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SOCIOECONOMIC INDICES AND SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ECONOMICS IN OBAFEMI OWODE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF OGUN STATE

BY

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Abstract

This paper investigated socioeconomic indices and senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area of Ogun State. Three research questions and three research hypotheses guided this study. The study employed survey research design. The sample size for the study was 315 respondents who were randomly selected from five senior secondary schools with a total population of 1,473 in the chosen local government area. The research instruments used for data collection were questionnaire and students' achievement test in Economics (SATE). Data collected were analysed using mean, standard deviation and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that significant relationship existed between parental income and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics; parental educational level has influence on students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics; and significant relationship existed between parental occupation and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics. The study concluded that socioeconomic indices and senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics are significantly related. The study recommended among others that government should subsidise educational materials for low-income Economics students in senior secondary schools; and government should provide students loans, grants and other aid for outstanding Economics students in senior secondary schools.

Keywords: Academic achievement, Economics, Parental educational level, Parental income and Parental occupation

Introduction

Economics is a social science subject. It equips students with the knowledge of how the societies and they (students) can utilise limited resources to satisfy their unlimited wants. It is one of the elective subjects studied at the Senior Secondary School (SSS) level in Nigeria. The objectives of Economics curriculum developed by the National Education Research and Development Commission (NERDC), includes among others to equip SSS graduates with the fundamental knowledge that will help them develop skills to appreciate economic situation in the society, and the basis for balanced economic choices. The achievement or otherwise of these objectives can only be ascertained through students' academic achievement in the subject (Economics). Academic achievement is the major measure of educational standard in any institution of learning. It is synonymous with academic performance. Ganai and Mir (2013) considered academic achievement as a measure of the knowledge and skills acquired by students in a learning institution, which is often determined by test or examination marks allotted by an examiner, the educator. It measures how well a learner performs on a given task or completes assignments related to the content and objectives of his/her study. This implies that academic achievement could mean how well a student or learner is achieving certain goals in academic settings such as secondary schools. Academic achievement of students in secondary schools is a vital concern for educators, policymakers, and society at large. It is an important factor in both education and learning; and is used for assessing overall potential measured by examinations (Bolarinwa & Okolocha, 2016).

Socio-economic indices refer to the social and economic variables of individuals or families within a society. According to Umazi and Cheboi (2024), socio-economic factors entail a wide range of economic and social variables such as race, income, ethnicity, gender, education level, occupation, family background, cultural beliefs, and access to social services. This shows that socio-economic indices include parental income, parental education level and parental occupation which are the focused of this study. Parental income refers to total earnings of a student's parents per month or weekly basis from all sources. Parental education level refers to educational qualifications of parents of the students; while parental occupation means the professional or activities in which the parents of a student engage in to earn a living for supporting themselves, their family and the education of the student. One of the most influential determinants of students' academic success is their socioeconomic background. Supporting this statement, Boruah (2021) found significant positive relationship between parental involvement, education level, and students' academic achievement. Also, Umazi and Cheboi (2024) argued that socio-economic factors significantly shape individuals' lives and societal structures, and academic performance. In addition, the researchers affirmed that socioeconomic elements collectively impact various life aspects, including health, education, housing, employment, and social mobility. This is an indication that socioeconomic indices such as parental income, educational level, occupation, and access to educational resources can significantly shape students' educational outcomes in Economics.

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In Nigeria, disparities in these indices may contribute to variations in students' academic achievement, particularly in subjects like Economics, which require analytical thinking, resource access, and environmental awareness. According to Ejimonye, Ugwuanyi, Okeke and Nwoye (2020a), recent studies have shown that students' performance in Economics is poor and that constituted worries to the Economic educators in Nigeria. The factors responsible for this poor performance include among others school factors such as inadequate facilities and teachers; and home factors like students' lack of textbooks and inadequate provision of money and food for the students. This is an indication that students' achievement in Economics at the Senior Secondary School level can be affected by socio-economic factors like parental income. This is in line with findings of Catherine and Box (2015) who reported that students' academic performance in the Kitale Municipality of Kenya is significantly impacted by the socioeconomic status of their parents, particularly those with high incomes this is because parents with high incomes can afford to buy educational materials for their kids to help their academic performance.

Understanding the influence of socio-economic factors on students' academic performance as well as identifying their fundamental mechanisms, can make policymakers and educators develop targeted strategies to bridge the gap and promote educational equity (Reardon, 2018). However, studies have shown that socio-economic status and students' academic achievement might be significantly related. This may be why Camacho-Morles, Slemp, Pekrun, Loderer, Hou, and Oades, (2021) reported that socio-economic disadvantages such as lower income, can lead to restricted access to educational resources, thereby affecting students' academic performance. Similarly, Adeoluwa (2022) found that among others that students' interest and parents' financial support have influence on students' academic performance. Equally, Umazi and Cheboi (2024) in a study conducted in Kenya reported that parental education, income, involvement, and cultural beliefs have significant impact on academic outcomes. Thus, the influence of socioeconomic indices on students' academic achievement in school subjects like Economics cannot be underestimated. This is based on the fact that indices like parental education level and occupation may have significant influence on students' performance in schools. It is against this background that this paper investigated socioeconomic indices and senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Statement of the Problem

Minimum of a credit pass in Senior Secondary School Economics examination by West African Examination Council (WAEC) or National Examination Council (NECO) is important to commercial students who want to study social and management sciences courses in tertiary institutions. Despite efforts to improve educational access and quality in Nigeria, students' achievement in Economics remain inconsistent and often low in certain regions. Observations and preliminary surveys indicated that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tend to perform poorly in Economics. This problem necessitates an investigation into the extent to which socioeconomic indices affect students' performance in the subject. The available literature shows that little or no empirical study exists on how various socioeconomic indices influence the academic achievement of secondary school students in Economics, especially in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area. This is the gap filled by this paper. Hence, this study investigated socioeconomic indices and senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area of Ogun State.

Research Objectives

The main objective of this paper was to investigate socioeconomic indices and senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics in Obafemi Owode Local Government Area of Ogun State. The specific objectives of this paper are to:

i. ascertain the relationship between parental income and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics;
ii. examine the influence of parental educational level on students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics; and
iii. determine the relationship between parental occupation and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested in this study.

1. There is no significant relationship between parental income and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.
2. There is no significant relationship between parental educational level and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.
3. There is no significant relationship between parental occupation and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.

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Methodology

This study was conducted in Obafemi Owode Local Governmenta Area of Ogun State. The state is located in South-West, Nigeria. Survey research design was employed in the study. The population for the study was 1,473 Senior Secondary (SS) 2 Economics students in the five randomly selected secondary schools in the chosen local government area. A sample size of 315 Economics students was used for this study. This sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane sample size calculator. Simple random sampling technique was used for selection of SS2 Economics students in each of the five (5) selected schools. However, proportionate sampling technique was used for selecting the students sampled in each of the chosen secondary schools due to variation in the number of SS2 Economics students in each of the sampled schools. Two instruments were used for collection of data in this study namely: researcher-designed questionnaire and Students' Achievement Test in Economics (SATE). The two instruments developed for the study were subjected to both face and construct validity. Also, the reliability coefficient of the research instruments was determined using Cronbach's Alpha reliability method; and reliability coefficients obtained were 0.89 and 0.87 for the questionnaire and SATE respectively. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

In this section, out of the three hundred and fifteen (315) copies of the questionnaire administered, only two hundred and nine-eight (298) copies were completed and returned by the sampled respondents. This represents 94.6% rate of returns. Hence, 298 was used for analysis of data in this study. In addition, all the three research questions raised in this paper were hypothesised and tested in this section. All the hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One

$H_0$1: There is no significant relationship between parental income and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.

Table 1: Significant relationship between parental income and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics

		Parental Income	Students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics
Parental Income	Pearson Correlation	1	.465**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	298	298
Students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics	Pearson Correlation	.465*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	298	298

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 reveals that the calculated "r" value of 0.465 is significant since the returned p-value of 0.000 is less than the criterion level of significance of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that "There is no significant relationship between parental income and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics" was rejected. This implies that significant relationship existed between parental income and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.

Hypothesis Two

$H_0$2: There is no significant relationship between parental educational level and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.

Table 2: Significant Relationship between parental educational level and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics

		Parental educational level	Students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics
Parental educational level	Pearson Correlation	1	.345**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	298	298
Students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics	Pearson Correlation	.345**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	298	298

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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Table 2 reveals that the calculated "r" value of 0.345 is significant since the returned p-value of 0.000 is less than the criterion level of significance of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that "There is no significant relationship between parental educational level and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics" was rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between parental educational level and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.

Hypothesis Three

$H_0$3: There is no significant relationship between parental occupation and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.

Table 3: Significant Relationship between parental occupation and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics

		Parental Occupation	Students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics
Parental Occupation	Pearson Correlation	1	.395**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	298	298
Students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics	Pearson Correlation	.395**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	298	298

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 3 reveals that the calculated "r" value of 0.395 is significant since the returned p-value of 0.000 is less than the criterion level of significance of 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis which stated that "There is no significant relationship between parental occupation and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics" was rejected. This implies that significant relationship existed between parental occupation and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics.

Discussion of Findings

This study revealed that there is significant relationship between parental income and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics. This implies that significant relationship existed between parental income and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics. Supporting this finding, Muhammad et al. (2011) found that the income variable of the parents is positively related to the students' performance. This is due to the fact that parents with a high income are more likely to provide their children with the necessary materials they need to succeed in schools. Also, Catherine and Box (2015) reported that students' academic performance in the Kitale Municipality of Kenya is significantly impacted by the socioeconomic status of their parents, particularly those with high incomes. The researchers explained that parents with high incomes can afford to buy educational materials for their kids to help their academic performance. In line with this finding, Camacho-Morles, Slemp, Pekrun, Loderer, Hou, and Oades (2021) argued that the interconnected nature of socio-economic factors such as lower income, can lead to restricted access to educational resources, thereby affecting academic performance. Similarly, Umazi and Cheboi (2024) found that parental income has significant influence on students' academic performance. Contrarily, Adzido et al. (2016) found that family financial status had no effect on students' performance; and concluded that family financial status is not a reliable indicator of higher academic performance among students.

This paper found that there is significant relationship between parental educational level and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics. This implies that parental educational level and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics are significantly related. Corroborating this finding, Khan, Iqbal and Tasneem (2015) found that significant positive relationship between parents' education levels and students' academic achievements. Similarly, Boruah (2021) found among others that significant positive relationship existed between parental education level and students' academic achievement. Equally, Umazi and Cheboi (2024) reported that parental education has significant impact of students' academic outcomes. This implies that parental educational attainment has a significant influence on how well their students do academically in schools.

This study also established that there is significant relationship between parental occupation and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics. This means that parental occupation and students' academic achievement in senior secondary school Economics are significantly related. Supporting the finding of this study, Duncan and Magnuson (2013) reported that variables like parental occupation as well as parental support and engagement in their child's education have influence on students' academic outcomes. Also, Hossain and Rahman (2021) found a positive correlation between socioeconomic variables (including parents' occupation) and students' academic success or achievement. Likewise, Munir,

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Faiza, Jamal, Daud and Iqbal (2023) reported that parental occupation has significant impact on students' academic achievement.

Conclusion

The influence of socioeconomic indices on students' academic achievement in school subjects like Economics cannot be underestimated. This is based on the fact that socioeconomic disparities critically impact academic outcomes among students. Therefore, it can be concluded based on the findings of this study that significant relationship existed between socioeconomic indices and senior secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are hereby suggested:

1. Government should subsidise educational materials for low-income Economics students in senior secondary schools. This should include subsidising of Economics textbooks and other relevant materials.
2. Administrators of senior secondary schools should offer parental education workshops. This has tendency to enhance students' level of education for improved stduents' academic achievement in Economics.
3. Government should provide students loans, grants and other aid for outstanding Economics students in senior secondary schools. This programme will cater for the necessary support that students from poor homes need to focus more on their studies for better academic achievement in Economics.

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