RESEARCH ARTICLE

IMPACT OF FAMILY BACKGROUND ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND ADJUSTMENT DIFFICULTIES

[1,*]McWinner Yawman and [2]Justice Appiah-Kubi

[1]University of Southeastern Philippines, Tagum Philippines
[2]Dominion University College, Accra Ghana

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This study examined how family background impacts the academic achievement of senior high school students, and how students with different family backgrounds are able to cope with problems they face in school. The study sample consisted of grade ten to twelve students from Baguio City National High School in Benguet, Philippines. Approximately 250 students consisting of 100 boys and 150 girls from five Departments in the School were randomly selected for the study. Data were gathered using questionnaires. The findings showed that family background has no significant effect on students' Academic achievements. On the other hand, it was noticed that boys are able to significantly adjust to problems in school more than their female counterparts with the same or similar family backgrounds. It is therefore suggested that parents pay more attention to their girls in senior high school to help them adapt to their school environments.

INTRODUCTION

There is huge debate about the relative importance of family background versus school factors in producing academic and nonacademic student outcomes, and how their impacts vary across different student groups. Child outcomes are influenced by factors such as people, processes and institutions. Parents, the extended family, peer groups, neighborhood influences, schools and other bodies like churches contribute in determining students' achievement in school Muthoni, 2013), Similarly, Family characteristics such as parenting style, parental educational background, level of involvement, family structure and social status, family economic background, parents self-efficacy and effort and the likes all come into play in determining the output of students (Megan, 2002; Admasu, 2004).Ikechukwu (2009) reports that smoking or non-smoking and drinking habits, emotional, health and psychological status of the mother during prenatal and post natal stages significantly impact the overall personality development of a child. The researcher shares that in a family, mothers take the upper hand role for the development of trust in newborn babies. According the researcher, the trust developed at this age does have considerable positive impacts later in life. Later on, social roles as well as educational development of the child

Corresponding author: **McWinner Yawman,**
University of Southeastern Philippines, Tagum Philippines.

will be shared among the father and more probably the elderly family members. In relation to the impacts of family educational background on children's academic achievement, Dandapani (2001) underlined that, parents with high level of educational qualification are likely to create an environment that is intellectually stimulating for their child in education and social life. This high level of educational qualification could make parental support systematic, proper and timely. This kind of support provision is regarded as "hidden curriculum" by him and this contributes for the betterment of their children's academic achievement. Xia and Kirby, (2009) studied family factors and student outcomes. In this study, the researcher found that family process factors can have significant impacts on both academic and nonacademic outcomes. For example, several family process variables (including doing homework more frequently, having home Internet access, and owning a community library card) had higher returns in terms of student achievement for black children or children from low socio-economic families than for their counterparts. Family process factors as a whole hold some value in explaining nonacademic outcomes. In the 21st century, it is vital that parents contribute to the success of their children's education. Generally, research shows that students with great family backgrounds are more likely to perform better and achieve more than students with poor family backgrounds. For example, Desforges and Abouchaar, (2003) showed in their study that the presence of a father in the household can

significantly increase the chances of increased student achievement. Factors such financial struggles, problems at home, homelessness, bullying, and peer pressure among others make students distance themselves from school (Landis and Reschley, 2013). Student attrition is often the ultimate result of a process of disengagement from school. Usually students fail to complete senior high school, and therefore tend to be jobless. With the effect of parental residential background on academic achievement, there is a considerable body of literature that support this (Aliyu, 2016). Bubelwa (2014) concludes that rural students perform less well than urban students on standardized tests of educational achievement). The existence of the difference in educational achievement between rural and urban students involves the relationships between the values in use of particular inputs and the level of such achievement (Ceci, 2011). On the other hand, social psychologists such as Vygotsky argued that human beings are highly influenced by social life. The smallest of such social groupings, the family, does have paramount impacts in the child's personality development-such as in education.

As has been indicated in PSEA (2007), decisions parents make about diet, entertainment, health care and discipline correlate with different (high or low) outcomes in terms of students' learning.Researchers and leaders in the field of education agree that family background and involvement is vital to student success (Epstein et al., 2009). Parents' desire for their children plays a key role in motivating children to do their best in school (Henderson and Mapp, 2002). Henderson and Mappexplains that ethnic background, race and socioeconomic background have very little bearing on whether parents will get concerned and contribute to their child's education or not. Students' achievement is a timely topic in the world of education today. Research on family structure is mostly based on Bandura's (2002) social cognitive theory because the theory argues that human development is influenced, in part, by environment. Family background is an environment that influences students' development and therefore achievement. In the study of Firestone and Riehl (2005), the researchers indicated that individual student uniqueness has the strongest effects on students' achievement. Individual student uniqueness includes family background and composition. Similarly, family demographics can have a great effect on the achievement of students. A student's family demographics could include a nontraditional family or a traditional family as well as other socioeconomic and psychological factors that affect the family.

Hampden-Thompson (2009) revealed some literacy achievement differences between teenagers from two-parent households and teenagers from single-mother households. The differences were noted in 12 countries, with the greatest occurring in the United States of America.According the researcher, parents' occupational status, parent education and number of books in the home are basis for students' educational outcomes (Buchmann and DiPrete, 2006). A report by Waldfogel, Craigie and Brooks-Gunn (2010) explains the differences in achievement between students specifically from single-mother families and students from traditional families. According to Angel-Castillo and Torres-Herrera (2008), school dropout rates for Hispanic students were almost doubled in students from single-parent families or blended families as compared to students from two-parent families. In Nigeria, a much related finding is published. The study by Uwaifo (2008); Yara and Tunde-Yara, (2010) supportthat differences

do exist in the achievement of students from single-parent families and students from two-parent families. Among adolescents, the study by Bachman et al., (2009) supports the presence of an achievement gap between students from single-mother families and students from traditional families with low-income. On the contrary, Jeynes (2006) described the two contradicting perspectives as relates to family background and school outcomes. The Transition School Perspective maintains that family transitions such as parental divorce, parental remarriage, and parental death create difficult transition situations for children, and this tends to have negative academic and psychological effects on children. In contrast, the Resiliency School Perspective holds the view that children are resilient and family transitions therefore do not produce long-term, significant effects on academic performance or psychological health. In connection with this, Jeynes (2006) had a meta-analysis of 61 quantitative studies to defend the Transition School Perspective. The study suggested an association between family transitions and achievement differences for students from nontraditional families compared to students from traditional families, and explained that the achievement gap widens for students from nontraditional families with each additional family transition beyond the first. In the study of Cavanagh and Huston (2008), the researchers emphasized that children who experience one family transition are at a greater risk of experiencing subsequent transitions and their associated stresses.

A lot of literature supports the existence of an achievement gap between students from different family backgrounds, however, some other studies report otherwise.International research by Chiu and Ho (2006) indicates that even if an achievement gap exists between students from nontraditional families and students from traditional families in the United States, the gap cannot be generalized this not the case for every country. The researchers report the apparent differences in achievement between students from Hong Kong and students from the United States. According to them, the differences could be due to differences in culture, the higher socioeconomic standings of single parents in Hong Kong, the prevalence of extended family networks in Hong Kong, and equal school funding policies for students in Hong Kong. Family background seems to influence school adjustment as well as academic performance. Families in general and parents in particular, have often been deemed to be the most important support system available to the child. The strongest force in shaping a child's personality or behavior is his relationship with his parents.Students who struggle academically in most cases are at higher risk of school avoidance, and ultimately dropping out, than those who are successful. Ideally school is a place that makes students feel competent and successful, which breeds motivation and self-confidence. For the struggling students, however, school is often a place that only serves to reinforce his already low self-esteem.

Theoretical Background: This study was consolidated on the Ecological Systems Theory of Development by (Bronfenbrenner, 1986). This theory is a useful conceptual model for investigating the effects of family backgrounds on students' educational outcomes. According to ecological systems theory, children learn and grow in the context of multiple nested systems: the micro-system, meso-system, exo-system and macro-system.All these systems interact with each other and with the child. Persons, processes and societal institutions at all levels, ranging from the family to schools

children attend, to local school boards and to cultural norms, affect children's development. The micro-system is the most proximal to the child. It includes individuals and institutions likefamilies, school and peers. The micro-system most directly interacts with the child through interpersonal relationships and patterns of activity (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). It is believed that family and home environment have the largest influence on children at earlier ages as they represent the primary socializing influence.

The interactions between individuals and settings of the micro-system make up the children's meso-system.At this level, relationships between multiple settings have an additional influence on the child. The strongest connection in the meso-system is the relationship between the family and the school. The meso-system has an influence on development over and above their individual contributions. The exo-system includes individuals, institutions and public policies that could affect children indirectly through their school and families (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). The macro-system is the most distal system of influence in a child's development and includes overarching patterns of values, beliefs and practices that characterize the other systems of influence and the broader social context. Although the effect is indirect, these larger societal processes permeate all stages and domains of development (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

This study investigated the impacts of family background on students' academic achievement. It also explored the specific effects of family background on students' ability to deal with school problems. Finally the study determined whether gender plays any role in students' their ability to handle problems in school.

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What is the demographic profile of students in terms of a) age, b) gender, c) program
- What family backgrounds influence students' achievement in school?
- Is there a relationship between students' family background and their ability to handle problems they face in school?
- Is there a relationship between the gender of students and their ability to handle and solve the problems they face in school?

Hypothesis

- There is no significant relationship between students' family background and their ability to handle problems they face in school?
- There is no significant relationship between the gender of students and their ability to handle and solve the problems they face in school?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study made use the descriptive survey with two standardized questionnaires to gather the data from respondents. The subjects for this study were randomly selected from five departments in Baguio National High School within the second semester of 2018-2019 academic year. The departments included; Biology, Computer Science, Mathematics, and Business. Grade 12 students were used for this study. The participants consisted of 200 subjects from the four departments. The sample had 100 boys and 100 girls. They were sampled because of reports received on their last semester examination results and other behavioral changes from course supervisors. These students were noted to have exhibited some behavioral problems such as indiscipline, absent from class, anger, cheating in examination, rudeness and poor academic performance within the semester. The two data gathering tools were adapted and modified for this study - Family Environment Scale (FES) and School Adjustment Scale (SAS), developed by Ojiji and Tafida (2010). The FES was made up of 25-items scored on a 1- 5 point Likert scale. The questionnaires covered areas as family democracy, family cohesion, openness, supportive family, parental acceptance and family discipline. Higher scores indicated the presence of effect or the nature of closeness between the participant and their parents.

The SASwas a 40-item questionnaire designed to assess the views of students about their school environment. The scale had five components which included security, social interaction, esteem, anxiety, and competence. With academic achievement, the researcher made use of the students' last semester examination result in their classes as a measure for their academic achievement. One-way Anova (Analysis of Variance) statistics was used to analyze the variables. The design was 3 x 3 factorial designs: The independent variables included the six subscales of family environment scale, i.e. family democracy, family cohesion, openness, supportive family, parental acceptance and family discipline. The level of significance of 5% ($p \leq 0.05$) was used in the study. Stated hypotheses were tested using the One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Independent t-test.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 below provides the distribution of the respondents. The sample consisted of 50% boys and 50% girls. The age distribution was follows: 16-17 – 15%, 18-19 – 60% and 20-21 – 25%. Four different programs in the school were selected for the studies. Their distribution was Biology – 25%, Mathematics – 25%, Computer Science - 25%, and Business – 25%. These programs were the major programs run by the school so the sample could be generalized to represent the entire students in the Senior High School. SzilviaVincze (2013) explains that generalization, which is an act of reasoning, involves drawing broad inferences from particular observations, and is widely acknowledged as a quality standard in quantitative research, but is more controversial in qualitative research. According to the author, generalization is an essential component of the wider scientific process. The researcher emphasized that in an ideal world, to test a hypothesis, one would sample an entire population which is not feasible, so a representative group is chosen to reflect the whole population (SzilviaVincze, 2013). Table 2 gives a summary of the results on the research variables. On school adjustment, it was found that 15.6% of the respondents well adjusted, 81.4% of the respondents moderately adjusted and 3.0% were not yet adjusted. This implies that for the majority of the students (81.4%), coping with school was not a problem irrespective of their family conditions or backgrounds. Because of this, their academic performance was not significantly affected. They excelled in their grades.

Table 1. Profile of Respondents

Profile		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Boys	100	50
	Girls	100	50
Age	16-17	30	15
	18-19	120	60
	20-21	50	25
Program	Biology	50	25
	Mathematics	50	25
	Computer Science	50	25
	Business	50	25

Table 2. Frequency, and percentage on the research variables

Variables	Measurement	N	Percentage %
School Adjustment	Well adjusted	31.0	15.6
	Fairly adjusted	162	81.4
	Not yet-adjusted	6.0	3.0
Family Conditions	Poor	6	3.2
	Good	170	85.0
	Great	24	11.8
Academic performance	Low	71	35.6
	High	129	64.4

Table 3. Mean and standard deviation on the research variables

Variables	Sample (N)	Mean	Standard deviation
School adjustment	200	21.32	5.86
Family environment	200	90.17	13.06
Academic performance	200	2.31	0.11

Table 4. Academic achievement means

Family conditions	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor	2.05	.08
Good	2.13	.11
Great	2.12	.11

T able 5. ANOVA source table of effect on academic performance

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-value	Sig.
Corrected model intercept	.018	2	.008	.676	.512
Family environment	153.45	1	154.469	.676	.000
Error	.018	2	.009	2162.223	.512
Total	2.095	196	.014		
Corrected Total	753.430	200			
	2.213	199			

Table 6. Mean table on school adjustment problems

Family environment	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor	22.70	4.08
Good	20.87	5.88
Great	24.40	5.87

Table 7. ANOVA Source table of the effect on Adjustment

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-ratio	Sig.
Corrected Model	205.018	2	102.514	3.055	0.051
Intercept	18027.130	1	18027.130	537.508	0.000
Family environment	205.018	2	102.514	33.055	0.051
Error	5533.315	196	33.528		
Total	83796.010	200			
Corrected Total	5738.843	199			

Similarly, Yellalah (2012) reports that students' adjustment has no significant effect on academic achievement of both males and females. In relation to family conditions, 11.8% of the students had great family conditions, 85.6% had good conditions and 3.2% had poor family conditions. With academic performance, 35.6% had low score in their exam, while 64.4% had high score in their exam. Study hours outside school offer another possibility to mediate family background with math performance, especially in a society which has a highly developed shadow education system (Baker et al. 2001). Outside school study including shadow education improves student's academic performance.

Based on the results from 11th grade Japanese high school student surveys conducted in 1979 and in 1997, Brown (2006) showed that after-school study hours are affected by socio-economic status. The means and standard deviations for the research variables are provided in table 3 below. It could be seen from the table that School Adjustment Mean and Standard Deviation were 21.32 and 5.86 respectively. The mean and standard deviation for family environment were 90.17 and 13.06 respectively. For academic performance, the mean was 2.31 and the standard deviation was 0.11. It is reported that better educated parents might place high values on child education and be more capable and also more willing to help their children. According to science educationist, educational achievement of school children can be either poor, average or high depending upon many contributing factors such as parenting style, parental educational background and level of involvement, family structure and social status, peer influence, school environment related factors (teachers quality, availability of school educational facilities, quality of the curriculum), family economical background, student's preschool educational experiences, their self-efficacy and effort and the likes (Gutman, Brown, Akerman and Obolenskaya, 2009); Admasu, 2004).

Table 4 displays the mean scores for academic achievement of students by the levels of their family conditions. From the results, students with poor family conditions had mean score of 2.05 with a standard deviation of 0.08. Students with good family conditions had a mean score of 2.13 and a standard deviation of 0.11. For students with great family backgrounds, they had a mean score of 2.12 and a standard deviation of 0.11. It could be seen that the mean differences did not differ significantly. This means that irrespective of family backgrounds, students' ability to excel was the same. To enhance students' performance even more, then partnerships among families and schools are essential. This is because children spend the greater portion of their time throughout their lives outside of school, and families heavily influence this out of school time. Families are among the most important determinants of children's attitudes, learning, behavior, healthy development and overall wellbeing (Epstein, 2009; Henderson and Mapp, 2002). The statistical analysis didn't show any statistical significant effect of family conditions on students' academic achievement. Therefore the hypothesis was rejected. It could be inferred that the family conditions of the students had no influence whatsoever on their ability to excel in school. The result is presented in table 5 below. The results showed that family background has a significant effect on students' ability to adjust in school. Therefore hypothesis 2 was accepted. The results of the study confirmed that family background contributes greatly to the extent to which students are able to cope with difficult situations in school. It becomes important for parents and guardians to ensure that their homes are conducive for students in terms of reducing their stress and worry levels. Table 6 below provides the mean scores of students' adjustment by the different family backgrounds. For students from poor family backgrounds, the means score was 22.70 with a standard deviation of 4.08. On good family background, the mean was 20.87 and the standard deviation was 5.88, and lastly, for students with great family backgrounds, the mean score was 24.40 with a standard deviation of 5.87. Results from table 7 indicate that there was a significant effect of family background on school adjustment of participants. The mean values: weak = 22.80, moderate = 20.97, strong 24.30; F (2, 165) 3.056, p = 0.050.

This means that the family backgrounds of students influenced their level of school adjustment with those from a strong family environment adjusting well more than other family environment type.

Conclusion

Family background has a significant effect on student adjustment in school, especially for female students. On the hand, family background does not have any significant effect on students' academic performance, especially among senior high school students. It is suggested that parents pay more attention to their girl child in senior high school to help them adjust with the challenges they face.

REFERENCES

Admasu B. 2004. Factors significantly influencing students' school performance in Bahir Dar. Unpublished

Aliyu, G.A. 2016. Influence Of Socio-Economic Status On Academic Achievement Of Senior Secondary Students, In Nassarawa Zonal Education Area Of Kano State, Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Educational Research.* Vol. 4, No. 4, 2016 *ISSN 2311-6080*

Angel-Castillo, M.D., & Torres-Herrera, M. 2008. The lack of academic achievement in the new family structure models. UniversitasPsychologica, 7(2), 403-409.

Baker RP, et al. 2001. Interaction between Ran and Mog1 is required for efficient nuclear protein import. *J Biol Chem* 276(44):41255-62

Bandura, A. 2002. Social Cognitive Theory in Cultural Context. Applied Psychology, 51: 269-290. doi:10.1111/1464-0597.00092

Bronfenbrenner, U. 1986. Ecology of the family as a context for human development: Research perspectives. Developmental Psychology, 22(6), 723-742.

Brown, Philip H. 2006. "Parental Education and Investment in Children's Human Capital in

Bubelwa C, D. 2014. Effects Of Broken Marriage On Primary School Pupils' Academic Performance In Ilala Municipality Cornel

Buchmann C, DiPrete TA. 2006. The growing female advantage in college completion: the role of family background and academic achievement. Am. Sociol. Rev. 71(4):515–41

Cavanagh, S. E., & Huston, A. C. 2008. The timing of family instability and children's social development. Journal of Marriage and Family, 70(5), 1258-1269.

Ceci, S.J. 2011. "Academic Achievement - Family Background and Family Structure". Retrieved 27/11/2017 from http://family.jrank.org/pages/11/Academic-Achievement- Family-Background-Family- Structure. html#i xzz1HBdYqSrDChandler, D. (2011).

Dandapani S 2001. A textbook of advanced educational psychology (2nd edition).India: Delhi: Annmol publications Pvt. Ltd.

Desforges, C., &Abouchaar, A. 2003. The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: A Literature Review. London: Department of Education and Skills

Epstein, J.L. 2009. In School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action (3rd ed.). USA: Corwin Press.

FIRESTONE, W. A., & RIEHL, C. 2005. *A new agenda for research in educational leadership*. New York, Teachers College Press.

Gutman, L.M., Brown, J., Akerman, R., & Obolenskaya, P. 2009. Well-being from childhood to adolescence: risk and protective factors. London: DCSF.

Hampden-Thompson, G. 2009. Single parents. In R. A. Shweder (Ed.), The Child: An encyclopaedic companion University of Chicago Press.

Henderson, A. T., Mapp, K. L. 2002. *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family and community connections on student achievement* (Research Synthesis). Austin, TX: National Center for Family &Community Connections with Schools.

Ikechukwu, A. 2009. *Child Abuse and Neglect- A Book of Reading.* 170-171. Onitsha: Gold Publishers.

Janet, M. R. 2004. Essentials of Research Methods: A Guide to social science Research. Blackwell Publishing

Jeynes, W. H. 2014. School Choice and the Achievement Gap. *Education and Urban Society*, *46*(2), 163–180. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124512447101

Landis, R. N., &Reschly, A. L. 2013. Re-examining gifted underachievement and dropout through the lens of student engagement. Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 36(2), 220-249. DOI: 10.1177/0162353213480864

Megan DS 2002. The effects of family, social and background factors on children's educational attainment. http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/econ_honproj/8

Ming Ming Chiu & Esther Sui Chu Ho (2006) Family Effects on Student Achievement in Hong Kong, Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 26:1, 21-35, DOI: 10.1080/02188790600607846

Muthoni. L.K. 2013. Relationship Between Family Background And Academic Performance Of Secondary Schools Students: A Case Of Siakago Division, Mbeere North District, Kenya

O. Uwaifo, V. 2008. The Effects of Family Structure and Parenthood on the Academic Performance of Nigerian University Students. Stud Home Comm Sci. 2. 121-124. 10.1080/09737189.2008.11885262.

Ojiji. O. O., &Tafida. A. M. 2010. Construction and evaluation of questionnaire. Family Environment Scale (FES) and School Adjustment Scale (SAS). Unpublished.

Pennsylvania Department of Education. 2007. "Special Education Data Report School Year 2005-2006." Retrieved at: http://penndata.hbg.psu.edu/ BSEReports/ SD_Reports/2005_2006/PDF_Documen ts/Speced_Data_Report_State_Final.pdf

Rural China." *Economic Development and Cultural Change* 54(4):759–89

Vincze, S. 2013. Research Methodology. Retrieved from file:///D:/2011_0009_Vincze_Szilvia-Research_Methodology.pdf

Waldfogel, J., Craigie, T., Brooks-Gunn, J. 2010. Fragile families and child wellbeing. The Future of Children, 20(2), 87-112. doi: 10.1353/foc.2010.0002

Xia, Nailing and Sheila Nataraj Kirby, Retaining Students in Grade: A Literature Review of the Effects of Retention on Students' Academic and Nonacademic Outcomes. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2009. https://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR678.html

Yara, P. O. & B. A. Tunde-Yara 2010. Broken homes and academic performance of adolescents in secondary schools in Ibadan Nigeria.*The Journal of International Social Research.*3(12):469-487

Yellaiah 2012. A Study of Adjustment on Academic Achievement on Higher School Students, *International Journal of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Research,* 1(5),84-94.

Yellalah 2012. A Study of Adjustment on Academic Achievement of High School Students. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Interdisciplinary Research*. Vol.1 No.5, May 2012, ISSN 2277 3630.

****