

INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON STUDENTS' ENROLLMENT INTO PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN AGBANI EDUCATION ZONE OF ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the Influence of Parental Socio-economic Status on Students' Enrollment into Public Secondary Schools in Agbani Education Zone of Enugu State. The research design adopted was Ex post Facto or Causal Comparative Research Design. Three research questions guided the study. The area covered in this study was Agbani education zone of Enugu state consisting of three Local Government Areas, namely Nkanu-East, Nkanu-West and Enugu-South with 19,091 parents whose children enrolled in the 43 public secondary schools in Agbani education zone in 2015, 2016 and 2017 serving as subjects of the study. The instruments used for data collection were: a form designed to capture information on students' enrollment and a questionnaire designed to elicit parental socioeconomic status. The instruments were developed by the researcher. They were validated by three experts. The form and the questionnaire were subjected to reliability tests and they yielded .61 and .68 coefficients respectively. The admission officer in each of the 43 public secondary schools supplied the enrollment records for the years under study using the forms. Form teachers assisted in administering the socioeconomic status questionnaire to various parents through their children (students). The research questions were answered using simple percentage. Major findings of the study revealed that parental socio-economic status measured by parental educational attainment level, parental occupation and parental income level influenced students' enrollment in public secondary schools significantly. It was recommended among other things that government should work towards improving the socio-economic status of parents so as to encourage higher students' enrollment into public secondary schools.

Introduction

The role of education in bringing about human development cannot be over-emphasized. This is because education embraces all processes by which a person acquires knowledge and skills to live well in his society. Education is a tool with which people, using the human ability to respond to, and interact with the environment, pass on from generation to generation, those aspects of their culture and values which they consider to be worthwhile. It remains an undisputable fact that no society or nation can rise above its educational level. Egbe (2012) averred that, education is the aggregate of all the processes by which a child or young adult

develops the abilities, attitudes and other forms of behavior which are of positive value to the society in which he lives. In other words, education is a process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both. Efe, (2013) defined education as a social process designed to induct the rising generation into the membership of their society. The Federal Republic of Nigeria recognizes the importance of education generally and secondary education in particular in attaining her national objectives. The five main national goals of Nigeria is to build; “a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens” (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2009).

Consequently, the broad goals of secondary education in Nigeria are

to prepare the individual for useful living within the society and higher education. Specifically, secondary education among other things, is expected to provide trained manpower in the applied sciences, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades; foster national unity with an emphasis on the common ties that unite us in our diversity, raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others, respect the dignity of labour, appreciate those values specified under our board national goals and live as good citizens and provides technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, industrial commercial and economic development, (FRN,2013).

Summarily, the place or role of secondary education in national development cannot be overlooked. Mostly, because education in general and secondary education in particular, fosters the worth and development of the recipient’s for each recipients sake and for the general development of the society.

Despite the importance of secondary education in Nigeria, it is threatened by so many factors among which is poor students’ enrollment, (Egbe, 2014). Simply defined, students’ enrollment into secondary schools refers to the act by which students enroll or sign up or register in secondary schools, (Efe, 2013). Efe alleged that parental socio-economic status contributes more to poor students’ enrollment into secondary schools. Efe defined parental socioeconomic status as parental societal and financial condition, position or standing relative to that of others. Efe listed the indices of socioeconomic status as, educational attainment level, occupation, and income level. Similarly, Carter (2013) defined socioeconomic status as the state of a person’s societal and financial affairs. Carter enumerated occupation, income, attitude and educational level as parameters that can be used to determine a person’s socioeconomic status. There is no doubt that other authors may have listed other indices suitable for determining a person’s socioeconomic status but this study alone cannot exhaust all possible lists. Hence, this study was restricted to the indices listed by Efe (2013) that is educational attainment level, occupation, and income level.

In the same vein, each index was categorized into four. Not because that was the only way they could be categorized but simply for one to bite as much as she can chew in a single study. Consequently, educational attainment level was categorized into primary, secondary, tertiary A (Below Bachelor's degree) and tertiary B (Bachelor's Degree and above). Income level was categorized into low (Below ₦20,000 monthly), Average (Between ₦20,000 and ₦60,000 inclusive), near sufficient (Between ₦61,000 and ₦100,000 inclusive, monthly) and sufficient (above ₦100,000 monthly). Occupation was categorized into Artisan, trader, public/civil servant and military/paramilitary personnel. These categories were adapted from the works of earlier researchers such as Egbe, (2012), Efe, (2013) and Carter (2013). Interestingly research findings on influence of parental socioeconomic status on students' enrollment into public secondary schools have no definitive conclusion. Egbe (2012), Peterson (2014) and Toks (2015) reported that parental socioeconomic status can influence students' enrollment into public secondary schools significantly. While Efe (2013) and Rogers (2015) reported the contrary. These controversies created the gap that necessitated this study.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study was to determine the Influence of Parental Socioeconomic Status on Students' Enrollment into Public Secondary Schools in Agbani Education Zone of Enugu State and to highlight the Implications for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Ascertain the influence of parental educational attainment level on students' enrollment into public secondary schools in Agbani Education zone of Enugu State in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
2. Determine the influence of parental occupation on students' enrollment into public secondary schools in Agbani Education zone of Enugu State in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
3. Ascertain the influence of parental income level on students' enrollment into public secondary schools in Agbani Education zone of Enugu State in 2015, 2016 and 2017.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the influence of parental educational attainment level on students' enrollment into public secondary schools in Agbani Education zone of Enugu State in 2015, 2016 and 2017?
2. What is the influence of parental occupation level on students' enrollment into public secondary schools in Agbani Education zone of Enugu State in 2015, 2016 and 2017?
3. What is the influence of parental income level on students' enrollment into public secondary schools in Agbani Education zone of Enugu State in 2015, 2016 and 2017?

Methodology

The research design adopted in the conduct of this investigation was Expost-Facto or Causal Comparative Research Design. Three research questions guided the study. The area covered in this study was Agbani education zone of Enugu state consisting three Local Government Areas namely Nkanu-East, Nkanu-West and Enugu-South. As at the time of this study they were 43 public secondary schools in the area of the study and 19,091 parents whose children enrolled in the 43 public secondary schools in 2015, 2016 and 2017 served as subjects of the study. Specifically, the enrollments were as follows; 6,902 in 2015, 6365 in 2016 and 5824 in 2017. The following instruments were used for data collection: a form designed to capture information on students' enrollment and a questionnaire designed to elicit parental socioeconomic status. The instruments were developed by the researcher. They were validated by three experts. The form and the questionnaire were subjected to reliability test, specifically, inter consistency test and they yielded .61 and .68 coefficients respectively. The three researchers and three research assistants administered the instruments. One researcher and one research assistant handled one local government area. The admission officer in each of the 43 public secondary schools supplied the enrollment records for the years under study using the forms. Form teachers of JSS III, JSS II and JSS I in each of the 43 secondary schools assisted in administering the socioeconomic status questionnaire to various parents through their children (students). This was because students who enrolled in 2015 were in JSS III, those who enrolled in 2016 were in JSS II while those who enrolled in 2017 were JSS I as at the time of the study. The research questions were answered using simple percentage.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the influence of parental educational attainment level on students' enrollment into public secondary schools in Agbani Education zone of Enugu State in 2015, 2016 and 2017?

Table 1: Percentage students' enrollment in 2015 based on parental educational attainment levels

Educational Attainment Level	N	Percentage (%)
Primary	350	5.07
Secondary	2102	30.45
Tertiary A (Below Bachelor's degree)	2800	40.57
Tertiary B (Bachelor's Degree and above)	1650	23.91
Total	6902	100

From Table 1, parents whose educational attainment stopped at primary level contributed 5.07% of the total enrollment in 2015, parents whose educational attainment stopped at secondary level contributed 30.45% of the total enrollment in 2015, parents whose educational attainment were higher than secondary but below bachelor's degree contributed 40.57% while parents whose educational attainment included bachelor's degree and above contributed 23.91% of the total enrollment in 2015.

Table 2: Percentage students' enrollment in 2016 based on parental educational attainment levels

Educational Attainment Level	N	Percentage (%)
Primary	215	3.38
Secondary	1500	23.57
Tertiary A (Below Bachelor's degree)	3050	47.91
Tertiary B (Bachelor's Degree and above)	1600	25.14
Total	6365	100

From Table 2, parents whose educational attainment stopped at primary level contributed 3.38% of the total enrollment in 2016, parents whose educational attainment stopped at secondary level contributed 23.57 % of the total enrollment in 2016, parents whose educational attainment were higher than secondary but below bachelor's degree contributed 47.91% while parents whose educational attainment included bachelor's degree and above contributed 25.14% of the total enrollment in 2016.

Table 3: Percentage students' enrollment in 2017 based on parental educational attainment levels

Educational Attainment Level	n	Percentage (%)
Primary	122	2.09
Secondary	1250	21.46
Tertiary A (Below Bachelor's degree)	3002	51.55
Tertiary B (Bachelor's Degree and above)	1450	24.90
Total	5824	100

From Table 3, parents whose educational attainment stopped at primary level contributed 2.09% of the total enrollment in 2017, parents whose educational attainment stopped at secondary level contributed 21.46 % of the total enrollment in

2017, parents whose educational attainment were higher than secondary but below bachelor's degree contributed 51.55 % while parents whose educational attainment included bachelor's degree and above contributed 24.90 % of the total enrollment in 2017.

Research Question 2

What is the influence of parental occupation on students' enrollment into public secondary schools in Agbani Education zone of Enugu State in 2015, 2016 and 2017?

Table 4: Percentage students' enrollment in 2015 based on parental occupation

Occupation Level	n	Percentage (%)
Artisan	1101	15.95
Traders	3500	50.71
Public/civil servant	1901	27.54
Military/paramilitary personnel	400	5.80
Total	6902	100

From Table 4, artisans contributed 15.95% of total enrollment in 2015, traders contributed 50.71%, public/civil servants contributed 27.54% while military/paramilitary personnels contributed 5.80% of the total enrollment in 2015.

Table 5: Percentage students' enrollment in 2016 based on parental occupation

Occupation Level	N	Percentage (%)
Artisan	825	12.96
Traders	3340	52.47
Public/civil servant	1880	29.54
Military/paramilitary personnel	320	5.03
Total	6365	100

From table 5, artisans contributed 12.96% of total enrollment in 2016, traders contributed 52.47%, public/civil servants contributed 29.54% while military/paramilitary personnels contributed 5.03% of the total enrollment in 2016.

Table 6: Percentage students' enrollment in 2017 based on parental occupation

Occupation Level	N	Percentage (%)
Artisan	520	8.93
Traders	3203	55.00
Public/civil servant	1501	25.77
Military/paramilitary personnel	600	10.30
Total	5824	100

From Table 6, artisans contributed 8.93% of total enrollment in 2017, traders contributed 55.00%, public/civil servants contributed 25.77% while military/paramilitary personnels contributed 10.30% of the total enrollment in 2017.

Research Question 3

What is the influence of parental income level on students’ enrollment into public secondary schools in Agbani Education zone of Enugu State in 2015, 2016 and 2017?

Table 7: Percentage students’ enrollment in 2015 based on parental income levels

Income Levels	n	Percentage (%)
Low (below ₦ 20,000 monthly)	300	4.35
Average (between ₦ 20, 000 and ₦ 60, 000 inclusive monthly)	1900	27.53
Near sufficient (between ₦ 61, 000 and ₦ 100, 000 inclusive monthly)	3652	52.91
Sufficient (above ₦ 100,000 monthly)	1050	15.21
Total	6902	100

From Table 7, parents with low income level (below ₦ 20,000 monthly) contributed 4.35% of total enrollment in 2015, parents with average income level (between ₦ 20,000 and ₦ 60,000 inclusive monthly) contributed 27.53% of total enrollment in 2015, parents with near sufficient income level (between ₦ 61,000 and ₦ 100,000 inclusive monthly) contributed 52.91% of total enrollment in 2015 while parents with sufficient income level (above ₦ 100,000 monthly) contributed 15.21% of total enrollment in 2015.

Table 8: Percentage students’ enrollment in 2016 based on parental income levels

Income Levels	n	Percentage (%)
Low (below ₦ 20,000 monthly)	202	3.17
Average (between ₦ 20, 000 and ₦ 60, 000 inclusive monthly)	710	11.15
Near sufficient (between ₦ 61, 000 and ₦ 100, 000 inclusive monthly)	4003	62.86
Sufficient (above ₦ 100,000 monthly)	1453	22.82
Total	6368	100

From Table 8, parents with low income level (below ₦ 20,000 monthly) contributed 3.17% of total enrollment in 2016, parents with average income level (between ₦ 20,000 and ₦ 60,000 inclusive monthly) contributed 11.15% of total enrollment in 2016, parents with near sufficient income level (between ₦ 61,000 and ₦ 100,000 inclusive monthly) contributed 62.86% of total enrollment in 2016 while

parents with sufficient income level (above ₦ 100,000 monthly) contributed 22.82% of total enrollment in 2016.

Table 9: Percentage students' enrollment in 2017 based on parental income levels

Income Levels	n	Percentage (%)
Low (below ₦ 20,000 monthly)	252	4.33
Average (between ₦ 20, 000 and ₦ 60, 000 inclusive monthly)	971	16.67
Near sufficient (between ₦ 61, 000 and ₦ 100, 000 inclusive monthly)	3501	60.11
Sufficient (above ₦ 100,000 monthly)	1100	18.89
Total	5824	100

From Table 9, parents with low income level (below ₦ 20,000 monthly) contributed 4.33% of total enrollment in 2017, parents with average income level (between ₦ 20,000 and ₦ 60,000 inclusive monthly) contributed 16.67% of total enrollment in 2017, parents with near sufficient income level (between ₦ 61,000 and ₦ 100,000 inclusive monthly) contributed 60.11% of total enrollment in 2017 while parents with sufficient income level (above ₦ 100,000 monthly) contributed 18.89% of total enrollment in 2017.

Discussion

From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that parental educational attainment level influenced students' enrollment into public secondary schools significantly. Specifically, parents with higher educational attainment levels tend to encourage students' enrollment better than their counterparts with lower educational attainment levels. Similarly, parental occupation influenced students' enrollment significantly too. Traders and public/civil servants tend to value enrollment into public secondary schools than their counterparts who were artisans and military/paramilitary personnels. While the reason for that of artisans could be traced to financial status that of military/paramilitary personnels could be linked to the fact that military and paramilitary organizations have a lot of staff schools, (Efe, 2013).

In the same vein, parental income level influenced students' enrollment into public secondary schools significantly. Parents with near sufficient income level took the lead. They were followed by parents who had average income level. Then parents with sufficient income level before those with low income level. It is important to note that parents classified to have sufficient income levels may have come third because a lot of them prefer private schools where they pay very high amount of money, (Egbe, 2012). Also important to note is the observation of Egemba (2014) concerning free basic education in Nigeria. Egemba alleged that though junior secondary school (Upper Basic Education) is gazetted by Nigerian government as free, parents in most schools are required to buy books, school uniforms and other materials for their children and some very poor Nigerians cannot afford such

expenses. Hence, the poor percentage of enrollment of children whose parents have low income level.

Implications for Sustainable National Development in Nigeria

Development has been defined as a process of both economic and social transformation based on complex, cultural and environmental factors and their interaction, (Peterson, 2014). Stuz (2016) highlighted some indices that determine a developed nation. These include what Stuz described as increased capacity of people to have control over material assets, intellectual resource and ideology, physical necessities of life (food, clothing and shelters), employment, and equity, participation in government, political and economic independence, adequate education, gender equality, sustainable development and peace. The above indicators no doubt, show how people are at the centre of all development processes. According to Toks (2015) human development is all about putting people at the centre of development. It is all about realizing their potential, increasing their choices and enjoying their freedom to live the lives they value.

This new approach to development focuses more attention to measures and strategies to reduce poverty and inequality and to the realization of the potentials of human personality. Thus, human development agenda have become a development paradigm which focus on empowering the individual with the knowledge and skill to face the social challenges that may hinder his/her productivity. Rogers (2015) defined sustainable development as any development that is likely to achieve lasting satisfaction of human needs and improvements of the quality of life. Thus, sustainable development encompasses help for the very poorest who are left with no option but to destroy their environment to survive, and the idea of self reliant development with natural resource constraints. Also sustainable development is concerned with cost effective development using different economic criteria to the traditional, that is development should not degrade environment. Important issues of health control, appropriate technologies, food self-reliance, clean water and shelter for all are all elements of sustainable development. For sustainable development, people centered activities are necessary. Hence, human beings are the resources in the concept of sustainable development.

Sustainable development as distributive justices focuses on improving basic human needs and interest in social justice. It involves modernization which emphasizes process of social change required to produce economic advancement, examine changes in social, psychological and political processes. It is therefore obvious that no meaningful development can occur without quality education and quality education cannot occur except there is satisfactory students' enrollment into schools, (Brooks, 2012). Children who stop at primary schools are generally classified as school dropouts, (Efe, 2013). Consequences of school dropouts are very grievous for any government in particular and any society in general. This is because greater percentages of social vices are traceable to school dropouts, (Egamba, 2014). Egamba listed these social vices to include drug abuse, rape, robbery, murder and most recently insurgence and terrorism. Unarguably, school dropouts constitute a big

threat and nuisance to the society. It is only education that can be used to recover the youths and direct them properly to utilize their potentials for the good of themselves and the society at large. When this is done, sustainable national development is secured.

Conclusions

Consequent upon the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made;

1. government should work towards improving the socioeconomic status of parents so as to encourage satisfactory students' enrollment into public secondary schools
2. government should, in addition to tuition-free basic education, provide school wears and study materials for public secondary schools' students to encourage satisfactory students enrollment into public secondary schools

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