

INFLUENCE OF FAMILY INCOME AND FAMILY STRUCTURE ON ATTRITION TENDENCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate the influence of family income and family structure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two corresponding null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Conceptual and empirical literature was reviewed in line with the objectives of the study. The study made use of the descriptive survey research design. Population of the study comprised of 20,910 SS3 students. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 1,049 respondents. A researcher developed instrument tagged: "Social Environmental Variables and Attrition Tendency Questionnaire" (SEVATQ) was used in collecting data. The instrument was structured in line with the 4-points Likert's Scale. Cronbach alpha statistics was used to ascertain the reliability of the items. A reliability co-efficient of 0.73 was obtained which indicated that the instrument was reliable enough for the study. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Hypothesis 1 was tested using analysis of variance while hypothesis 2 was tested using independent t-test. The two hypotheses were rejected and the alternate accepted. The study found a significant influence of family income and family structure on attrition tendency among secondary school students. Recommendations were therefore made that among other measures, there should be financial support for indigent students, mostly those with the passion for learning.

Keywords: Family Income, A Family Structure, Attrition Tendency Secondary School, Students

Introduction

In most of the developing and underdeveloped parts of the world including Nigeria, educational backwardness continues to be a persistent phenomenon. There can be no denying the fact that education is one of the crucial factors responsible for the overall development of any country. It is a sector that propels other sectors of social development. To assure congenial environment for quality education is the responsibility of the family, the government and the society at large. This is a prerequisite for building the sustained development yearned for. Unfortunately, in Nigeria, a large number of children are out of school without completing their education. Despite claims of increased school enrolment through various schemes such as the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme, 1976, the Universal Basic Education scheme (UBE) 1999, it has fallen short to keep pace with cross completion. Attrition produces a negative culture, for the individual and also widens the gap in the already existing social and economic inequalities.

The socio-development characteristics of the family have direct influence on the child, and his development. The family is responsible for moulding the child and developing his personality. Family is considered universally as indispensable in the growth and development of the human organism. The family still acts as a mediator between children and the social community promoting their socialization which is essential to their cognitive and behavioural development. No matter what its structuring, the family remains, a veritable link between children and the world. Paradoxically,

in the family environment, children can either get protection or be exposed to risks for their development. Reported risk factors are often associated with family structure and family socio-economic status. In the views of Rumberger (2011), a whole lot of family factors such as family socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, family mobility, lack of parental support and educational expectations, negative parental attitudes or even ignorance on their parts, absence of stability in family environments, single parenting, job pursue, personal or social problem are all factors that may contribute to early school leaving by children.

The present study was focused on the variables of family socio-economic status and family structure as factors contributing to attrition. The study acknowledged the fact there are variables beyond family background contributing to early school leaving. However, interest for the research was triggered off by the peculiar situation of the Nigerian environment where families are the major financiers of children's schooling. Given the low-socio-economic status of most homes, there was a need for an investigation of the connection between familial variables and attrition with specific focus on the situation in Borno State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Cases of attrition have been on a steady increase in Borno State for the past ten years. This has been blamed on factors such as insurgency and religion. Hardly has there been research on the economic and familial factors which have equally appeared to be prominent causes of attrition. One can see that quite a percentage of students who start school do not always stay to complete it. Accusing fingers are also easily pointed at school factors such as poor facilities, ineffective administration teaching methods and a general lack of conducive environment. Discussions have hardly focused on other variables.

It was the burden of this study to investigate the influence of family income and family structure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria. Education stakeholders and the public may wish to know how these two familial variables can truncate the life chances of the individual learner.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

Purpose of this study was to determine the influence of familial variables on attrition by secondary school students in Borno State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

- i. influence of family income on attrition tendency among secondary school students.
- ii. family structure on attrition tendency among secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- i. Is there any significant influence of family income on attrition tendency?
- ii. Is there any significant influence of family structure on attrition tendency?

Null Hypotheses

- i. There is no significance influence of family income status on attrition tendency.
- ii. There is no significant influence of family structure on attrition tendency.

Review of Related Literature

Family Income and Attrition

The social status and the inequalities created among the families that students come from, results in them also being unequal as far as their school performance is considered. Families with low economic status have limited access to public and social benefits, including the benefit of education. Consequently, they are excluded both socially and educationally (Ratcliff and Mckernan, 2010; Rumberger, 2011). Many children abandon education as a result of the financial implications inherent which they may not be able to cope. Given the present economic status of sub-Saharan African societies, education became a reserve of only those who are capable of footing the bill. Implied here is the fact that children are likely to drop out of school if their family socio-economic status is low. (Lyche, 2010, Rumberger and Lin, 2008). Studies conducted in the United State, United Kingdom and Australia have equally shown that one of the common reasons for attrition is the youngsters need to support their families financially by leaving school to get a job and earn money (Budgeland, Dilulio and Bakare, 2006).

Research studies in several countries have also indicated that poor families which are also dysfunctional (with domestic violence, child abuse and alcoholism) more often have children who drop out of school (Lamb, Walstab, Teese, Vickers and Rumberger, 2004). Secondary school education involves money and even concealed expenses. Nwankwo (2006) observed that some schools require students to pay for textbooks, levies, school fees, dues and other sundry charges. Poor students who cannot pay for all these are confronted with serious problems. Many students from low socio-economic backgrounds have left school because their fees and other expenses were so high that they could not afford to complete school. Thus, as noted by Ubegu (2004), poverty is conversely related to attrition. This equally means that children from rich homes have a lower risk of attrition than their counterparts from poor families.

Laying credence to the link between family socio-economic status and attrition, Alani (2001) stated that schools have a middle class bias and that social class background can affect student academic performance. As a result, the family income of a student is reflected in school grades, intelligence test scores, course failures and truancy, all of which are indices of attrition. He reasons for the above findings are clear: rich homes are more likely to provide their children learning materials which keeps them at ease in their educational pursuit and reduces the chances of leaving school without completion. With their position in society, high social classes have been observed to ensure their children attend elite schools. These schools charge exorbitant fees but are provided with modern educational facilities that promote high academic achievements and encourage retention. Attrition tendency here becomes very low as the learner gets the desired motivation to excel academically.

Further researches show that students coming from families with high socio-economic status are less likely to leave school early (Rumberger & Lin, 2008; Rumberger, 2011). Poverty is considered to be one of the most important causes of early school leaving (Bruneforth, 2006; Cardoso and Verner, 2007). High parental income makes it possible for a family to provide more resources to support children's education, including access to better quality schools, private tuition and more support for learning within home (Brain and Clarke, 2013). However, Coleman (1988) claimed that it is possible to have children who share the same family socio-economic characteristics and,

nevertheless, manifest differentiated school performance, a fact which is largely explained as being a result of the interaction of some other factors as well.

Family Structure and Attrition

The type of family structure a child grows up affects his decision to relinquish school before completion. Home environment and family provides a network of physical, social and intellectual forces and factors that affects student learning. Various changes in family structure such as divorce, death of spouse, family mobility are all variables that defines change in family structure, a fact that increases dropout rates (Gramier, Stein and Jacobs, 1997). According to Garasky (1995), any changes in the structure of a family place before the age of four have a positive effect on the likelihood of a child successfully completing school; while changes occurring after the aforementioned age are reported to have negatively influenced the dropout rates. Moreover, children who stopped living with both parents at the age of eight and started living with only one of them are more likely to leave school early.

In global literature, the effects of the changes in the structure of a contemporary family are regarded as detrimental to a child emotional and social development. When referring to family structure, the number and the types of a family's members are pinpointed (Rumberger, 2011). Thus, the different family structures include two-parents or nuclear families, single parent families, extended families, polygamous families and foster families (Levin, 2012). In the opinion of White and Kelly (2010), students who stay in school and perform successfully tend to have parents who are informed, concerned and involved in their child's education. Negative parental attitudes about school, low expectations and poor parenting styles contribute to poor performance by students and can trigger attrition. As such, parents who are actively involved and engaged in their child's education contributes to their academic success in all areas.

Furthermore, another important variable of a family's structure is its size. Families that consist of many members seem to invest fewer resources on childrens' education (Hunt, 2008). A possible explanation could be that children from small families are the happy recipients of parental interest and are mostly motivated to complete their studies. On the other hand, children from large families are more likely to be forced to abandon their studies to take up more family responsibilities (Snyder and Dillow, 2011). Other factors related to family structure like single-parenting, non-placement of value on the education of the children and neglect of the girl-child education have one influence or the other on attrition rates. Adding credence to this position is Beckimerger and Russel (2018) who noted that the size of the family often has a part to play in the education of children and the rate of dropout from school. This is in view of the fact that large families are always hard to maintain and in view of the present economic recession only the rich may be able to finance their families both educationally and otherwise. In addition to this, rowdiness of large families does not create a conducive atmosphere for learning while in smaller families, there is always security and tranquility which enhances convenience for learning. The level of stability in the home as per parent's marital status also affects attrition (Pamela, 2005).

In recent decades, the stigma attached to unwed mothers and other single parents have significantly diminished. Single parent families in which one parent is present to care for the child can hardly be viewed as a rarity in Nigeria. The lives of single parents and their children are not inevitably more difficult than the lives of children from stable homes. It will then be inaccurate to postulate that

children from stable homes have a better chance of persevering in school than those from broken homes. Also, it is inaccurate to assume that a two-parent family is always secured and happy. Nevertheless, life in a single parent family can be extremely stressful in both economic and emotional terms. A family headed by a single mother faces especially difficult problems when the mother is a teenager. Consequently, the chances of the child preserving in school becomes very slim (Monique, 2005).

Certain family structures such as broken homes and single parent homes also contribute negatively to the chances of the children completing school. For instance, children born into such homes are bound to take on adult roles that may interfere on their ability to continue school (Nesman, 2007, Olatunji, 2005). Often, family responsibilities such as assisting in house works, providing child care, take priority over school-related activities. These responsibilities often limit children, involvement in school and in turn increase their likelihood for drooping out (Nesman, 2007). In many broken homes, children share the responsibility of supporting and providing for the family (Latunji, 2005). Work not school, is often viewed as a normative experience in such families and frequently, fulfills the cultural, expectation to contribute many disadvantaged students who relinquish school are observed to live in single-parent homes, in households where the mother is, the head, an in homes where the household head is unemployed – all of which are associated with an increased risk for high school dropout (Chugh, 2011).

Methodology

Research Design

The study used the descriptive survey research design in its investigation. The descriptive survey is most appropriate in investigating events that had already occurred with the aim of identifying possible causes and relationships with the variables under investigation. According to Ndem, Udoh and Joseph (2003) the ex-post facto design is suitable when the researcher is seeking for information on a variable already in existence and which cannot be easily manipulated by the researcher. Ndiyo (2005) agreed that the descriptive survey research design is the most suitable design to adopt when gathering information on the effect or influence of an independent variable over a dependent one.

The design was therefore considered suitable for this study since the researcher was not able to manipulate the independent variables constituting social environment which are already in existence. Beyond this, design allows the use of the questionnaire as research instrument for the collection of data through impersonal information supplied by the respondents on the influence of social environmental variables and attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Population of the Study

Population of the study comprised of all the Senior Secondary Three (SS 3) students in Borno State, Nigeria. There are 20,910 SS 3 students in the 74 Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State. (Borno State Teaching Service Board, 2023).

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size of 1,049 SS3 students representing 5% of the population of study were selected for the study. According to Nwana (1981) if a population is in several thousands, a five percent or less sample will do. Multistage sampling technique was used in selecting the sample for the study. At the first stage a proportion of 20% of Local Government Areas was selected from the three Senatorial

District, which gives a total of six Local Government Areas. At the second stage, a proportion of 20% of secondary schools was elected in each of the Local Government Area, which gives a total of eight schools. At the last stage, a proportion of 30% of students which gives a total of 1,049 students. The summary of the selection process is shown in Appendix IV.

Instruments for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a researcher developed instrument tagged: “Social Environmental Variables and Attrition Tendency Questionnaire (SEVATQ)”. The component scale of the instrument measured the influence of social environment exemplified by religious orientation, peer group, insurgency, family income, family structure and learning environment on attrition among Secondary school students.

The instrument was divided into two parts: ‘A’ and ‘B’. Part ‘A’ of the instrument collected the bio data information of the respondents while the part ‘B’ contained the questionnaire items to measure the influence of the variables on attrition in a Four Point rating scale of strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Method of Data Collection

An introduction letter was obtained from the Head of Department, Educational Foundations to the principals of the schools selected for administering the research instruments. Three research assistants who are conversant with the language of communication in the study area were trained to assist in administering the instruments. Items in the instrument were explained to the respondents with the assistant of their respective class teachers. The respondents were then guided to respond to the items and then copies of the questionnaire retrieved. Out of the 1,049 copies of the instruments administered, 1,022 were properly completed and returned. This gives a 97.43% retrieval rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected from the field were coding in a coded sheet before being analysed. The data were then analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Hypotheses 1 and 4 were tested using analysis of variance while hypotheses 2, 3, 5 and 6 were tested using independent t-test. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: In what ways do family income influence attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State?

Table 4.1: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Family Income on Attrition Tendency

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Remark</i>
1	I struggle to raise my school fees sometimes	1022	3.39	.74	High
2	I feel that learning a trade brings more money than schooling.	1022	2.94	.83	High
3	My parents hardly have enough to meet my school needs	1022	3.22	.65	High
4	I go to school hungry often	1022	3.15	.78	High
5	I hardly have money for books and learning materials.	1022	3.37	.73	High

6	I stay away from school some days to help my parents in the farm.	1022	3.47	.70	High
7	I spend most of my time at home raising money than reading.	1022	3.25	.69	High
8	I feel that the cost of education is too high.	1022	3.02	.85	High
9	Schooling does not always make one rich.	1022	3.52	.81	Very High
10	My schooling is taking too much money from my parents.	1022	2.97	.93	High
Grand Mean			3.23	.77	High

Decision rule: 1.00 -1.4 = Low; 1.5-2.4 = Moderate; 2.5-3.4 = High; 3.5-4.0 = Very high

The result in Table 4.1 shows the mean influence of family income on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State. As shown in the table, the grand mean of 3.23 shows that family income has a high influence on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Research Question Two: What are the ways family structure influence attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State?

Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Influence of Family Structure on Attrition Tendency

<i>S/N</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Remark</i>
1	I consider my siblings as too distractive to my reading sometimes.	1022	2.60	.92	High
2	I am always relaxed at home.	1022	2.34	1.03	Moderate
3	I communicate a lot with my parents.	1022	2.95	1.02	High
4	My parents encourage me in my studies.	1022	2.17	.89	Moderate
5	My parents do not bother much about my school activities.	1022	2.27	1.09	Moderate
6	My parents do not really value education	1022	2.34	1.01	Moderate
7	I hardly have time for myself because of household chores.	1022	1.99	.97	Moderate
8	I feel that large family sizes have negative effects on schooling.	1022	1.92	1.08	Moderate
9	Children from broken homes do not do well in school.	1022	2.62	1.06	High
10	Children from small family sizes perform best in school.	1022	2.50	.89	Moderate
Grand Mean			2.37	.99	Moderate

Decision rule: 1.00 -1.4 = Low; 1.5-2.4 = Moderate; 2.5-3.4 = High; 3.5-4.0 = Very high

The result in Table 4.2 shows the mean influence of family structure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State. As shown in the table, the grand mean of 2.37 shows that family structure has a high influence on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Hypothesis 1: Family income does not significantly influence attrition among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria.

Table 4.3: Dependent t-test Analysis of the Influence of Family Income on Attrition Tendency among Students

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-cal.</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Family Income	1022	26.84	3.61	15.42	1021	.000
Attrition Tendency	1022	28.99	3.59			

The result in Table 4.3 shows that the calculated t-value of 15.42 for the influence of family income on attrition tendency among students in Borno State is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of family income on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State is rejected. Hence, there is significant influence of family income on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Hypothesis 2: Family structure does not significantly influence attrition among secondary school students in Borno State.

Table 4.4: Dependent t-test Analysis of the Influence of Family Structure on Attrition Tendency among Students

<i>Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-cal.</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Family Structure	1022	29.83	4.67	8.31	1021	.000
Attrition Tendency	1022	28.99	3.59			

The result in Table 4.4 shows that the calculated t-value of 8.31 for the influence of family structure on attrition tendency among students in Borno State is significant. This is because the p-value of .000 is less than .05 levels of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence of family structure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State is rejected. Hence, there is significant influence of family structure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State.

Discussion of Findings

Family Income and Attrition Tendency among Secondary School Students in Borno State

Findings on the influence of family income on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State shows a significant influence of family income on attrition. It was discovered that children from low income families have the highest chance of dropping out of school than those from average and high income families. This finding supports the position of Huber (2004) who declared poverty as a fundamental forcing agent for children education. This position is also supported by Ubogu (2004) who argued that poverty is conversely related to attrition. This implies that, by reason of this findings children from rich homes have a better chance of completing schools compared with children from poor homes. The reason here is that while parents are struggling to feed, cloth and accommodate children, the money to pay fees and provide learning materials for the children may be lacking. This is typically the case with the North East which has the highest poverty index among the geo-political zones in Nigeria.

Thus, results from tables 4.1 and 4.3 shows a significant influence of family income on attrition tendency. The findings is also in consonance with that of Rumberger and Lin (2008) who consider

poverty as one of the most important cause of early school leaving. This is because of lack of money for schooling. On the other hand, as observed by Ardoso and Verner (2007) high parental income makes it more possible for a family to provide resources to support children education implied here is that children from rich homes stand a better chance of completing school. The finding is also in consonance with that of Rateliffe and Mckernan (2010) who discovered that children from low socio-economic homes have limited access to education and a greater chance of attrition. These findings imply that there is need for support to children schooling in Borno State way of grants or scholarship for indigent students.

Family Structure and Attrition Tendency among Secondary School Students in Borno State.

Findings on the influence of family structure on attrition tendency among secondary school student in Borno State confirm a strong influence. This finding is in consonance with Muhammed (2012) who conducted a study to determine the influence of family structure on the social and emotional behaviour of adolescents the discovered from his research that children from broken homes often get into trouble with school authorities that may lead to their expulsion. This may be due to instability in the home background and poor parental upbringing. The findings also agree with that of Griffin, Botyin, Scheieri and Muler (2000) who reason that broken home tend to have fewer financial and other coping resources and suffer from social isolation than the intact family. This position is also supported by Okunniyi (2004) and Patterson (2000).

The finding is also supported by Whitehead (2008) who see family structure as affecting self-esteem, conformity and personality trait which go a long way to affecting school completion. The finding also gains the support of Lessard, Fortin, Marcotte, Potrin and Royer (2009) who assert that cases of truancy, absenteeism, examination misconduct is to be found more often among children from broken homes. In the same vein, Agnew (2003) submitted that parental distance strengthens the rate of anti-social behavior that constitute school drop-out tendency. These findings suggest that the home and school should collaborate to ensure a stable home environment that will encourage retention of students in school.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, there is a statistically significant influence of family income and family structure on attrition tendency among secondary school students in Borno State, Nigeria. The poverty index in the region is so high that many families struggle to survive on low income. This affects the acquisition of education by children born into such homes. Formal education remains crucial to sustainable human development globally. The study found out that regrettably, despite the functional role of education in virtually all sectors of human life, the tendency towards attrition by most learners threaten the very essence of education. Borno State presently suffers a high rate of underdevelopment occasioned by insecurity, cultural challenges, religious bigotry, unemployment and worst of all, insurgency. These affects the delivery of education negatively and contributes to attrition tendency in the students. Many of the students who leave school never return and this poses a serious setback to development. It is evident and correct to say that if these variables are checked, the rate of attrition by students will be minimised.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- i. Governments both at the federal and state levels should enact legislations that will put a check to inflammatory religious messages and doctrines that corrupt the adherents.
- ii. Government should provide security to educational facilities in the North East. Many schools in the North East do not have adequate and sophisticated security system.
- iii. There should be support for families, mostly poor families and the ones affected by insurgency. There should be scholarship schemes and free education for indigent students who have the passion for education.

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