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EFFECT OF SINGLE PARENTHOOD FACTORS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL STUDENTS OF THE COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
Academic performance is an integral aspect of the educational pursuit of every student at all levels; however, there are so many psychosocial, moral and spiritual factors that may constitute an impediment to the academic performance of a child. This study investigated the influence of single parenthood factors on the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique. The study population consisted of undergraduate medical students. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 57 undergraduate students. The instrument of data collection was the questionnaire. The administered questionnaires were retrieved immediately, collated and presented for analysis. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation, ANOVA and multiple regression analysis technique. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed a significant relationship between academic performance of undergraduate medical students and guardian type (r=.067), sex of students (r=.052), guardian occupation (r=.179), guardian educational level (r=.084) and guardian income (r=.063). There was also a negative relationship between academic performance of undergraduate medical students and the ages of students (r=-.185). The study concluded that the absence of one of the parents would definitely have an effect on the income level of the household, which might make it impossible to provide all the necessary resources that would support better academic performance by students from single parenthood background.

Key words: parenting, single parenthood, educational status, medical.

INTRODUCTION
Academic performance is very important in any educational setting, as it indicates the level of a student's competence in respect of the academic content. Indeed, academic performance does create competition among students and it may shift focus from the academic content of a course; however, academic performance is a prerequisite in order to achieve success at every other level of educational pursuit.
Academic performance is represented by the actual mark obtained by the participants in an examination. Success is typically defined in terms of performance, and grades represent the most obvious and universally accepted indicator of academic performance in the educational context (Hampden-Thompson & Pong 2005). The academic performance of a student determines whether he or she will be considered successful or not. As a result, academic performance is very important in education. Therefore, it is crucial to know and understand which factors are responsible for determining, predicting or causing variance in academic performance.
Over the years, researchers such as Biblarz, Gottainer (1999) and Byun (1996) have sought to discover factors that determine students' performance. Their findings were corroborated by Donkor (2010), who opined that education has become concerned with the physical, social and emotional development of the individual, with more attention being given to factors contributing to the academic performance of learners, than to home environment factors. Hence, investigating those factors that influence the academic

performance of students have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counsellors, psychologists, researchers and school administrators in Nigeria (Single-Rushton & McLanahan, 2004). This is probably due to the public outcry concerning the low standard of education in the country, and the fact that students graduate with little knowledge and technical know-how, resulting in serious setbacks to the development of the nation (Amato, 1991; Amato & Keith, 1991). Furthermore, researchers have identified different factors that are capable of influencing the academic performance of school students. Such factors include their personal and socio-economic background, their internal state (intelligence, state of health, motivation, anxiety etc.) and their environment (availability of a suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like textbooks and well-equipped laboratories (Ajila, Olutola; 2007 & Tenibiaje, 2009).

The family lays the psychosocial, moral and spiritual foundations upon which the overall development of the child can take off. A mother's role in laying the right foundation cannot be over-emphasised. Likewise, studies on father-child relationship suggest that the presence of a father in the home influences significantly the development of a child (Ushie, Emeka, Ononga & Owolabi, 2012) Thus, parenthood is a responsibility that requires the full cooperation of both parents who must ensure the total development of their children.

The inference to be drawn from the above submission is that, structurally, a family is either broken or intact. A broken family in this context is one that is not structurally intact for various reasons: death of a parent, divorce, separation, desertion or illegitimacy - in which case, the family is not complete, and only one of the parents is taking the sole responsibility for the child or children (David, Susan, Terri & Susan; 2010)· This analysis becomes necessary because life in a single-parent family can be stressful for both the child or children and the parent. Such families as Chang and Min (2002) rightly observed are faced with the challenges of diminished financial resources, assumption of new roles and responsibilities, establishment of new patterns in intra-familial interaction and reorganisation of routines and schedules. These conditions are not conducive for effective parenting. This is because when the single parent is overburdened by responsibilities and by their own emotional reaction to their situation, they often become irritable, impatient and insensitive to their children's needs. (Biblarz &Gottainer, 2000)

As a result of the substantial prevalence of single parenthood, researchers such as (Ebenuwa-Okoh; 2010, Ichado, 1998; Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq & Berhanu, 2011) have extensively examined the consequences of growing up with a single parent for children's education. The outcome of their researches revealed that single parenthood is negatively associated with children's academic performance, however, recent comparative studies show that the strength of the negative relationship varies significantly across countries. (Ginther & Pollak, 2003; Mandara & Murray, 2006). Likewise, emerging facts from other studies of developing societies have found no apparently negative effects of single parenthood (Park, 2008; Osunloye, 2008 & Nyako 2007), rather they found that in sub-Saharan African countries, children in female-headed households tended to have greater educational opportunities in terms of school enrolments and attainment relative to children in male-headed households.

Before now, the existence of single parenthood was unknown in Nigeria, and where cases existed they were regarded as exceptional. However, single parenthood is now a growing phenomenon in Nigeria. In Nigeria, parental roles are culturally determined and distributed. Maternal roles include child-rearing, home training and playing of complementary roles, while paternal roles include financial provision (food, clothing, shelter, etc) for the family and discipline of the children. (Nwachukwu, 1998; Salami & Alawode, 2000; Uwaifo, 2012). The inference from this submission is that a child is likely to be morally, mentally and emotionally balanced when the caring responsibilities are carried out by both parents. However, these balances may be jeopardised when the responsibilities are being carried out by a single parent.

The decline in the academic performance of undergraduate students in universities in Nigeria is becoming alarming, such that employers of labour now consider many Nigerian graduates unemployable. Several factors, which are social, economic, institutional and infrastructural in nature, are being attributed to this unpleasant situation. However, there has been little focus on the home environment and parental factors. Observations and scholars' opinions are pointing to the type of parenthood under which a child is nurtured, which can also affect the performance of such a child. (Nyako, 2011)

Therefore this study investigated the effect of single parenthood factors on the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The scope of the study covered only MBBS undergraduate medical students from single parenthood backgrounds in their fourth and fifth year of clinical.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of single parenthood factors on the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the University of Ibadan. The study answered the following research question and tested the research hypotheses below it:

RESEARCH QUESTION

What effect do single parenthood factors (guardian type, age and sex of respondent, guardian's occupation, educational and income level) have on the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the University of Ibadan?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H_{O1}: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, from single parenthood background based on guardian type (i.e father or mother).

H_{O2}: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, from single parenthood background based on sex of students.

H_{O3}: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, based on age of students.

H_{O4}: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, from single parenthood background based on guardian's occupation.

H_{O5}: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, from single parenthood background based on guardian's educational level; and

H_{O6}: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, from single parenthood background based on guardian's income level.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is often asserted that, besides cognitive abilities, a blend of personality characteristics is necessary for people to be successful in medical studies and eventually in the medical profession. (Insha, Mumuni &Bowan, 2013). Therefore, a medical student's academic performance attracts the attention of all those involved in medical education. Family education and other socio-economic background factors may affect the performance of students. (Al-Shawwa, Abulaban, Merdad, Baghlaf & others, 2015)

Many medical education stakeholders are concerned about students' performances as they reflect their various areas of interest and personal background. These stakeholders, are not only faculty members but also medical school selection committees, curriculum planners and instructional designers. (Alfayez, Strand & Carline, 1990; Astone & Mc Lanahan, 1991). Moreover, improvement in students' achievements has always been one of the main goals of education. Many studies were conducted to identify the factors that affect (positively or negatively) students' achievement. For instance, House (2002) opines that factors like parental background, student characteristics, lifestyle, learning environment and instruction activities contribute to their achievement, while Ushie, Emeka & Ononga (2012) in their study attested that students' background, study skills, study habits, study attitudes and motivation for study are related to academic performance.

In furtherance of this argument, other studies (Scaramella & Leve, 2004; Mandara & Murray, 2006) have stated that the most important predictors of performance in medical school are both prior academic ability and students' background. Likewise, Salami and Alawode (2000) also identified socio-economic status as one of the factors affecting learning. These authors affirmed that students learn better if they are from an above-average or average income family. Furthermore, Uwaifo (2012) in his study reported that family-related factors such as family size and issues did not show any significance. This might reflect that those factors might not directly affect students' motivation, available time for studying and efficiency of their learning process.

The literature on academic performance of students suggests that students' academic performance improve when both parents are actively involved in their education (Mahama & Champion, 2011), while some studies seem to neglect the issue of single-parenting as a variable. Generally, such studies have tied the academic performance of students to socio-economic status, parents' educational level, students' attitudes to learning, school environmental factors, housing and residential experience. (Dayioglu &Türüt-Asık, 2004; Fadeiye, 1985; Hood & Eyberg, 2003). What these studies failed to consider was that the variable of family structure (particularly single parenting) is crucial in determining a person's academic performance. Similarly, some other studies that seemed to have focused on assessing the role of single parenting on the academic performance of children had mostly used respondents from senior secondary schools, without considering university students and specific disciplines in the universities. (Fields, 2003; Kiernan, 1992; Ermisch & Francesconi, 2001).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Learning Theory was propounded by Albert Bandura in 1970. According to Bandura's theory, development is due to the reciprocal influence of the external or social environment, such that the behaviour of an individual is influenced by prior learning and the internal characteristics of the person (Bandaru, 2012). In other words, most learning is due to the imitation of social models. Hence, focus is on the relationship between social and environmental antecedents and their behavioural consequences.

Social Learning Theory is one of the most influential models of parent-child relationship. Broadly put, Social Learning Theory argues that children's real-life experiences and exposures directly or indirectly shape behaviour. Hence, the fundamental tenet is that moment-to-moment exchanges are crucial; if a child receives an immediate reward for his/her behaviour, such as getting parental attention or approval, then he/she is likely to exhibit the behaviour again, whereas if she/he is ignored (or punished) then she/he is less likely to do it again.

Similarly, other advocates such as Biblarz and Gottainer (2000) have expanded this focus to consider the cognitive or 'mindful' processes that underlie the parent's behaviour and its effects on children. Whether the assessment and conceptual focus is on behaviour or cognitions, the model suggests that children learn strategies about managing their emotions, resolving disputes and engaging with others not only from their experiences, but also from the way their own reactions were responded to, which ultimately affects their performance.

Furthermore, Social Learning Theory looks at learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, through observation, imitation and modelling. Thus, Bandura, who is considered as one of the leading proponents of Social Learning Theory, believed that classroom learning could be influenced by the type of instruction delivered and by the interactions that occur within and outside the classroom. Hence, the interactions between the person and the environment could have a reciprocal effect by which the environment influences behaviour, and behaviour influences the environment. Also, the theory proposes that children's real-life experiences and exposures directly or indirectly shape their behaviour. Processes by which this learning occurs can be diverse, and they include imitation and reinforcement. (Kim, 2002; Scott, 2004). The implication from the foregoing is that children who come from a deformed parenting background may suffer some psychological setbacks that could end up affecting their performance both in school and outside the school environment, since it is expected that quality parenting would bring about positive behavioural tendencies in children. When the home is deformed through the absence of one of the parents, the child may not have access to quality parenting. It is generally believed that every child requires the attention of both parents to succeed in life and researches have also established this fact.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The population for this study comprised all the undergraduate medical students from single parenthood background in their clinical years at the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. There were 121 undergraduate medical students from single parenthood background in 400-500 levels of clinicals at the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. (University of Ibadan Student Records, 2015) The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted for the study. The purposive sampling technique was adopted in selecting only undergraduate medical students from single parenthood background studying for MBBS. There were 57 undergraduate medical students studying for MBBS in 400 and 500 levels of clinicals at the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.(University of Ibadan Student Records, 2015). Thus, only 57 undergraduate medical students studying for MBBS constituted the sample for this study.

Both primary and secondary data were used for this study. Questionnaire designed for the study was used to collect the background information of the students, while the results of the 2014/2015 sessional examinations were used to collect data on the academic performance of the students. The questionnaire for the study was given to experts for appropriate corrections and comments. The necessary corrections were effected and the questionnaire was trial tested on 20 medical students other than those studying for MBBS. Data collected were analysed using Cronbach Alpha coefficient which yielded a reliability level of 0.74 (α = 0.74), and considered appropriate for the study. Descriptive techniques, such as frequency and percentages, and appropriate inferential statistics, such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation, ANOVA and multiple regression analysis technique, were employed in answering the research questions and testing the hypotheses set for the study.

RESULTS

A total of 57 copies of questionnaire were administered on the medical MBBS students and all were retrieved with useful responses. Therefore, the results presented in this study were based on the fifty-seven copies of the questionnaire. The demographic information, as showed in Table 1, reveals that majority (60%) of the respondent fell between the ages of 20 and 25 years, while very few (11%) were above 30 years. Majority (58%) of respondents were female. A significant proportion (77%) of the respondents had their mothers as guardian and more than half of them (53%) worked as civil servants. It further reveals that most of the guardians possessed university higher degrees of Master's (44%) and Ph.D. (33%), respectively. Lastly, a high percentage (53%) of the respondents' guardians earned ₦60, 000 and above.

The result obtained in response to the effect of single parenthood factors (guardian type, sex and age of students, occupational, educational and income level of guardian) on academic performance of undergraduate medical students, as shown in Table 2, reveals a positive relationship between academic performance of undergraduate medical students and guardian type (r=.067), sex of students (r=.052), guardian occupation (r=.179), guardian educational level (r=.084) and guardian income (r=.063). Thus, it can be inferred that guardian type, occupation, educational level, income and sex of students had a positive direct effect on academic performance of medical students. On the other hand, a negative relationship existed between academic performance of undergraduate medical students and age of students (r=-.185), which may mean that younger students are likely to perform better than older ones. It can therefore be inferred that an improvement in the educational level of the guardian, better occupation for the guardian and enhanced income may lead to better academic performance of medical students. This finding is in support of Ebenuwah-Okoh's[23] findings that there is positive correlation between gender, age and financial status and academic performance of students

Result in Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of medical students from single parenthood background based on guardian ($F_{(1,48)} = .023$; $P>0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. The inference to be drawn from this information is that the type of guardian (viz: father or mother) of a student does not have any influence on the academic performance of the student. This finding is at variance with Park's (2008) finding that students with single mothers performed better in their academics than those with single fathers.

Table 4, which was used to find out if there is any significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students from single parenthood background based on sex, shows that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of students based on sex ($F_{(1,48)} = 1.391$; $P>0.05$). Therefore, it can be inferred that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female undergraduate medical students from single parenthood background. This is in contrast to Dayioglu and Türüt-Asik's (2004) finding of a gender gap in academic performance of students in favour of male students.

Furthermore, as shown in Table 5, there is no significant difference in the academic performance of the students based on age ($F_{(2,47)} = .150$; $P>0.05$). This is in support of the null hypothesis. This implies that the age of students does not have any influence on the academic performance of the students, since there is no difference in the performance of the students across the various age groups. This is in support of Ebenuwah-Okoh's (2010) finding that there is no significant difference between students' academic performance based on age. Similarly, Table 6 also reveals that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students based on guardian's occupation ($F_{(6,43)} = .317$; $P>0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. It can thus be inferred that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students from single parenthood

background based on guardian occupation. A guardian's occupation does not make any significant difference to the performance of the students.

Table 7 reveals that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of the students based on the educational level of the guardian ($F_{(4,45)} = .206$; $P>0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, it could be said that a guardian's educational level does not make any difference as far as the academic performance of undergraduate medical students from single parenthood background is concerned. This finding is contrary to Park's (2008) finding of a significant difference in the academic performance of students from single parenthood background in favour of students from highly educated background because students from lowly educated background pay less attention to their education.

It is obvious that a guardian's income level does not make any difference as far as the academic performance of undergraduate medical students from single parenthood background is concerned. Table 8 shows that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of the students based on the income level of the guardian ($F_{(2,47)} = .235$; $P>0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This result is at variance with Ajila & Olutola (2007) finding of a significant differential achievement in the performance of students from single parenthood background based on income in favour of students from high earning households, such that low household income may explain part of the negative effect of single parenthood on the educational achievement of students.

Table 1: Social Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic Information		Frequency	Percentages
Age	20 - 25 years	34	59.6
	26 – 30 years	17	29.8
	31 years and above	06	10.6
	Total	**57**	**100**
Sex	Female	33	57.9
	Male	24	42.1
	Total	**57**	**100**
Guardian Type	Mother	44	77.2
	Father	13	22.8
	Total	**57**	**100**
Guardian's Occupation	Civil Servant	30	52.6
	Corporate worker	13	22.8
	Business worker	11	19.3
	Trader	3	5.3
	Pensioner	-	-
	Clergyman	-	-
	Others	-	-
	Total	**57**	**100**
Guardian's Level of Education	SSCE	-	-
	Diploma	2	3.5
	NCE	1	1.8
	HND	3	5.3
	Bachelor's Degree	7	12.3
	Master's Degree	25	43.8
	Ph.D.	19	33.3
	Total	**57**	**100**
Guardian's Income Level	Less than ₦19,000	-	-
	N19,000 – N29,000	-	-
	N30,000 – N39,000	2	3.5
	N40,000 – N49,000	3	5.3
	N50,000 – N59,000	25	43.8
	N60,000 and above	27	47.4
	Total	**57**	**100**

Table 2: Correlation Matrix showing relationship between independent variables (guardian type, age and sex of students, occupational, educational and income level of guardian) and dependent variable (academic performance of medical students)

S/N	Variable	Mean	Std Dev	R
1	Academic Performance	2.04	1.095	-
2	Guardian Type	1.55	.503	.067
3	Age	3.06	.311	-.185
4	Sex	1.86	.348	.052
5	Guardian Occupation	3.69	1.903	.179
6	Guardian Education	1.57	1.083	.084
7	Guardian Income	3.06	.544	.063

Table 3: Summary of ANOVA of Academic Performance of Students Based on Guardian Type (Father or Mother)

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	.042	1	.042	.023	.880
Within Groups	86.458	48	1.801		
Total	**86.500**	**49**			

Table 4: Summary of ANOVA of Academic Performance Based on Sex of Students

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	2.436	1	2.436	1.391	.244
Within Groups	84.064	48	1.751		
Total	86.500	49			

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA of Academic Performance Based on Age of Students

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	.550	2	.275	.150	.861
Within Groups	85.950	47	1.829		
Total	**86.500**	**49**			

Table 6: Summary of Analysis of Variance of Academic Performance Based on Guardian's Occupation

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Main Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	3.661	6	.610	.317	.925
Within Groups	82.839	43	1.926		
Total	**86.500**	**49**			

Table 7: Summary of ANOVA of Academic Performance of Students Based on Guardian's Educational Level

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	1.557	4	.389	.206	.934
Within Groups	84.943	45	1.888		
Total	**86.500**	**49**			

Table 8: Summary of ANOVA Table of Academic Performance Based on Guardian's Income Level

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	.856	2	.428	.235	.762
Within Groups	85.644	47	1.822		
Total	**86.500**				

DISCUSSION

The various single parenthood factors that may influence the academic performance of students with particular emphasis on guardian type, guardian educational level, guardian occupation and income level were investigated. The study established that guardian type, occupation, educational level, income, sex and age of students were major factors that can affect the academic performance of undergraduate medical students from single parenthood background. The study further established that there is no significant difference in the academic performance of undergraduate medical students based on guardian type, sex and age of respondents, guardian's occupation, educational level and income level.

The major factors that determined the academic performance of medical students were inadequate provision and lack of access to relevant information resources such as books and journals. The inadequate provision and lack of access may be due to the inability of medical students from single parenthood background to afford learning resources that can aid their better performance in their academics. Therefore, medical libraries should endeavour to make provision for relevant and up-to-date books and journals in the libraries and also ensure that medical students have ease of access to these resources. By this, medical students from single parenthood background would not be at any disadvantage in having access to adequate learning resources to make them perform well.

In addition, counselling centres should be opened to handle the varying problems confronting students from single parenthood background irrespective of age, financial status and gender. Also social workers should be employed to take care of students from dysfunctional homes to enable them achieve success in their academic pursuit Adopting these measures will help them to adjust quickly and easily to their environment without any stress.

CONCLUSION

Sound academic performance is a critical aspect of schooling. In fact, without excelling in certain courses, a student may not be able to graduate from school. However, a good academic performance is predicated on so many factors, which can be financial, social, moral, spiritual, and so on. One factor that has received scant attention from researchers as a predictor of academic performance is single parenthood. Yet it is a very potent factor because the family structure is a significant variable with far-reaching implications. Thus, this study investigated the impact of single parenthood factors on the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the absence of a parent would definitely have an effect on the income level of the household, which may be inadequate to provide all the necessary resources to support better academic performance by the child. The fact that guardian type, sex, age of student, guardian's occupation, educational level and income level have direct positive effect on academic performance of students is a pointer to the fact that the academic performance of medical students can either be positively or negatively influenced by single parenthood factors. On the other hand, variations in age and sex of students, guardian type, guardian's occupation, educational level and income level do not lead to any variation in the academic performance of junior secondary school students.

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