

Home and School Factors as Determinants of Students' Achievement in Senior Secondary School Economics in Botswana

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the relative and combined contributions of the home and school factors as determinants of students' achievement in Senior Secondary School Economics, and carried in some Secondary Schools in Botswana. Two specially designed questionnaires (The Home Factor Scale (HFS), and School Factor Scale (SFS)) were used to collect data from two hundred students who were randomly sampled which were analyzed with stepwise multiple regression. The finding implied that the achievement of students in Economics could be predicted by the combination of students' home and school factors. It was recommended that teachers should perform their supervisory roles of giving out exercises and marking at the expected time so that the students can get the feedback at the appropriate time while parents should also be favourably disposed to the academic work of their children.

Keywords: *Home Factors, School Factors, Students' Achievement, Economics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Problem

The purpose of education is to make an individual to be functional within his/her family, society, town, state and country. It is in view of this, that Dada (1999), attempted to formulate the aims of education which may be found in what any good father would wish for his son. It is a kind of all-round development (intellectual, physical, spiritual, moral) for the learners.

Education has been an agent of change and an instrument of national development. Adepoju and Akinwumi (2001) observed that the role of education in national development has received considerable attention in developed countries where it is argued that heavy investment in education has a great potential for enhancing rapid economic growth. Education is important in the development and improvement of skills.

Education has been responsible for the upliftment of the human conditions. Alade (2004) observed that the primary concern of education is the elevation of human conditions. Through education, people are enabled to develop their knowledge and skills, adopt new behaviour and be able to survive in the society. In the same vein, Oderinde (2005), opined that all over the world, education is the key to development which clearly demonstrated that education play vital roles in the development of the individual, society and the nation as a whole.

Although, education goes on in all aspects of human endeavour, most societies have set up specific institutions that use variety of means to promote efficient and desirable learning. Dada (1999), opined that usually in these institutions, the major concern of learners and teachers is the acquisition of what is considered to be knowledge. The responsibility of imparting knowledge

revolves around the teacher who plans, organizes and implements the teaching learning process. Nonetheless, one of the issues to be resolved is whether or not the teachers are effectively performing their role in the teaching – learning process and to see the effects of their role in students' academic achievement.

The revised National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004), stated that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers. This has made the subject of teacher effectiveness a perennial one in educational discourse since the quality of education at any level is highly dependent on the quality and dedication of the teachers (Ajiboye, Adu & Amosun, 2005). Both the developed and developing nations have been making huge investments on education. Anderson (2004) observed that teacher salaries still account for 70 to 90% of the education budget in most countries. This is due to the fact that it is the teacher who determines the ambience of the classroom and together with other members of staff, the ambience and expectations of the school. Some teachers plan and execute these elements more effectively than others. But what is it, in particular, makes an effective teacher?

In the teaching-learning process, both the teacher and the learners must be active. The learner learns through some activities while the teacher does all he considers necessary to make learning possible. For any society to be equipped with the basic knowledge and skills that will enable it to better appreciate the nature of economic problems, and how to make rational economic decisions, such a society must depend on the accumulated knowledge of economics, which the citizens possess.

For many years, educators and researchers have debated over which variables influence student achievement. A growing body of evidence suggests that schools can make a great difference in terms of student achievement, and a substantial portion of that difference

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is attributable to teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Sanders and Rivers, 1996). Thus, the impact of school and home factors seem to be additive and cumulative. The studies highlighted above have brought into focus the prominent roles which school and home factors variables can play on student academic achievement in a given subject.

Several studies such as Ibanga (1997) in Accounting, Ifamuyiwa (1998) in Mathematics, Okpala (2001) in Physics, Anuka (2002) in Financial Accounting and Adu et al. (2011) in Economics have tried to identify the causes of poor performance in school subjects and each have come out with its own findings. In spite of all these findings, students' performance has not improved significantly to justify the efforts of previous research studies. This situation, therefore, calls for more research directed at identifying the actual problem associated with students' achievement in Economics.

The teaching of Economics provides a learner with the opportunities to live meaningfully within the changing economic world. The following are the objectives of teaching Economics:

- To equip students with the basic principles of Economics necessary for useful living and higher education;
- To prepare and encourage students to be prudent and effective in management of scarce resources;
- To raise student respect for the dignity of labor and appreciation of economic, cultural and social values of our own society; and
- To enable students acquire knowledge for the practical solution of the economic problems of the society, Nigeria, developing countries and the world at large.

From the highlighted objectives, the question is often asked – why study Economics? To provide an answer, Adu et al. (2009) put forward the identified reasons:

- The study of Economics enables a student to understand the nature of the complexity of the economic activities in which he is only a very small part.
- It enables students to understand and appreciate various government policies where choices have to be made such as probably to spend more money on free education and therefore provide less employment opportunities.
- The study of Economics provides the students with basic skills for analyzing Economic problems thereby preparing them better for positions where economic decisions have to be made.

- The study of Economics helps government to promote growth and development therefore improving the quality of life of the citizens.
- Knowledge of Economics is useful to analyze fascinating patterns of socio-economic behaviour.
- The study of Economics is useful to understand and alter the inequalities in the distribution of income and opportunities.

In view of the above, every society is faced with three fundamental Economic problems: what to produce? How to produce? And for whom to produce? These problems are solved through the study of Economics. Economics has been widely accepted by many countries including Botswana to the extent that many students are now writing examination in it at the end of their Senior Secondary School level.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

There has been a trend of poor achievement in Economics in Secondary Schools. It is therefore necessary to gear research work in Economics Education towards finding solutions to the factors responsible for students' failure in the subject. Hence, the study therefore examined the relative and combined contributions of the determinants (school factors – student-teacher ratio and use of instructional aides; home factors – parental involvement, parental education, etc.) of students' achievement in Senior Secondary School Economics. Furthermore, it sought to find out the variables that could predict senior secondary school students' achievement in Economics.

1.3 Hypotheses

HO₁: The combined contribution of home and school factors in the prediction of students' achievement in Economics is not significant.

HO₂: The relative contribution of home and school factors in the prediction of students' achievement in Economics is not significant.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted an ex-post-facto design approach. The target groups for the study were Senior Secondary School students in Botswana. The samples were drawn from four (4) private schools in Botswana that are offering the subject. Judgmental sampling technique was used to select the school's base on the fact that they offer the subject. From each school, fifty students were selected using the simple random sampling. The student ages ranged from 15 to 20 years. In all, 200 students participated in the study 173 completed questionnaires were returned. These constitute 86.7percent of the original sample size. The instrument has two sections – Section A is basically on the demographic information of the Economics teachers like age, sex, level of education, type of school, etc. Section B

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of the instruments contains items eliciting information from the students on the theme of the study.

2.1 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The validity and reliability of the instrument were determined by trial testing the instrument on the similar set of the sample and the Kurder-Richardson 21 formula was used to obtain the inter-item reliability coefficient of 0.80 and 0.75 respectively. The data was collected within a period of one month. The data resulting from scoring of the instrument and coding were subjected to stepwise multiple regression analyses to test the hypotheses. Data were tested for significance at the 0.05 level.

3. RESULTS

HO₁: The combined contribution of home and school factors in the prediction of students' achievement in Economics is not significant. The multiple regression analysis indicated that there is a significant combined contribution of home and teacher factors in the prediction of students' achievement in Economics as presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: The combined contribution of home and school factors in the prediction of students' achievement in Economics

R = 0.084

R² = 0.007

R²(adjusted) = 0.005

Standard Error of the Estimates = 5.41734

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Regression	364.790	2	121.597	4.143	0.006a
Residual	50830.031	171	29.348		
Total	51194.820	173			

(a) Predictors: (Constant), school factors, home factors.

(b) Dependent Variable: Economics

The results in Table 1 indicated that home and school factors combined to significantly predict the achievement of students in Economics (R = 0.084; R² = 0.007; R² (adjusted) = 0.005; F (3,173) = 4.143; p < 0.05). This implies that 0.5% of the variance in the achievement of students in Economics is significantly predicted by the combination of home and school factors.

The research hypothesis which stated that the combined contribution of home and school factors in the prediction of students' achievement in Economics is not significant was rejected by the findings of this study. The finding implies that the achievement of students in Economics could be predicted by the combination of students' home and school factors.

HO₂: The relative contribution of home and school factors in the prediction of students' achievement in Economics is not significant.

Table 2: Coefficients of home and school factors predicting students' achievement in Economics

	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Beta		
	Std. Error			
(constant)	9.926		8.868	0.000
	1.119			
Home Factors	0.088	0.071	2.865	0.004
	0.031			
School Factors	0.029	0.026	1.009	0.313
	0.028			

(a) Dependent Variable: Comprehension. The results in

Table 2 revealed that home factors are the most and the only potent predictor of achievement of students in Economics (B = 0.088; t = 2.865; p < 0.05). The hypothesis which stated that the relative contribution of home and school factors in the prediction of students' achievement in Economics is not significant was rejected by the findings of this study as home factors alone contributed to students' achievement in Economics. School factors do not constitute powerful factors in students' achievement in Economics.

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The multiple regression analysis indicated that the combined contribution of home and school factors in the prediction of students' achievement in Economics is not significant. This finding corroborates that Baker & Soden (1998) who examined the degree of family enlightenment and its effect on children academic aspiration. It was discovered that the home, which is the first socializing agent, has a considerable effect on the child's later development and academic achievement. Similarly, Maynard & Hawley (1997) also found that parental education has a positive relationship with academic pursuits of their children. He supported his findings by probing into the home environment of the educated as well as the illiterates. He examined six variables, which are likely to prevail in the home. In the educated home, there is likely to be achievement press, good language model, and academic guidance, stimulation to explore various aspects of the larger environment, the intellectual interest and activities in the home. He found that the overall index of home environment had a correlation of +0.8 with the total score of the entire test.

Many scholars believed that there exists a relationship between the home and academic performance of students. Davies (1991) in Odinko (2000) stated that there exists a link between parental attitude to education

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and academic performance of their children. School factors are not powerful factors in students' achievement in English language Comprehension. This is expected because interest in schooling aids students of all ages to control their learning strategies. Interest in schooling seemed to be a motivator that affected the students' attitude, which influenced achievement in English language. This negates the popular slogan by many researchers that it appears that the home and the school are important agencies in the education of the child. Educators like (Oyetunde, 1997; Evans, 2000) believe that the home complements the teaching of the school, and the school stands in "Loco Parentis" while the child remains the focus.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that there is a great level of interaction between the determinants. They have a greater influence on the academic achievement of Economics students. Parental involvement and the level of education are very important in the academic achievement of their children, so parents should enable to acquire some level of educational in order to assist their wards. From the discussion, the factors are inseparable with the academic achievement in Economics. Both the teachers and parents should develop positive attitude to the students' learning.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers should perform their supervisory roles of giving out exercises and marking at the expected times that the students can get the feedback at the appropriate time. There is a need for government to enforce the issue of teacher-student ratio in secondary schools as the small class size enhances learning while large classes' aid roundness. The government should make provision for instructional materials tube used in teaching and learning. Managers of schools must take cognizance of the domineering influence of the teachers in the achievement level of students generally in their academic pursuits. More importantly, parents should develop positive attitudes to their children education as a way to imbue them with the right level of self-confidence that could promote their learning of Economics at school.

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