**SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS AS DDETERMINANTS OF PUPILS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KADUNA METROPOLIS**

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**PDE/19/0139**

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND HUMANITIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA IN EDUCATION, BABCOCK UNIVERSITY, ILISHAN REMO, OGUN STATE**

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**MARCH, 2020**

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 Background to the study**

Education is essential for the development of society. The more educated the people of a society are, the more civilized and well-disciplined the society might be (Muhammad et al., 2013). Formal education is obtained in schools through an array of subjects. Academic performance is an important parameter used in measuring students’ success or failure in a particular subject in school (Ellaet al., 2015). Academic performance is used synonymously with academic attainment. A student's academic performance attracts the attention of all those involved in education. This is so because academic performance is a proxy for measuring learning. Moreover, the improvement of students' achievements has always been one of the main goals of education(Salahuddin & Talukder, 2017).Educators want learning to improve and as such strife to raise pupils’ academic performance (PAP).

Many factors contribute to the academic performance of learners (pupils in this case). Some of these have been studied by researchers with many emphasizing the role of students, schools, governments, peer groups and so on. More often than not, some of these factors influencing the academic achievement of the students have been traced back to parents and family; being the primary platform on which learning not only begins but is nurtured, encouraged and developed which later transforms to the performance of the students (Ogunsola et al., 2014). The training and development of a child is naturally placed in the hands of the parents. This is congruent with the common assertion of sociologists that education can be an instrument of cultural change whose foundation begins from home. It is not out of place to imagine that parental socio–economic background can have effects on the academic achievement of children in school (Adewale & Ogunshola, 2012). Learning begins at home through interaction with one’s family. Parental involvement in a child’s education along with environmental and economic factors may affect child development in areas such as cognition, language, and social skills. Numerous studies in this area have demonstrated the importance of family interaction and involvement in the years prior to entering school (Bergsten, 1998; Hill, 2001; Wynn, 2002). Research findings have also shown that a continued effort of parental involvement throughout the child’s education can improve academic achievement (Driessen, Smit & Sleegers, 2005; Fan, 2001; Hong & Ho, 2005 in Rafiq et.al., 2013).

But if parental involvement is so important, are some parents better placed to influence their children academic output than others? Socioeconomic status is seen as one of the factors that affect learning; students learn better if they are from an above-average or average income family (Shawwa, Ahmad, Rhman, Merdad, Sara, Algethami,, Abu-shanab, & Balkhoyor, 2015). The impact of demographic, socioeconomic and educational patterns onacademic performance is an especially relevant issue in developing countries, where major inequality in the distribution of wealth is a serious social concern (Azhar, Nadeem, Naz, Perveen, & Sameen, 2013). Low-resource and low-income families may be unable to provide materials and fees needed by their children in school. According to Salahuddin et.al., (2017) one of the main factors that affects the academic performance of students is adequacy of money provided by the parents/guardians to the students. High income families may be able to provide more resources and as a result their children may have better academic outcomes than those from low income families. Daniyal, Nawaz, Aleem , and Hassan (2011) also found this to be true in Nigeria.

If parents do not have the resources, they may be unable to provide not only the needed academic resources for their wards but also the necessary nutrient intake. When a woman’s nutritional status improves, so does the nutrition of her young children (Ogunshola et.al., 2014). Low resource families or large households also create in the upbringing of children some identified problems such as feeding, poor clothing, insufficient funds, and lack of proper attention for children, disciplinary problems and malnutrition which impact negatively on children academic performance (Ella et.al., 2015). Moreover, Powell and Stellman (2010) and Van-Ejick and DeGraaf (2012) argued that children’s academic attainment depends on inputs of time and money from their parents, the more children there are in family the less of both inputs. These inputs are not money alone, but other essential things like attention, resource dilution and so on. For low-income households there is less money and this may translate to less time for the children because parents will be busy trying to get money to cater for the family needs. This means that the single constraint of not having adequate money can attract such undesirables as inadequate family resources, inadequate time for family interactions, lack of focus and attention to the children academic and nutritional needs thereby culminating in low academic performance for the children in the household.

To reduce this low academic performance issue among primary school students, the government of the federation and that of the state instituted a free education and free feeding programme in primary schools in the state. Pupils pay 100 naira per term as examination fee. Pupils may not pay this amount and still be allowed to write the examination provided they are ready to copy questions into their notebooks from the chalk board. In such case the chalkboard serves as the question paper while the pupil’s note is the answer booklet. Moreover, textbooks are provided. Pupils can share textbooks with their seat partners usually about 2-5. Also, pupils from primary one through three get nutritious age-grade relevant meals once every school day during breakfast to complement household consumption. These are expected to lighten the educational load on the pupils’ families and therefore raise the academic performance of the pupils.

**1.2 Statement of the research problem**

A conducive environment is necessary to enhance the academic performance of a child. A stimulating home environment can spur up a potential mediocre into an intellectual giant while an inhibiting one could turn a genius into a mediocre (Olakan, Osakinle, &Onijingin,2013). Taking care of children and also making provision for their needs, especially educational needs, are very important in determining the academic performance of children (Ella et.al., 2015). The home environment and family processes provide a network of physical, social, and intellectual forces and factors that affect the student’s learning. The family’s level of encouragement, expectations, and educational activities in the home is related to socio-economic status. Families from different socio-economic groups create different learning environments that affect thechild’s academic achievement (Slaughter, 2007).

In situations where parents are unable to provide such conducive environments at home, a suitable alternative must be sought. The Free Education and The Home-Grown School Feeding Programme was introduced. It was supposed to help parents and pupils surmount the obstacles to learning at home thereby raising pupils’ academic performance. Various supporting programme like massive teacher training and school renovations were carried out.

Despite all these, pupils’ academic performance still varies substantially especially in literacy, and numeracy. Moreover, when overall subject scores are disaggregated into examination and continuous assessment there appears a bimodal distribution and substantial variance across aggregates. For pupils who do not have to worry about whether their school fees are paid or not, who enjoys meal at school during break time, and who are being taught by trained teachers with modern academic toolkits, this observation is unexpected. Could it be that there ‘are other aspects of parents’ demographics that should be addressed? This is a knowledge gap that this study hopes to address.

**1.3 Objectives of the study**

The general objective of the study is to assess how parents’ socio-demographic characteristics affect pupils’ academic performance in Kaduna Metropolis Primary Schools. The specific objectives of the study shall be to:

1. assess the socioeconomic characteristics of the primary school pupils in the study area
2. assess the socio-demographic characteristics of their parents
3. examine the relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of the parents and the academic performance of the pupils, and
4. determine which components of the parents’ socio-demographic characteristics influence pupils’ academic performance.

It is the hope of the researcher that achieving these specific objectives will ultimately translate to the achievement of the general objectives of the study.

**1.4 Research Questions**

To address the knowledge gap, the following research questions will be raised:

1. Will parents’ occupation type have any influence on pupils’ academic performances in Literacy and Numeracy?
2. Will pupils’ household sizes have any influence on pupils’ academic performances in Literacy and Numeracy?
3. Will parents’ educational status have any influence on pupils’ academic performances in Literacy and Numeracy?

It is the hope of the researcher that providing answers to the research questions will ultimately answer the research problem and consequently fill the knowledge gap.

**1.5 Hypotheses for the study**

The following null hypotheses will be tested in order to achieve some of the objectives of this study.

1. There is no significant relationship between Parents’ occupation type (POT) and Pupils’ Academic Performance in Literacy and Numeracy (PAPLIN).
2. There is no significant relationship between pupils’ Household size and PAPLIN.
3. There is no significant relationship between Pupils’ socio-educational characteristics and PAPLIN.
4. There is no significant relationship between parents’ educational status and PAPLIN.

**1.6 Significance of the study**

Education is instituted to produce learning. Formal education is believed to make students learn specific skills. These skills are expected to be evident in the learners’ interaction with his/her environment. As a result, the society improves and becomes better overtime. Such is the reasoning behind the creation of schools and the advancement of education right from the early childhood years. Learning cannot be directly measured. Therefore, quantitative record of academic performance is used to proxy learning. The higher the academic performance the higher the amount of learning that has taken place.

Every country is concerned with improving the academic performance of its learners. But to improve something we must understand its dynamics. Earlier studies have pointed to the positive relationship between child nutrition, household income and academic performance. This relationship if enhanced is expected to raise the academic performance of the pupils. But the disheartening situation still persists. Hence, the need for this study.

The study has the potential of revealing which aspects of PSP that should be addressed in order to address the issue of undesirable PAPLIN in Kaduna Metropolis. The findings may be applicable to neighbouring metropolis or communities that have similar socio-demographic characteristics. The findings will therefore be a useful guide in steering the wheel of primary education to the desired state in the state.

**1.7 Scope of the study**

This study is limited to lower primary school pupils in Kaduna Metropolis.

**1.8 Operational definition of terms**

It is necessary at this juncture to define some constructs proposed to be used in this study.

1. Pupils’ Academic Performance in Literacy and Numeracy (PAPLIN): This is the individual pupil score in Literacy and Numeracy. The score ranges from 0-100 and is made of two components -the continuous assessment part and the examination part.
2. Parents’ Socio-demographic Characteristics (PSC): These are the population, economic, and social characteristics of the parents of the primary school pupils. Examples are age, household size, educational attainment, occupation, tribe etc.
3. Socio-educational characteristics: These are the social, anthropometric and educational characteristics of the pupils. These include sex, pastimes, educational ability classification, literacy and numeracy score, grade level, age, height, weight, either with parent or guardian etc.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

This section presents a brief review of literature on socio-demographic characteristics of parents and the academic achievement if pupils. It sheds more light on the relevant theories and concepts, examines some empirical studies, visits some useful methodologies hitherto employed in literature and concludes by pointing out the peculiarities of this study.

**2.1 Theoretical Framework**

Many theories have been propounded to explain academic performance of learners.

1. The Triarchic Theory of Intellectual Abilities: According to the Theory of Intellectual Abilities (Sternberg, 1985; 1986:23), three kinds of intellectual abilities exist, namely analytical, creative and practical abilities. Measures of abilities tend to focus mainly on analytical abilities, whereas all three types of abilities need to be regarded as equally important. Research done by Sternberg (1997b:24) showed that: The more we teach and assess students based on a broader set of abilities, the more racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse our achievers will be.
2. The Theory of Mental Self-Government Furthermore, research by Sternberg emphasizes that students' learning and thinking styles (Sternberg, 1997a) (which are usually ignored), together with their ability levels, play an important role in student performance (Sternberg, 1992:134; 1994:36-40; Sternberg and Grigorenko, 1997:295). The Theory of Mental Self-Government refers to an inventory of different thinking styles that gives an indication of people's preference of thinking patterns. Where the Triarchic Theory focuses on the ability itself, the theory of Mental Self-Government refers to different thinking styles which constitutes preference in the use of abilities (Sternberg, 1990:366-371). In light of the above theories, this study adopted the theory of mental self-Government as the most appropriate one in enhancing students ‘academic performance at UNZA main campus. The reason is that, the learning and thinking styles of students at campus can either be reinforced leading to excellent academic performance or hindered leading to poor academic performance. This is heavily contingent upon the availability and provision of a number of essential facilities such as good study materials, accommodation, conducive learning environment (lecture theatres), good water and sanitation facilities among others. These being available and in provision, students’ potential abilities of being analytical, creative and practical as described in triarchic theory also become reinforced.
   1. **Empirical review**

This section presents the findings of some studies relating to academic performance.

**Academic Performance segregated by socio-demographic factors**

Several studies have been conducted in different countries to assess the factors which contribute to academic performance of students at different levels. In Pakistan, Farooq and Berhanu (2011) found that parents’ education and socio-economic status have significant effect on a student’s academic performance in Mathematics and English Language. A study conducted by Jayanthi, Balakrishnan, Ching, Latiff and Nasirudeen (2014) in Singapore revealed that the interest in pursuing a subject, co-curricular activities, nationality of a student and gender affect the academic performance of a student. Additionally, Sibanda, Iwu and Olumide (2015) found that, regular study, punctuality in school and self-motivation are the key determining factors which influence students’ academic performance in South Africa. Ali, Munir, Khan and Ahmed (2013) also found that daily study hours, parent’s socio-economic status and age have a significant impact on academic performance.

Moreover, Catherine (2015) found that socio-economic status of parents especially those with high incomes has a significant impact on academic performance of students within the Kitale Municipality of Kenya. Positive classroom environment has also been found as determining factor of academic performance (MolokoMphale & Mhlauli, 2014). Maganga (2016), Nghambi (2014) and Osei-Mensah (2012), indicated that the availability of teaching and learning materials, competency of teachers and the environment in which a school is located have an impact on students’ academic performance. Furthermore, students’ personality traits, personal goals and motivation as well as the support from teachers and the teacher’s level of experience significantly influence the academic performance of students (Ulate & Carballo, 2011). The discussion above suggests that academic performance of students is influenced by a combination of factors which includes but not limited to: Parents level of education, socio-economic status, interest in a subject, gender, regular studying, punctuality in class, self-motivation, availability of teaching and learning materials, and competency of teachers, school environment, personal goals, and personality traits. These factors could be classified into student, teacher, school and parents factors.

##### Student factors which contribute to academic performance

From the discussions above, it is evident that students play a critical role towards their academic performance. Students’ factors such as developing interest in a subject, engaging in co-curricular activities (Javanthi et al. 2014), regular studying, self-motivation, punctuality in school (Sibanda et al. 2015; Khan & Ahmed, 2013), and students personal goals as well as personality traits (Ulate & Carballo, 2011) affect their academic performance. According to Maric and Sakac (2014), students’ factors that affects their academic performance could be classified into Internal and social factors. They found that the internal factors that influence students’ academic performance included interest in content of a subject, internal satisfaction, and aspiration. The social factors also included social prestige and material reward. MeenuDev (2016) corroborated that students level of interest in a subject influence their academic performance. Similarly, Kpolovie, Joe, and Okoto (2014) asserted that student’s attitude to school and their interest in learning influence their academic performance.

Moreover, Komakech (2015) found that there is a positive relationship between students’ attendance to school and academic performance. Using correlational approach to assess attendance on academic performance in Nigeria, Oghuvbu (2017) had the same result as Komakeck. He found that there is a positive correlation between class attendance and academic performance. Stanca (2010) also found that class attendance has a statistical significant impact on academic performance. Several studies have also found the same relationship (Lukkarinnen, Koivukangas, Seppala, 2016; Aden, Yahye, Dahir, 2013; Duran-Narucki, 2008).

The attitude of students towards their learning have been found to have a significant relationship with academic performance. For example, Awang, Ahmad, Bakar, Ghani, Yunus et al. (2013) found that there is statistical significance relationship between students attitudes towards their learning and academic performance. Janssen and O’Brien (2014) argued that although students learning has an impact on academic performance, it is indirect. Notwithstanding their findings, Manoah, Indoshi and Othuon (2011) confirmed that in the case of mathematics, students’ attitude towards the subject has a direct impact on their academic performance. However, Uok and Langat (2015) found that students who had positive attitudes towards mathematics did not affect their mathematics score.

Afzal, Ali, Khan and Hamid (2010) asserted that students’ personal motivation plays a vital role towards their academic performance. They found that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has a positive on students’ academic performance. They added that intrinsic motivation has a strong predictor towards academic performance than extrinsic motivation. Similarly, Haider, Quereshi, Pirzada and Shahzadi (2015) concluded that motivation play an important role in the success of a student academics. In their study, they found that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation had a positive statistical significance relationship with academic performance. They outlined that students motivational characteristics such as self-exploration, altruism, and career focused and manages social pressure have a positive impact on their academic performance. Using structural equation modelling analysis to assess the effect of motivation on performance, Kusukar, Cate, Vos and Croiset (2013) categorised motivation into Random Autonomous Motivation (RAM), Controlled Motivation (CM) and Autonomous motivation (AM). They found that RAM which they define as intrinsic motivation is positively correlated with academic performance. Additionally, Amrai, Motlagh, Zalani and Parhon (2011) argued that the academic performance of students is affected by a combination of different motivational factors.

The literatures reviewed indicated that students factors which influence their academic performance is a combinations of several indicators. From this review, it was found that interest in a subject, regular studying, class attendance, self-motivation and attitude of student towards learning are the key factors which affect their academic performance. All the literature reviewed with the exception of Uok and Langat (2015) who found that there is a positive relationship between these factors and academic performance. This implies that if a student exhibit positive attitude towards these factors his/her academic performance will improve, all other things being equal.

##### Teacher factors which contribute to academic performance

Teachers play vital role towards the academic performance of students. A study conducted by Kimani, Kara and Njagi (2013) in Kenya on teacher factors influencing academic achievement, found that teachers experience, age, gender and professional qualification had no statistical significant relationship with academic performance of students. However, they noticed that performance targets, completion of syllabus, paying attention to weak students, assignments, student evaluation, and the teaching workload of a teacher had significant relationship with students’ academic performance. In Nigeria, Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009) also found that there is no statistical relationship between teacher effectiveness and academic performance.

Ganyaupfu (2013) on the other hand asserted that combination of teacher and student centred method have a positive effect on academic performance. They concluded that student centred method is more effective than teacher approach. Musili (2015) added that teacher experience and professional training have a significant impact on students performance. Blazar (2016) confirmed that the impact teachers have on the academic performance of their students is substantial. But stressed that little is known about the specific teacher factors which contributes to the academic performance of students.

Furthermore, Akinsolu (2010), concluded that teacher-student ratio, teacher’s experience and qualification has a significant impact on academic performance. Similarly, Ewetan and Ewetan (2015) emphasized that the level of teacher’s experience has significant impact on academic performance in English Language and Mathematics. They posited that school with teachers with more than 10 years’ experience perform better than school with teachers with less than 10 years’ experience.

Teacher factors that significantly affects students’ academic performance as reviewed above includes: Teachers teaching experience, completing of syllabus, paying attention to weak students, assignments, students’ evaluation, teacher effectiveness, teacher and student centred method of teaching, professional training, teacher to student ratio and qualification of teachers. It was also noticed that teacher’s age and gender have no effect on students’ academic performance.

Parent factors which contribute to academic performance

Recent studies have found that parental involvement have a positive impact on the academic performance their wards. McNeal (2014) for example, revealed that parent involvement directly affects the behaviour and students attitudes but indirectly influence their academic performance. In Ghana, Chowa, Masa and Tucker (2013) posited that the involvement of parents towards their wards academic performance is categorized into home-based and school-based parental involvement. Their study revealed that home-based parental involvement have a positive significant relationship with their wards academic performance but there is a negative relationship between school-based parental involvement and academic performance. Similarly, Mante, Awereh and Kumea (2014) also concluded that parental involvement affect the academic performance of their students but the direction of the impact wasn’t stated. Additionally, Mwirichia (2013) noticed that parental involvement in the academic performance of students has different forms. He found that there is parent involvement in educational activities at school, parent-school communication and parents’ involvement in academic activities at home. The study concluded that parent’s involvement in home academic activities have a direct influence on the academic performance of their wards; it was realized that parent’s involvement in academic activities at school has an indirect effect on academic performance; and the impact of parent-school communication on academic performance was found not to be a strong predictor. It was recommended that parents provide home-school tutorials for their wards and there should be rules to govern their children’s studying behaviour in the house. Caro (2011), also found that parent-school communication as a positive impact on their wards education.

Matinez (2015) emphasized that students with high level of parental involvement in their academics significantly perform better than those students with no parental involvement in English Language arts and Mathematics. Using a multiple mediational analysis, Topor, Keane, Shelton and Calkins (2010) found that there is a statistical significance association between parental involvement and the wards academic performance. In Pakistan, Rafiq, Fatima, Sohail, Saleem and Khan (2013) had the same results. They emphasized that parental involvement has a significant effect in improving the academic performance of students. In South Africa, Mutodi and Ngirande (2014) found that parent-teacher communication, family and home support as wee las parenting have is positively related to academic performance. The concluded that the most significant predictor of academic performance is the family and home support.

Empirically, parental involvement have been found to have a significant positive impact on the academic performance of the wards but the degree and level of parental involvement varies and this has an indirect effect on the academic performance of their children.

##### School factors which contribute to academic performance

School based factors are factors within the school which influence academic performance. Tuitock, Yambo and Adhanja (2015) found that in Kenya public schools, the key school factors which affect academic performance are modern laboratories and text-books. Within the same country, Nambuya (2013) revealed that the availability of physical resources such as library, text-books, adequacy of classrooms and spacious playing ground affect the academic performance of students.

In Tanzania, Tety (2016) noticed that instructional materials have an impact on academic performance. Awolaju (2016), Olayinka (2016), and Adipo (2015) also found that students who are taught with instructional materials in Nigeria perform better than students taught without instructional materials. Similarly, Krukru (2015) found that in Nigeria, instructional materials have a significant impact on academic performance. He asserted that the use of instructional materials facilitates the smooth delivery of a lesson and it enhances teaching and learning. The use of instructional materials assist students to understand the concept of a subject better. As a result of this students who are taught with instructional materials perform better than student taught without instructional materials (Adalikwu & Lorkpilgh, 2013).

The location of a school has also been found to have a significant impact on the academic performance of students. Mhiliwa (2015) opined that the distance of a school affects the academic performance of students. He emphasized that the longer the distance of a school from a student’s residence the more tired and hungry the student becomes hence it will negatively affect their academic performance. He argued that students in community schools will continue to perform poorly if community schools are not provided within their community. According to Ellah and Ita (2017) students in urban areas tend to perform better in English language than those in rural areas. This indicated the location of the school has an influence on students’ performance in English Language. However, Yusuf and Adigun (2010) found that there is no statistical significance relationship between school location and academic performance.

Again, it was found that schools with suitable rules and regulation; fair punishment; and good implementation of students’ rules and regulations perform better than school with less suitable rules and regulations (Mussa, 2015). Ehiane (2014) also recommended that effective school discipline should be used to control students’ behaviour because it has a direct impact on their academic performance. Simba, Agak and Kabuka (2016) concluded that discipline has a positive relationship with academic performance. They asserted to improve on academic performance the discipline level of students should be enhanced.

Moreover, the size of a class or students to teacher ratio has also been found as a school factor which influence academic performance. According to Ajani and Akinyele (2014), there is a significant relationship between teacher to students’ ratio and a student’s performance in Mathematics. Zyngier (2014) argued that if the class size is smaller and is combined with effective teaching, its impact on the academic performance is positive. Similarly, Bakasa (2011) found that school factors such as effective teaching when combined with class size have a positive impact on academic performance. However, Owoeye and Olatunde (2011) found that there is no statistical difference between class size of schools in the urban areas and rural areas on academic performance. Vandenberg (2012) corroborated that class size has no significant impact on academic performance.

According to Sabitu, Babatunde and Oluwole (2012) there is a statistical significant difference in school facilities of private and public schools but in terms of academic performance there is no statistical difference. On the other hand, Owoye and Yara (2011) stressed that school facilities is the most important determining factor of academic performance.

With respect to school environment, Lawrence and Vimala (2012) found found that there is no statistical significant relationship between school environment and academic performance but other studies said otherwise. For example, Odeh, Oguche, and Dondo (2015), found that school environment has significant impact of academic performance. Duruji, Azuh, and Oviasogle (2014) also found that school environment has a statistical significance relationship with academic performance.

School factors which affect academic performance is enormous as revealed by the literatures above. However, it has been proven that the key school factors which directly influence academic performance includes: instructional materials, discipline, effective teaching, class size and the school environment.

##### Level of parents’ education and academic performance

According to Khan, Iqbal and Tasneem (2015) parents with higher level of education show much interest in the academic performance of their wards. They observed there is a positive significant relationship between the level of parents’ education and students’ academic performance. The same result was found by Muthoni (2013) in Kenya. She noticed that in Kenya Secondary schools, the level of education of a student parent is positively related to his/her performance. Similarly, Ogbugo-Ololube (2016), found that parents level of education has a positive relationship with academic performance. It was also observed by Ntitika (2014) that parents with higher level of education serve as a motivation for their children to work hard to achieve their academic goals. He added that such students have higher aspirations for their education. He found that parent’s level of education has some level of impact on their wards academic performance. Muruwei (2011) argued that although parents level of education has significant impact on academic performance, it not a major determining factor. There are other factors such as learning environment and facilities which also important factors that influence academic performance. On the other hand, Amuda and Ali (2016) found that parent’s level of education has no statistical impact on their wards academic performance. The impact of parent’s level of education of the academic performance of their wards seems inconclusive. Whiles some studies found a positive significant relationship; others have argued that it is not the sole determining factor of academic performance. Additionally, studies have also found that there is no statistical significance relationship between parents’ education level and academic performance. This creates a gap in the literature hence the researcher sought to fill this gap.

Gender and academic performance

The relationship between gender and academic performance have been researched extensively for the past decade (Eitle, 2005 as cited in Farooq & Berhanu, 2011). According to Ghazvini and Khajehpour (2011) there is a difference between the cognitive levels of boys and girls. They noticed that the learning task of girls is more adaptive than boys. Omwirhiren and Anderson (2016) indicated that there is a statistical significant difference between the academic performance of males and females in Chemistry. They concluded that boys performed better than girls. Farooq and Berhanu (2011) on the other hand found that girls generally perform better than male students. Similarly, Nnamani and Oyibe (2016) and Jayanth et al. (2014) found that gender has a significant impact on academic performance. Maric and Sakac (2014) also observed that girls have higher academic performance than boys. MeenuDev (2016) also noticed that girls are superior to boys in academic performance. The same result was found by Nnamani and Oyibe (2016). They noticed that females perform better than males in Social studies. With respect to Mathematics, English and Aptitude, boys perform better than the girls (Eshetu, 2014). Manoah et al. (2011) also argued that in terms of mathematics, gender has no statistical significant impact on performance. Adigun, Onihunwa, Irunokhai, Sada and Adesina (2015) also found that there is no statistical difference but concluded that boys perform better than girls.

A study conducted in Nigeria to assess gender difference in academic performance of students in Economics subject at the Secondary school level revealed that, in 2006/2007 Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE), there was no statistical difference in the academic performance of boys and girls in Economics but from 2008 to 2010 there was statistical difference. It was concluded that males generally performed better than females in Economics (Amuda, Ali, Durkwa, 2016). The impact of gender on academic performance still remain inconclusive. Using Aptitude Test as a measure for academic performance in Kashim Ibrahim College of Education in Nigeria, Goni, Yagana, Ali and Bularafa (2015) noticed that there is no statistical difference between gender and academic performance. Wangu (2014), found other wise and reported that females perform better in languages while males perform better than females in the sciences. From the discussion above, the influence of gender on academic performance is not clear; whiles some researchers have found a statistical significance difference, other found no significance difference. In assessing the performance of boys and girls, it has been revealed that it depends on the subject but it has been established that they have different cognitive level.

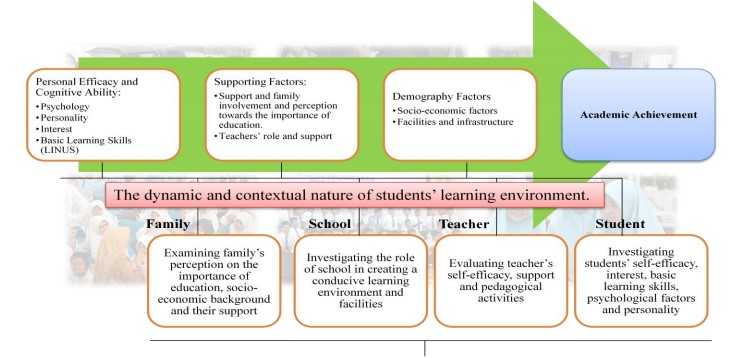
##### Age and academic performance

Several demographic variables have been used as a predictor of academic performance (Jabor, Machtmes, Kungu, & Buntat, 2011) but this section looks at the impact of age on academic performance. The impact of age on academic performance are mixed. For example, Ali et al. (2013) found that age has a significant impact on academic performance. Jabor et al. (2011) also found the same result by using mathematics as a measure of academic performance. Similarly, Abubakar and Oguguo (2011) noticed that there is significant positive impact of age on academic performance in Mathematics and Science but the degree of association is weak. Amro, Mundey and Kupczynski (2015) corroborated that in an online and face-to-face algebra class, age was found to be a predictor of students’ performance. Further, Ezenwafor and Obi (2015) used the Vocational and Technical Education students in Nigeria to assess the effect of age and gender on their academic performance. Their study revealed that age has a significant impact on academic performance. Naderi, Abdullah, Aizan, Sharir and Kumar (2009) suggested that other studies should be contacted to incorporate other factors which determine academic performance because they found a weak positive impact of age on academic performance.

In contrast, Amuda, Bulus and Joseph (2016) reported that age has no significant impact on academic performance. Voyled (2011) also reported that student age does not have an impact on his/her performance in reading but was significant for mathematics.

**2.3 Conceptual Framework**

Various views and opinions exist on how academic performance is determined by some factors.



Academic performance is not achieved in vacuum neither is it purely idiosyncratic. A league of factors interrelatedly plays to determine how a given learner performs in academic assessments. These array of factors are the personal genetic ability of the learner, the school the learner attends and its teachers, the community of the learner, the educational policy obtainable in the learner’s context, the personal aspirations of the learner, and the household to which the learner belongs. If all but one is right, then, all is still not right. A single research effort will find it difficult to determine how these factors determine academic performance. As such, dedicated efforts towards discovering the impact of one factor will promise more robust result than a jumbled effort that hopes to tackle all the factors at once. This study concerns itself with how the household factors affect the learners’ academic performance. It is assumed that the socio-demographic characteristics of the learners’ parents can influence the academic performance of the learners in that household.

For this study the chart below sheds more light on the researcher’s perspective on the relationship between learners’ academic performance and their parent’s socio-demographic characteristics. The various inputs (such as teacher, school, community, family, household size, etc) undergoes the process of resource provision, teaching and support to bring the desirable outputs of moral and academic achievement in the learner. These outputs overtime translates to the outcomes evident in an egalitarian society full of problem solvers, sustainable developers and one devoid of the fuss and kerfuffle of crime, violence, intolerance and associated vices. This will also help the community to achieve goal 4, 5, and 6 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Parent

Pupils

Teachers

School

Community

Peers

Family

Education

Household size

Improved Literacy and Numeracy Scopes

Improved moral attainment

Happy family, teachers, pupil

Inputs

Process

Outputs

Increase in the number of problem solvers

Learned community makes sustainable development

Reduction in crime rate, violence, intolerance and other vices

Outcomes

Figure 1: Developed by the Author, 2020

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This section presents the methodology employed in this study. It discusses the research design, the study population, the sampling technique, the method for data collection and the method for data analysis.

**3.1 Research Design**

The research design that will be used is the descriptive survey research design which is cross-sectional in approach. The rationale for using this design is because it will observe the sample variables and will find out the behavioural patterns of the respondents across selected schools. The study will find out the influence of parents’ socio-demographic characteristics on the academic performance of their children in Literacy and Numeracy with a focus on public primary schools enjoying the Home Grown School Feeding Programme.

**3.2 Population**

The target population comprises public primary school pupils in Kaduna Metropolis of Kaduna State.

**3.3 Sampling and Sampling technique**

A three-stage simple random sampling approach shall be employed. The table below sheds more light on the sampling procedure.

Table 1: Sampling Stages

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| STAGE | POPULATION | SAMPLE |
| 1 | Public Primary Schools in Kaduna Metropolis | 5 Randomly selected Public Primary Schools in Kaduna Metropolis |
| 2 | Randomly selected Public Primary Schools in Kaduna Metropolis | 1 Randomly selected Classroom from the selected Public Primary Schools |
| 3 | Randomly selected Classroom from the selected Public Primary Schools | 80% of all pupils in the selected classroom. |

An average classroom in Kaduna Metropolis consists of two classes with each having about 35 pupils making an average of 70 pupils per classroom. With this information, 80% of 70 pupils will be 56 pupils and therefore 5 classrooms will give a total sample population of about 280 pupils.

**3.4. Instrument**

Research Instrument that will be used is the self-constructed questionnaire for collection of data from respondents. The questionnaire will be sectioned into two parts that is Section A, consisting of questions covering demographic information of the respondents such as name of school, sex, etc. and Section B will further be divided into two subsections. One of the sections will consist of questions on parents’ socio-demographic characteristics such as occupation, education, household size, etc while the other will consists of questions to be responded to by the pupil’s Literacy and Numeracy teachers. These questions will be on pupil’s academic performance.

**3.5 Validity and Reliability of the Instrument**

The questionnaire will be given to the Project Supervisor to scrutinize to ensure the face validity as well as content validity. The corrections and the observations of the Project Supervisor will be integrated into the final instrument to be used to ensure content validity. In order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach method will be adopted. Fifteen pupils from another school used for the test phase. These pupils will not be learners in schools to be sampled. The reliability coefficient will be calculated and the Cronbach Alpha will be used to determine the level of validity.

**3.6 Administration of Instrument**

The Researcher will visit the schools, take permission from the relevant authorities, appoint research assistant to help distribute the questionnaire. The research assistant will administer the questionnaire in the selected schools for a period of three weeks.

**3.7 Method of Data Analysis**

Data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics ( frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation, simple and multiple linear regression).

It is believed that these tools will be adequate for meeting the objectives of the study and consequently answering the research questions.

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