
**FAMILY STRUCTURE, PARENTAL LEVEL OF EDUCATION
AND STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE OF CHILD'S RIGHTS
CONCEPTS IN CIVIC EDUCATION IN OWO LOCAL
GOVERNMENT, ONDO STATE**

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of family structure and parental level of education on students' knowledge of child rights among junior secondary school students in Owo Local Government, Ondo State. The study sample comprised 389 junior secondary school students randomly selected from 10 public secondary schools. The study employed an ex-post facto type of survey research design. The instrument use for the data collection was Questionnaire on Family Structure and Parental Level of Education on Students Knowledge of Child Rights (QFSPLESKCR) with reliability co-efficient of 0.74 USING Cronbach Alpha. Two hypotheses were raised to guild the study. It was discovered that there is no significant difference in the knowledge of child rights among students whose parents are separated and those whose parents are not separated ($t_{cal}=.467$) and that parental level of education plays insignificant role in students' knowledge of child rights ($t_{cal}=2.377$). This study therefore recommends that there is need to keep enlightening the parents on importance of home structure on life of children. National Women

Commission through Ministry of Women Affairs should mount family support programmes that will promote family life, and enhance parental practices.

Keywords: *Family structure, Parental level of education, Child rights, Civic education.*

Introduction

Family background forms the foundation of a child's development. In this regard, family structure plays a vital role in a child's educational progress and ability to integrate socially. A society striving for economic growth, technological advancement, and cultural development cannot reach its goals without tapping into the full potential of its people. The educational level of parents is another key factor in shaping their children's academic success. In families where both parents have university degrees, children are often more inspired and encouraged to pursue higher learning. Research shows a positive link between the educational levels of parents and their children's academic performance (Onyedikachin & Ezekiel-Hart, 2021).

Education plays a central role in building both nations and individuals. It significantly influences a society's growth and progress. The quality of education a student receives depends not only on schools and teachers but also on the learning environment at home. A parent's educational background greatly impacts a child's academic performance. Educated parents understand the value of education and are more likely to encourage their children to study. Their children, in turn, often draw motivation from their parents' achievements and strive for academic excellence. Compared to those whose parents have lower levels of education, children of highly educated parents tend to be more determined, confident, and resourceful.

Ganzach (2010) explained that both parents' educational levels contribute equally to setting expectations for their children, though this balance doesn't necessarily translate into actual academic success. The child's cognitive ability also plays a moderating role, especially in relation to the mother's education, but less so with the father's.

Parental education is often a stronger predictor of children's

aspirations than family income (Davis-Kean, 2005). The study also shows that when parents lack formal education, they may struggle to create a positive and supportive learning environment for their children. Santhiyappan (2019) confirmed a strong correlation between parents' education and students' academic performance, while Muhamad (2015) argued that parents with higher qualifications tend to influence their children's academic involvement and achievement more significantly. However, a parent's own academic success doesn't always directly translate into better school performance for their children.

Family background also shapes children's ambitions and success in life. Some researchers believe that psychosocial factors—like family structure, income, and education—have a greater impact on academic performance in secondary schools. When parents separate, children often face various challenges. They may develop behavioral issues, experience lower emotional well-being, and perform poorly in school compared to peers from stable two-parent homes (Grätz & Härkönen, 2024). Still, the effects of parental separation vary among children. Some experience negative impacts, while others may be unaffected or even benefit from the change (Amato & Anthony, 2014).

Grätz and Härkönen (2024), in their research on the educational impact of parental separation, found that for many children, the experience has no noticeable effect—positive or negative. Children who did go through parental separation had, on average, slightly lower Grade Point Averages than those whose parents stayed together. They further suggested that children from “good enough” homes where parents eventually separated often still do reasonably well in school. This aligns with earlier studies indicating that separation tends to have more negative consequences when it occurs in families that were previously functioning relatively well. According to Boudu and Anarfi (2015), children living with both parents generally perform better academically than those raised by a single parent. They also point out that children from single-parent homes are more likely to grow up in disadvantaged neighborhoods and associate with peers who have less positive views on social and personal development.

Ogunyemi (2015) discovered that there was no significant difference in academic achievement between students from educated and uneducated families. However, students from wealthier backgrounds did better than those from poorer ones. Also, students whose parents lived together outperformed those whose parents were separated. In contrast, Amuda and Domiya (2016) believed that the level of parental education was not a strong predictor of students' academic involvement or performance.

A child has been defined in various ways by scholars and organizations, often based on age groupings. Both the United Nations and the Nigerian government define a child as anyone between the ages of 0 and 18 (Babatuyi et al., 2022). Child rights focus on the survival, development, and participation of children. It is important to note that these rights are not derived from the adult constitution but from other laws designed to protect children physically, mentally, and emotionally.

At the dawn of the 21st century, many United Nations member countries began creating and adopting child rights laws to protect their young citizens. Nigeria joined this effort in 2003 by establishing a legal framework known as the Child Rights Act (CRA, 2003). Despite the adoption of this law, challenges such as child labor, early marriage, street hawking, and female genital mutilation remain widespread issues. While many researchers have studied barriers to implementing child rights and students' knowledge of them, little to no research has explored how family structure or parents' educational background influence child rights in Nigeria. It is against this background that this study examines the influence of family structure and parental level of education on students' knowledge of child rights in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State. The specific objectives are to:

- i. assess the difference between the knowledge of child rights among students whose parents are separated and those whose parents are not separated; and
- ii. determine the difference between the knowledge of students on child's right based on those whose parents are educated and those whose parents are not educated.

Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of child rights among students whose parents are separated and those whose parents are not separated.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of students on child's right based on those whose parents are educated and those whose parents are not educated

Methods

The study employed ex-post facto type of survey research design. Its data were collected through the use of questionnaire and achievement test on child rights. This questionnaire was a self-developed questionnaire this instrument has two sections A and B. Questionnaire on Family Structure and Parental Level of Education on Students Knowledge of Child Rights (QFSPLESKCR) with reliability coefficient of 0.74. Section A elicits responses on personal information such as sex, class, age, family background, religion. Section B has forty-five (45) multiple choice questions on child rights, and was rated as 1 mark for each correct item.

The population comprises of all public secondary schools in Owo Local Government. A total of 10 public secondary schools were selected and 389 students were randomly selected for the study. The retrieved instruments were subjected to inferential statistics for the analysis. The hypotheses were tested by the use of t.test status 0.05 level of significance was used to reject or accept the hypotheses.

Results

Ho1: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of child rights among students whose parents are separated and those whose parents are not separated.

Table 1: t-test table of knowledge of child rights among students whose parents are separated and those whose parents are not separated

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Diff.	t _{cal}	Sig
SKCRT Separated	321	17.75	5.455	.342	.467	.641
Non-Separated						

The result in table 1 shows that ($t_{cal}.467$) was not significant at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is retained. This means that there is no significant difference in the knowledge of child rights among students whose parents are separated and those whose parents are not separated

Ho2: There is no significant difference in the knowledge of students on child's right based on those whose parents are educated and those whose parents are not educated

Table 2: t-test table of knowledge of students on child's right based on those whose parents are educated and those whose parents are not educated

Parental Education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Diff	t _{cal}	F	Sig
SKCRT Educated	288	18.4444	8.17686	386	2.377	2.236	.136
Not Educated	100	16.3800	4.94777				

Table 2 shows that there is no significant different in the knowledge of child rights among students of educated parents and those from Non-educated parents ($t_{cal}= 2.377$). This implies that parental level of education plays insignificant role in students' knowledge of child rights.

Discussions

The study reveals that the parental level of education plays insignificant role on students' knowledge of child rights. This finding corroborates the finding of Ogunyemi (2015), who found in his study that parental level of education plays an insignificant role in students'

academic achievement. It also supports the reports of Ogunsola and Adewale (2012) who noted that parental level of education has no significant influence on students' academic achievements. This shows that uneducated parents are also adequately motivated and enlightened on the need to protect their children's rights and to support their education. However, this finding contradicts that of Mario (2006) who posits that non-educated parents mostly have I do not care or negative attitudes towards their children's right and education.

Moreover, the study also shows that there is no significant difference in the knowledge of child rights among students whose parents are separated and those whose parent are not separated. This contradicts the findings of Ogunyemi (2015), Olasode (2015) and Uwaifo (2008) noted that there is significant difference between the performance of students from single parent families and those from two parent families. However, the finding was in line with that of Ushie, Emeka, Ononga and Owolabi (2012) who found that academic performance of students from non-separated family and that of single parent does not vary. Also, Ajila and Olutola (2007) affirmed that there are some children in single parent family structure who still perform academically better than children from two parents' family structure.

Conclusion

The study was on Family Structure and Parental level of education on students' knowledge of child rights, it was discovered that both variables did not have an effect on students' knowledge, this study thereby concludes that school location, and some environmental factors or students readiness to learn new things should be focused on when trying to look for the factors that could predict students' knowledge of child rights in civic education.

Recommendations

The study recommends that there is need to keep enlightening the parents on importance of home structure on life of children, National Women Commission through Ministry of Women Affairs should mount family support programmes that will promote family life, and enhance parental practices, Guardians of students should put additional time and check out their kids' schooling, Guardians should also give an appropriate climate to learning at home.

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