

PROPRIETORS' CHARACTERISTICS, PARENTAL SUPPORT AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENIN METROPOLIS

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the extent of relationships between proprietors' characteristics, parental support and students' academic performance in Private Senior Secondary Schools (SSS) in Benin Metropolis. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The research design employed to achieve the aims of the study was a correlational survey research design. The population of the study comprises of 3410 private SSS3 students in Benin Metropolis. The teachers and students will serve as the respondents for the study because they are considered fit to have the useful information needed to carry out the study. A structured questionnaire, titled: "Questionnaire on Proprietors' Characteristics, Parental Support and Academic Performance of students in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis" were used for data collection. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and linear regression. The result revealed that proprietors' characteristics and parental support were significant negative predictors of students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

Keywords: Benin Metropolis, Parental Involvement and Support, Private Senior Secondary Schools, Proprietors' Characteristics, Students' Academic Performance.

Introduction

The secondary school education according to the Federal republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2014) in its education policy document is the education children receive immediately after the completion of primary education and it is the education children receive before the tertiary education. This is why secondary school education is so important because of its mediating role between primary school education and tertiary school education. The broad objectives of secondary school education is twofold (1) to prepare students to be useful within the society, and (2) to prepare students for higher education. Secondary school education is sub-divided into two structures, namely: junior secondary school education and senior secondary school education. The junior secondary school education is the level of education where emphases are laid on practical while the senior secondary school education lay emphasis on theory.

In Nigeria, the secondary schools are educational institutions currently managed by individuals, groups, corporate bodies and missionary societies which retain the right to select their students and are run completely or partly with the fees they charge the students. The essence of establishing private secondary schools is to render educational service for possible financial and academic returns. With this objective in mind, the society has witnessed a dramatic establishment of private schools by various individuals or group of individuals who are referred to as school owners commonly called school proprietors. It is a school other than those established by public authority, which conform to the set

minimum standards and may be approved by the government. In the last three decades, private schools has earned an increasing patronage from parents and guardians. This has led to the desire and preference among most parents and guardians to enroll their children and wards in private schools. There has been argument trailing these common trends. Some individuals have highlighted that private schools' academic performance is better than public schools' academic performance, which relatively explained the rationale behind the preference of the parents and guardians choosing the private schools over the public schools.

Academic performance is an issue that deeply concerns students, parents, teachers and authorities especially school owners, however, there are complexities accompanying its conceptualization. Actually, it summarizes the performance of schools and can be described as academic performance or achievement. Students' performance is the result of learning, prompted by the teaching activity by the teacher and which is often evident in the students' grades and scores. There have been reports comparing performance of students in private and public schools, which established that students of private schools perform better than those of public schools. Akinloye, Adu and Adu, (2017) opined that the private school students performed significantly better than their public school counterparts. Lapite and Ogunjimi (2013) had found that the academic performance of private school pupils was significantly different from that of public school pupils. In addition, it was found that students who had private school background out performed their counterparts who attended public primary schools in English and Mathematics. It is of general myth to associate good academic performance to students of private schools. However, the researcher is concerned about the possible factors that could be responsible for the performance of the students. Performance of students in examinations is attributed to a number of factors; these include provision of physical facilities, classroom size, effective school discipline policies, administrative support and effective leadership. The source of concern for this study is the role played by the proprietors' characteristics and parental involvement in fostering better academic performance, especially among the students in Private Secondary Schools in Benin Metropolis.

Proprietors' characteristics are some of the personality factors of interest in this study. Proprietorship refers to the ownership of schools attended by students, that is, whether it is established by government or individuals and private organizations. The school proprietorship as a business is evident in the huge volume of privately owned schools located and springing up in every nook and cranny of the society. The potential role of a proprietor to the performance of his or her school cannot be ignored. Before now, there is no standard qualification requirement for opening or owning a school beyond the capacity to meet the infrastructural needs for takeoff and continued operation of the school. Thus, one does not need to be a professional teacher or educationist to own and operate a school as at date. Consequently, the ownership or proprietorship of schools is basically on venture and capacity basis; leading to proprietorship of schools by various individuals from different background including the semi-literate and non-literate.

Proprietorship refers to the ownership of schools attended by students, that is, whether it is established by government or individuals and private organizations (Omachonu & Offorma, 2017). Generally, a proprietor in the first place comes up with an intention to establish an institution of learning that will satisfy the educational quest of the general populace. This intention is expectedly driven by a mission and vision; because lack of vision in the establishment and management of such institution may lead to ineffective allocation of and use of resources. It has been argued that the academic achievement of students is largely a function of a working vision and an effective leadership which are spearheaded by the proprietor. A proprietor is regarded as the chief executive of the school programmes. The position of a proprietor saddles him or her with an array of administrative and managerial responsibilities (for example, planning, organizing, leading and controlling) which is not limited to management of finance and personnel of the school, designing of school programme, maintenance of student welfare services, supervision of instructional programmes in the school and establishment of good relations with the host community, among others. The failure of the proprietor to carry out these assignments effectively and efficiently may affect the running of the school and attainment of academic goals. For effective execution of these responsibilities, the proprietor is expected to take the lead in planning, controlling,

organizing, coordinating and directing both human and non-human resources so as to achieve the goals of the school among which is resounding students' academic success.

The parental support or involvement has gained much research attention. It is a common knowledge that children cannot deny the influence of their parents on their personal and academic growth and developmental strides. It is believed that some aspects of parental factors such as styles of parenting and expectation relatively impacts on educational outcomes of the students. Household rules, parental attendance and participation at school functions can also play a role on the students' developmental outcomes. These evidences indicate that parental involvement in school programmes or students' activities have a role on educational outcomes. Parents' positive and cooperative attitude towards the development of schools has been found to have positive effects on students' learning outcomes (Ubangha, 2004). Such parental attitudes are reflected in regular attendance at Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings, sending children to school on time, paying school fees on time, ensuring that their children complete their homework on time, and visiting the school regularly to monitor their children's progress.

The literature on proprietor and academic performance is sparse. However, Omachonu and Offorma (2017) carried out a study to find out the influence of proprietorship on the achievement of students taught Oral English with games technique and found that was no significant difference in the achievement of private and public school students, there was significant interaction effect of method and school proprietorship. The proprietor is the sole driver of the agenda of the school although not without the assistance of the other school personnel as he or she is expected to encourage team spirit among teaching and non-teaching staff. Research findings showed that principals (who are sometimes proprietors) can significantly contribute to the academic performance of students if attention is given to teaching, methods, class management, size of the school, patterns of discipline and characteristics of school climate (Olaleye, 2013). A proprietor who effectively and properly exercises his or her leadership and ownership responsibility will enable his or her school to realize the objective of excellent academic achievement. Essentially, virtually every decision in the school are, in large part, determined by the school proprietors, who have an important and undeniable influence on the composition of the school workforce and course content, and are in charge of monitoring the quality and quantity of instruction delivered by classroom teachers as well as services rendered by non-teachers for appropriate academic climate.

Literature has established the influence of parents on every aspects of the development of students including academic progress. Mortimore, Simmons, Stoll, Lewis and Ecob (1993) in their study found that parental involvement in the life of the school had positive influence on pupils' progress and development. This involvement includes parents' attendance at meetings to discuss the children's progress, principals' accessibility to parents, as well as parents who provide their children with books. However, formal parent-teacher associations were found to be unrelated to effective schooling. This corroborates the observation of a private school's principal in this current study who preferred to discuss students' progress and problems with individual parents rather than a group of parents.

The research conducted by Dietel (2007) at John Hopkins University shows that high quality school and family partnerships could lead to substantial achievements for students with disadvantaged background. The Current Education Challenges (2007) state that family and parental involvement are linked with higher students' achievements, better attitude towards learning, low levels of dropout rates, and increased community support for education, regardless of socio-economic background or parents' level of education. Parental involvement should not be viewed and defined only in terms of involvement in homework. This is because the increasingly complex demands of secondary schools would prohibit many parents from being involved that way. To overcome this problem, many Nigerian parents pay experts to do this job for them. However, some research findings indicated that a strong form of parents' involvement is expectation (Jeynes, 2005). Parents who hold high expectations for their children and communicate them clearly, and also encourage the adolescents to work hard in order to attain them can make a difference in students' success.

The school has the responsibility not merely to promote parental involvement; this responsibility

requires “a hard sell” by determined teachers and supported by well-informed publicity. Parents should be made to realize their responsibility to provide education for their children, as well as the knowledge that their active interest and co-operation with the school will help the students to benefit from schooling (Macbeth, 1993). Parents are expected to sign an undertaking of co-operation with the school. Lack of co-operation may be reflected in the students’ progress report. This format can be adapted to suit the situation in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold:

3. To examine the interplay between proprietors’ characteristics and better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.
4. To examine the interplay between parental support and better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

Research Question 1: What is the interplay between proprietors’ characteristics and better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis?

Research Question 2: What is the interplay between parental support and better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formed and tested at a 0.5 level of significance.

Research Hypothesis 1: Proprietors’ characteristics does not significantly predict better academic performance of students’ in private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

Research Hypothesis 2: Parental support does not significantly predict better academic performance of students’ in private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

Methods

Research Design

A correlational survey research design was used in this study to achieve the specific objectives of the study. This research design would help to investigate the relationship between proprietors’ characteristics, parental support and students’ academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. This type of research design “involves collecting data to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables” (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009, p. 195). Therefore, a correlational survey research design is appropriate for this study because it would help to determine the extent to which a relationship exists between two different independent variables (proprietors’ characteristics and parental support) and one dependent variable (academic performance).

Population and Sampling Procedure

The target population of this study comprises of 3410 in various Private SSS in Benin City, Edo state. The teachers and students in Private SSS3, which serves as the respondents for the study, because they are considered fit to provide the necessary information needed to complete this study. Three private secondary schools were selected for the study to represents the entire population. The three selected schools have a total of 159 SSS students in Benin City, Edo State and the entire SSS3 students and teachers of the three schools were taken as the sample size selected from the three secondary schools. The sample was determined using a multi-stage sampling method. In the first stage, purposive sampling method was used to select the geographical spread covering Benin Metropolis; Benin Metropolis is a fair representation of Benin City geographical spread. Then, in the second stage, the three sampled schools were selected using a random sampling method of the three schools from the coverage area of study. The

random sampling method was used to provide equal opportunity for any school to be selected, noting that all schools in the population is assumed to have the same variable of study.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire, titled: “Questionnaire on Proprietors’ Characteristics, Parental Support and Students’ Academic Performance” were used for data collection. The questionnaire contains items on proprietors’ characteristics, parental support and students’ academic performance. The questionnaire was made up of eight items, which focused on proprietors’ characteristics and parental support. Each variable was measured with four items. An example of the items for proprietors’ characteristics is “Your proprietor occasionally comes to class to teach some subject”. An example of the items for parental support is “Your parents usually give support when doing take-home assignments”. The teacher gave the overall average performance of each student that completed questionnaire based on his/her knowledge of individual student and their academic performance. Students’ academic scores were used as their academic performance. The academic scores of students were supplied by the teachers who also assisted in administering the questionnaire with strict adherence to the ethics of academic performance record.

Validation and Reliability of Data Collection Instrument

The data collection instrument was given to experts in field of test and measurement by the authors to ensure the content and face validation of the data collection instrument. The authors later retrieved the instrument from the experts and incorporated their comments and suggestions into the instrument. In establishing the reliability, 30 copies of the instrument were administered on the respondents who were not part of the study. Data collected were analyzed using the Cronbach’s alpha, which yielded a reliability co-efficient value of .840. This indicates that the items of the instrument are reliable to measure what they are intended to measure.

Data Collection Procedure

The authors visited the schools selected for the study, approached the school’s proprietors’ and discuss with them to establish a hitch-free administration of the instrument. The authors explained the purpose of the study to the respondents who were briefed on how to respond to the questionnaire before they were administered on them by the help of research assistants, with strict supervision and were retrieved the next day.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) and linear regression. The PPMCC were used to answer the research questions, while the linear regression was used to test the research hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significant. The decision rule the research questions is that any correlation coefficient (r) value between 0.0 to 0.49 was regarded as low correlation, between 0.5 to 0.59 was regarded as moderate correlation, and 0.6 and above was regarded as high correlation. Note that when a correlation value is negative, the decision is considered a negative correlation, and when a correlation value is positive, the decision is considered a positive correlation. The probability or p-value was used in taking decisions on the null hypotheses. If the p-value was lesser than or equal to 0.05 level of significant, the null hypotheses was rejected, and if the p-value was greater than 0.05 level of significant, the null hypotheses was retained.

Results

Answering Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the interplay between proprietors’ characteristics and better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis?

Table 1: Pearson’s correlation on the interplay between proprietors’ characteristics and better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

	N	Mean	SD	r	r ²	Remark
Proprietors’ Characteristics	159	11.68	3.09			
Academic Performance	159	54.28	12.95	-0.88	-5.56	NC

r²= coefficient of determination, SD = Standard Deviation, NC = Negative Correlation.

Table 1 indicated that the mean score of proprietors’ characteristics was 11.68 and a standard deviation of 3.09. The mean score of students’ academic performance was 54.28 and a standard deviation of 12.95. Table 1 also showed that there was a negative correlation (-0.88) between proprietors’ characteristics and students’ academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. The coefficient of determination (r²) associated with the correlation coefficient value of -0.88 was -5.56. The coefficient of determination (r²) indicated that the proprietors’ characteristics has -5.56% influence on students’ academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. This is an indication that other factors that influenced academic performance of students in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis accounted for -94.44%.

Research Question 2: What is the interplay between parental support and better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis?

Table 2: Pearson’s correlation on interplay between parental support and better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

	N	Mean	SD	r	r ²	Remark
Parents’ Characteristics	159	14.20	1.61			
Academic Performance	159	54.28	12.95	-0.39	-0.25	NC

r²= coefficient of determination, SD = Standard Deviation, NC = Negative Correlation.

Table 2 indicated that the mean score of parental support was 14.20 and a standard deviation of 1.61. The mean score of students’ academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis was 54.28 and a standard deviation of 12.95. Table 1 also showed that there was a negative correlation (-0.39) between parental support and students’ academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. The coefficient of determination (r²) associated with the correlation coefficient of -0.39 was -0.25.

Research Hypothesis 1: Proprietors’ characteristics does not significantly predict better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

Table 3: Linear regression on proprietors’ characteristics and better academic performance of students’ in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

Proprietor’s Characteristics	Academic Performance				
	B	SEB	Beta(β)	t	p
Constant	12.9	1.063		12.133	.000
Proprietor’s Characteristics	0.22	.019	-0.93	-1.176	.615

Note R² = .093, adjusted R² = .009, F=1.384, P > .001

Table 3 showed that proprietors’ characteristics has a significant negative relationship with students’ academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis (F = 1.384, t = -1.176, β = -0.93, P >.001, p-value .615). Testing at alpha level of 0.05, the p-value is not significant, since p-value is greater than 0.05. All in all, the null hypothesis proposed for the study is supported, which implied that proprietor’s characteristics does not significantly predict students' academic performance in Private SSS

in Benin Metropolis. Hence, hypothesis 1 is accepted in the study.

Research Hypothesis 2: Parental support does not significantly predict better academic performance of students' in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

Table 4: Linear regression on parental support does not significantly predict better academic performance of students' in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

Parental Support	Academic Performance				
	B	SEB	Beta(β)	T	P
Constant	14.4	1.747		25.958	.000
Parental Support	-.005	.010	-0.40	-0.503	.615

Note $R^2 = .040$, adjusted $R^2 = .002$, $F = 0.253$, $P > .001$

Table 4 showed that parental support has a significant negative relationship with students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis ($F = 0.253$, $t = -0.503$, $\beta = -0.40$, $P > .001$, p -value = .615). Testing at alpha level of 0.05, the p -value is not significant, since p -value is greater than 0.05. By and large, the null hypothesis proposed for the study is supported, which implied that parental support does not significantly predict students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. Hence, hypothesis 1 is accepted in the study.

Discussions

The first finding revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between proprietors' characteristics and students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. A proprietor who effectively and properly exercises his or her leadership and ownership responsibility will enable his or her school to realize the objective of excellent academic achievement. Virtually every decision in the school are, in large part, determined by the school proprietors, who have an important role to play and undeniable influence on the composition of the school workforce and course content, and are in charge of monitoring the quality and quantity of instruction delivered by classroom teachers as well as services rendered by non-teachers for appropriate academic climate. The failure of the proprietor to carry out these assignments effectively and efficiently may affect the running of the school and attainment of academic goals. For effective execution of these responsibilities, the proprietors are expected to take the lead in planning, controlling, organizing, coordinating and directing both human and non-human resources so as to achieve the set goals of the secondary school among which is resounding students' academic success.

The second findings revealed that there is a significant negative relationship between Parental support and students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. Hence. Parents' positive and cooperative attitude towards the development of secondary schools has been found to have positive effects on students' learning outcomes (Ubangha, 2004). Their involvement includes parents' attending cooperate meetings and functions to discuss their children's (students') academic progress, principals' accessibility to parents, as well as parents who provide their children's with text books. However, formal parent-teacher associations were found to be unrelated to effective schooling. The research conducted by Dietel (2007) at the John Hopkins University reveals that high quality school and family partnerships could lead to substantial achievements for students with disadvantaged background. The Current Education Challenges (2007) stated that family and parental support and involvement are linked with higher levels of students' achievements, better and positive attitude towards learning, lower levels of dropouts or attrition rates, and increased community support for education, regardless of socio-economic background or parents' level of education. Parents should be made to realize their responsibility to provide education for their children, as well as the knowledge that their active interest and co-operation with the school will help the students to benefit from schooling (Macbeth, 1993).

Conclusions

This study sought to investigate the interplay between proprietors' characteristics, parental support and students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. The result obtained from the study indicated that proprietors' characteristics does not significantly predicted better academic performance of students in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. The result obtained from the study also indicated that parental support does not significantly predict better academic performance of students in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis. These results may account for why students' academic performance has become an issue that deeply concerns students, parents, teachers and authorities especially school owners or proprietors. According to the authors, students' academic performance is the result or outcome of learning, prompted by the teaching activities influenced by Proprietors' characteristics and parent's characteristics, which is often evident in the students' exam grades and test scores. this means that students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis is significantly affected by these human factors, which has implications on the students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

3. Proprietors should effectively and properly exercise his or her leadership and ownership responsibility to enable his or her students to achieve the desired students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.
4. Parents should hold high expectations for their children and communicate with them clearly, and also encourage the adolescents to work hard in order achieve the desired students' academic performance in Private SSS in Benin Metropolis.

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