

Family Factor as predictors of student's enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state

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Abstract: The study examined family factor as predictors of student enrolment in secondary in Benue State. The study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study comprised 91 principals and 1,202 public secondary school teachers in zone B Senatorial District of Benue State. Out of the population, sample of 27 principals and 297 teachers were selected through stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was 17 item questionnaires. Data collected were analyzed using mean, standard deviation and t-test. The findings of the study show that family size predicate students enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state. The result of the study also reveals that economic status of parents influence students enrolment in secondary schools. It was recommended that government and financial institutions should provide Nigerian families with micro-finance to enable families invest in business irrespective of the family. It was also recommended that self-employment opportunity should be created for families for income generation. This can enhance economic status of the family.

Keywords: Family, Students, Enrolment and secondary schools

Introduction

Education is a tool for advancing the developing nation. Breakthrough in science, technological advancement, cultural transformation, political stability, economic growth and agricultural development came through the process of education. Nigeria seems not to have achieved development because it has not given education the right priority. Under-development of the nation can be linked to poor funding of education in Nigeria. Ugwu in Achimugu (2000) reported that poor funding of education could be traced to 1970 when government spending on education began to wane. News watch in Achimugu (2000:13) reported that:

Nigeria is lagging behind some relatively poorer African countries in education. Nigeria commits only 1.4 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to education compared to Ghana's 3.4 percent, Gabon's 7 percent, Cote'd'Ivoire's 6.9%, Kenya's 7%. These investments are reflected on their literacy rate. Nigeria can boast of 51 percent literacy rate. Compare that to Ghana's 61 percent, Kenya 69 percent, Gabon 61 percent and Cote'd Ivoire's 54 percent.

Considering the above statistics, it is obvious that the Federal Government of Nigeria has not met UNESCO requirement of 26 percent annual budget allocation of a nation to education. The above scenario calls for family intervention in school enrolment.

The family is a fundamental social institution. It is the child first place of contact with the world. Murdock in Onu (2004) defines family as a social group characterized by common residence, economic-cooperation and reproduction. The author concluded that family is a universal institution. Action Health (2003) defines family as the area in which virtually the entire range of human experience can take place. In the context of this study family implies a home where children are groomed psychologically, morally, socially and physically in preparation into formal system of education, secondary school inclusive.

Secondary education occupies a strategic position in Nigerian system of education. According to National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004) secondary education is a form of education that prepare the participant for useful living in society and preparation of the individual for higher education. Secondary education is expected to develop the individual for useful contribution to Nigeria, Benue State inclusive.

The importance of secondary education has led to increase in secondary school enrolment. The social demand for secondary education in Benue State has brought about increase in the enrolment of students in schools. This fact was confirmed by Aghenta (2001) who pointed out that social demand approach considered education as a service that is demanded by people just like any other goods or services. Thus, the free education at the primary and junior secondary school levels in Nigeria was a response to the social demand of education by people in Nigeria. The free education introduced by the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo has led to considerable expansion in student enrolment in the school system and this has created demand the family intervention.

The family is made up of structures. Nwobi in Adikwu (2015) revealed that in Nigerian context because of the phenomenon of the family size, family is made up of the married couple, offspring, immediate kin and kin, brothers and sisters of the bridegroom, parents, in-laws. Irrespective of the family size, parents are expected to play a fundamental role in child school enrolment. Shankar-Rao (2012) argued that the family is expected to provide the basis for the child formal learning. Family provides connections to the resources that are needed to be successful students. Ayodele (2006) opined that the family structure where children finds themselves goes a long way to determining the educational foundation of the child. Life in a large family can be stressful for both the child and the parents. Such family is faced with challenges of inadequate financial resources. Schuitze (2006) noted that if adolescent from a large or unstable home are compared with those from small or stable home, it would be seen that the formal have social, academic and emotional problems. Scale and Roehilde (2000) are of the opinion that family and it size play a great role in children enrolment in school. Family structure in terms of small or large and socio-economic background of parent may or may not affect school enrolment.

Nigeria like any other developing country is composed of a wide gap between the rich and the poor in the society. The gap between the rich and the poor might serve as impediment to the pursuit of quality education. According to Ebirim and Ochai (2011), family resources may decline as a result of expenditures resulting to low standard of living, high level of poverty and inability to meet family financial demand. According to Akinwumi (2008), the causes of decline in family financial resources are attributed to unemployment, corruption in the society, greediness and inflation. These may lead to a cut back in the family expenditures on social services sub-sectors like education, health, agriculture, commerce and industry. According to Ogbaji (2015), socio-economic background of parent determines the type of school one goes and how the individual perform in school. Parent of upper socio-economic class often put their children into good schools and provide them with adequate equipment that facilities their education.

Family factor has long been studied in the field of education and psychology. It has also become clear that school enrolment is a construct influenced by a number of factors such as motivation, interest and achievement. The present study is concerned with family factors as predictors of school enrolment in Benue State.

Statement of the Problem

Family is made up of members under one roof having a single household and united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption. Family provides connections to the resources that are needed to be a successful student. This implies that family factors are fundamental in secondary school enrolment. Benue state is known for mass agricultural production. This is manifested in the structure of family unit. Most family opts for large family. The rational for this is to have children that will help out in the farm work. In most case children are deprived of attending schools with the intention to help in farm work. Children mostly are not motivated to value schooling and this reflects in situations where parents fail to provide educational needs of their children. This may affect children enrolment in schools. Whether family structure or family socio-economic can predict student enrolment in secondary school is yet to be empirically established. The problem of this study therefore is to find out how family factor predicate student enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine family factors as predictor of student's enrolment in secondary schools in Benue State. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Determine family structure as of secondary school enrolment in Benue State.
2. Determine socio-economic background of family as predictor of secondary school enrolment in Benue State.

Research Question

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the ways family structure predicate secondary school enrolments in Benue State?
2. What are the ways socio-economic status of the family predicate secondary school enrolment?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

1. Family size has significance on secondary school enrolment in Benue State.
2. Socio-economic status of family has significance on secondary school enrolment in Benue State.

Methodology

The research is a survey design aimed at ascertaining family factors as predictor of student enrolment in secondary schools in Benue State. Benue State has three senatorial District (Zone A, B, and C). The study was carried out in Zone B Senatorial District. Zone B has seven local government areas.

The population of the study comprises 1,293 respondents made up of 91 principals and 1,202 teachers (TSB, 2016). The respondents were chosen in order to ensure that those used for the study were sufficiently knowledgeable about the variables under study and could supply useful information on the research instruments.

The sample of the study consist 324 respondents drawn from the total population of the study. Applying proportionate random sampling technique 3 public secondary schools were randomly selected from each local government area in the zone making a total of 27 public secondary schools in Zone B. 11 teachers were randomly selected from the 27 public secondary schools making a total of 297 secondary school teachers. The entire 27 principals were selected for the study making a total of 324 respondents respectively.

The instrument for data collection was a researcher development questionnaire titled: Family Factors for School Enrolment Questionnaire (FFSEQ). A seventeen item survey questionnaire was structured on a 4 point rating scale of: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The items on the questionnaire were developed based on the two research questions that guided the study. The items on the questionnaire elicit information on family factors as predictors of secondary school enrolment in Benue State.

The research instrument was face validated by experts from the University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State. The comments and criticisms made by the experts shaped the focus of the study. The validated instrument was trial tested to ascertain the validity of the instrument. Using Cronbach alpha method the reliability co-efficient was 0.65. This indicates that the instrument is reliable. Research assistants were trained and instructed in the distribution of the questionnaire and for the collection of all the data. This was done to ensure that the entire questionnaire were duly completed and returned.

Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for the two research questions. The t-test statistics was used in answering the two hypotheses formulated for the study. The level of significance was set at 0.05 with 322 as degree of freedom. The hypotheses were rejected if the t-calculated is equal to or higher than the table value. A mean score of 2.50 and above constitutes accepted. A mean score less than 2.50 was adjudged rejected.

Results

The results presented in table 1-4 according to the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

Research Question 1: What are the ways family structure predicate secondary school enrolments in Benue State?

Table 1: Responses of Principals and Teachers on Family Structure

S/N	ITEMS	Principal			Teachers		
		X	SD	Dec	X	SD	Dec
1	Extended family	3.78	0.41	Agree	3.01	0.81	Agree
2	Nuclear family	3.68	0.66	Agree	2.93	0.66	Agree
3	Poly-gamy family	2.91	0.78	Agree	3.51	0.79	Agree
4	Monogamy family	3.50	0.51	Agree	3.71	0.54	Agree
5	Small family	3.44	0.41	Agree	3.00	0.71	Agree
6	Large family	3.56	0.77	Agree	3.41	0.48	Agree
7	Single family	3.71	0.58	Agree	3.50	0.27	Agree
8	Dual family	3.50	0.49	Agree	3.61	0.58	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.51	0.57	Agree	3.34	0.60	Agree

Table 1 present the response of secondary school principals and teachers on ways family structures predicate secondary schools enrolment. A look at the table shows that items 1-8 are rated above the criterion means of 2.50. The respondents agreed with all the items on the tables as ways family structure predicate student enrolment in secondary school in Benue state.

Research Question 2: In what ways does socio-economic status of parents predicate secondary school enrolment in Benue State?

Table 2: Responses of Respondents on Socio-economic Status of Family

S/N	ITEMS	Principal			Teachers		
		X	SD	Dec	X	SD	Dec
1	Family financial support	2.59	0.80	Agree	2.73	0.82	Agree
2	Parents financial support	3.00	0.41	Agree	3.71	0.21	Agree
3	Provision of financial needs	2.79	0.26	Agree	2.81	0.51	Agree
4	Availability of school materials	3.01	0.51	Agree	3.71	0.71	Agree
5	Affordability of school fees	3.50	0.56	Agree	3.50	0.58	Agree
6	Meet economic needs	3.11	0.77	Agree	3.71	0.75	Agree
7	Efficiency in financial management	2.78	0.81	Agree	3.90	0.77	Agree
8	Planning for income and expenditure	3.50	0.91	Agree	3.50	0.84	Agree
9	Encourage joint savings	3.71	0.78	Agree	3.71	0.71	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.49	0.72	Agree	3.91	0.73	Agree

Table 2 reveals the views of principals and teachers on socio-economic status of family predicate student enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state. The mean rating is above the criteria mean score of 2.50 for both principals and teachers. This implies that family financial support, provision of financial needs, affordability of school fees and meeting economic needs are ways socio-economic status of family predicate student enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state.

Hypothesis 1: Family Size has significant on secondary school enrolment in Benue State

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis of Family Structure

S/N	Source	No	X	SD	Df	Critical Value	Table Value	Decision
1	Principals	27	3.51	0.57	322		1.96	
2	Teachers	297	3.34	0.60		0.48		Significance

Table 3 indicates that the calculated t-value is 0.48 at 322 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value is less than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, family size has significance on student enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state.

Hypothesis 2: Socio-economic status of family has significance on secondary school enrolment in Benue State

Table 3: Summary of t-test Analysis of Socio-economic Status Family

S/N	Source	No	X	SD	Df	Critical Value	Table Value	Decision
1	Principals	27	3.49	0.72	322		1.96	
2	Teachers	297	3.91	0.73		0.61		Significance

Table 4 reveals that the calculated t-value is 0.61 at 322 degree of freedom and at 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated t-value of 0.61 is less than the table value of 1.96, the null hypothesis of the study is accepted as stipulated.

Therefore, supervision of functional secondary education in Benue state has significance on national development.

Discussion

There are similarities between the responses of principals and teachers. Research question one indicted ways family structure predicate student enrolment in secondary schools to include small family, large family, nuclear family and extended family. The finding is in line with Ayodele (2006) who opined that family structures where children find themselves goes a long way to determine the educational foundation of the child. Life in the large family can be stressful for both the child and the parent. Schuitze (2006) argued that if adolescent from a large family are compared with those from the home, it would be seen that the formal have social, academic and emotional problems. The result of the analytical finding is in support of accepting the hypothesis as stated that family structure has significance influence on student enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state.

The major finding on socio-economic status of the family on student enrolment in secondary schools shows family financial support, provision of financial needs, availability of school fees and meeting economic needs of children. The finding is in agreement with Ogbaji (2015) who maintained that socio-economic status of parent determines the type of school one goes and how the individual perform in school. Parents of upper socio-economic class often put their children into good schools and provide them with adequate equipment that facilitates their education. The results from the respondents agree with the second hypothesis made that socio-economic status of family has significance influence on student enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state.

Conclusion

Considering the findings of the study, there is need for student enrolment in secondary schools in Benue state. This is evident in the finding of this study. The findings have led the researchers to conclude that socio-economic status of parent influence student enrolment in secondary schools. It was therefore concluded that family financial support, provision of financial needs and availability of school fees are ways family economic-status predicate student enrolment in secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made bearing in mind the need for student enrolment in secondary schools.

1. Government and financial institutions should provide Nigerian families with micro-finance. The finance will enable each family structure to invest in business irrespective of the family structure.
2. Self-employment opportunity should be created for families for onward income generation. This will enhance the economic status of the family.

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