10) primary schools through multistage sampling procedure and simple random sampling technique. Five (5) schools out of the ten were government owned schools while the remaining five (5) were private schools. Twenty (20) pupils were randomly selected from each of the schools that make up the study area.

2.1 Instrumentation

Two questionnaires were used to collect data from the pupils. The questionnaires are: Homework Type Questionnaire (HTQ) was developed by the researcher for this study with ten (10) items. The items are measured on a likert type scale from Strongly disagree (1) Disagree (2), Agree (3) and Strongly Agree (4). HWTQ has validity of crombach alpha value of 0.91.

Parental Occupational Status Questionnaire (POSQ) was a self-developed instrument. POSQ is an instrument with twelve (12) items. The items are measured on a likert type scale from Strongly disagree (1) Disagree (2), Agree (3) and Strongly Agree (4). It has validity of crombach alpha value of 0.86.

The quality of pupils' academic performance was measured by their scores in the previous term examination in core subjects (Mathematics and English language).

2.2 Data Analysis

In analyzing the result, Regression Analysis was used. The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

3. Results

Hypothesis 1: Homework type does not have significant influence on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State.

Table 1: Model summary of regression analysis of the influence of homework type on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State.

REGRESSION		ANOVA				
Model	Source	Sum Of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
R = .459 ^a	Regression	5110.506	1	5110.506	52.491	.000 ^a
R ² = .210	Residual	19179.906	197	97.473		
Adj. R ² = .206	Total	24290.412	198			

Predictor variable: Homework type.
 Dependent variable: academic performance.

The result in Table 1 shows a significant outcome ($R = .459$; $R^2 = .210$; $F_{(1, 197)} = 52.491$; $P < .05$). Homework type accounted for 21.0% of the variance in the academic performance of primary school pupils in the area of study. Therefore, the null Hypothesis which states that homework type does not have significant influence on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State is hereby rejected.

Hypothesis 2: Parental occupational status does not have significant influence on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State.

Table 2: Model summary of Regression analysis of the influence of Parental occupational status on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State.

REGRESSION		ANOVA				
Model	Source	Sum Of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
R = .059 ^a	Regression	85.421	1	85.421	0.695	.405 ^a
R ² = .004	Residual	24204.992	197	122.115		
Adj. R ² = .002	Total	24290.412	198			

Predictor variable: Parental occupational status.
 Dependent variable: academic performance.

As shown in Table 2 above, Parental occupational status did not significantly influence academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State ($R = .059$; $R^2 = .004$; $F_{(1, 197)} = 0.695$; $P < .05$). Parental occupational status accounted for 0.4% of the variance in the academic performance of primary school pupils in the area of study. The null Hypothesis which states that Parental occupational status does not have significant influence on academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu North Local Government, Ogun State was hereby accepted.

3.1 Summary of Findings

Homework type has significant influence on pupils' Academic Performance. Parental occupational Status does not significantly determine pupils' academic performance.

4. Discussion

Result of the first hypothesis indicated that homework type contributes for 21.0% to

academic performance of primary school pupils. The findings revealed that homework type determined academic performance. This implied that the type of homework given to pupils to a large extent influence their academic performance. The study also revealed that completion of work method seems to produce more result when compared to inquiry based type and project type. The finding disagreed with the conclusion of Buell (2004) where he pointed out that while students who do homework may receive better grades and higher class test scores; this does not translate to long-term retention or student learning.

The second hypothesis appraised the influence of parental occupational status pupils' academic performance. The result indicated that parental occupational status accounted for 0.4% pupils' academic performance. It is expected that parental occupation should influence pupils' academic performance because it is often said that parents who are teachers tend to affect their pupils' performance positively. The study findings showed that parental occupational status did not significantly determine pupils' academic performance. This is in deference to the expectation. This implied that it is not in all cases that parental occupational status determined students' academic performance. This accorded with the submission of Hill (2004) where he opined that socio-economic status of parents do not affect the academic performance but makes it possible for children from low background to compete with their counterparts from high socio-economic background under the same academic environment.

5. Conclusion

The key aspect for the educators in primary schools is to educate their pupils effectively so that they may be able to show quality performance in their academics. To achieve this objective, it is necessary for the educators to understand better, the factors that may contribute to the academic success of the pupils. On the basis of the findings of this research, the researcher is of the opinion that the academic performance of primary school pupils in Ijebu

North Local Government, Ogun State may be alleviated when the government begins to find ways and means of increasing teacher-effectiveness through giving qualitative homework to pupils.

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