

Impact of Deprivations in Childhood on the Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Ghetto Areas in Lagos, Nigeria

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Pervading the Nigerian polity is the pauperization of the populace. The poverty problem manifests in highly unequal income distribution and differential access to basic necessities of life which have telling effects in ghetto neighborhoods where the signs of poverty are highly visible in all facets of life. This study sought to find the impact of deprivations in childhood on the academic performance of secondary school students in ghetto areas in Lagos, Nigeria. Four hypotheses were postulated for the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 250 students from 42 ghetto secondary schools. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item questionnaire, "DFYLCQ" (Deprivations in Formative Years and Life Chances Questionnaire). The test and retest scores of the sample were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the reliability of 0.85 was obtained. Findings show that there is a significant difference between the extent of deprivation experienced in the formative years between ghetto public secondary school students and private secondary school students and there is a significant difference between the extent of deprivations experienced in the formative years when examined among secondary school students whose fathers are of different educational status.

Keywords: deprivations, life chances, ghetto areas

Background to the Study

Nigeria today is characterized by: infringement of citizens rights; restrictions on freedom of speech, press, assembly, religion, and movement; official corruption and impunity; and violence, regional and religious violence. Ige (2003) stated that Nigeria has been classified as one of the countries at the critical level of poverty, the living conditions are not different from all other poverty-stricken countries with unemployment, hunger, and deprivation, hence poverty has become constant companions of most Nigerians.

Between 1985 and 2004, inequality in Nigeria worsened from 0.43 to 0.49, placing the country among those with the highest inequality levels in the world. Many studies have shown that despite its vast resources, Nigeria ranks among the most unequal countries in the world. The poverty problem in the country is partly a feature of high inequality which manifests in highly unequal income distribution and differential access to basic infrastructure, education, training, and job opportunities. (UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) HDR (Human Development Report), 2008; 2009)

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Schaefer (2005) is of the opinion that life chances are positively correlated with one's social situation. Life chances are related to individual's well-being and cover a range of opportunity that people can experience as they become adults in life. The opportunities mean the extent to which an individual have access to important societal resources, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care. Social class affects life chances of individual in a given society. In modern western society, people strive to achieve or obtain the things that are labeled desirable by their culture. The healthier one's economic situation, the higher the status, and the greater one's power, the better the life chances. Ajere (2009) and Azikwe (2008) stated that the family is the basis for transferring power, property, and privilege from one generation to the next. The social class of parents significantly influences children's socialization experience and degree of protection they receive. Kornblum and Smith (1994; as cited Jargowsky, 1991) commented that, ghetto neighborhood consists of predominantly minority, they tend to have threatening appearances, marked by dilapidated housing, vacant units with broken or boarded-up windows, abandoned and burned out cars, and men "hanging out" on street corners.

Haralambos and Holborn (2004) were of the opinion that deprived area or neighborhood experienced problems, such as high crime rate, poor services, and poor health, frustrated at being deprived of basic life chances, such as decent homes, environment, and schools, all which resulted in loss of hopes for them and especially their children

Poverty in Nigeria: Harbinger of Deprivations in the Formative Years

Poverty refers to the conditions of not having the means to afford basic human needs, such as clean water, nutrition, healthcare, clothing, and shelter. It also means the condition of having very few resources compared to others within a society or country. Atolagbe (2001) opined that poverty refers to the situation when the resources of an individual are not enough to cater for his/her basic necessities of life. The issue of poverty and deprivations in Nigeria cannot be over-flogged. Though poverty is a global phenomenon, Nigeria has been classified as one of the countries at the critical level of poverty. The HDR (2010) revealed that Nigeria is one of the poorest among poor countries of the world. The truth about Nigerian poverty situation is that more than 40% of Nigerians live in extreme poverty spending less than N320 per capital, the poor are not just the rich with less money, but are the poorest of the poor. Households are not only poor but suffer from vast inequality in incomes, assets (including education and health status). For many Nigerians, the quality of life has declined rather than improved since independence. The average-salaried worker cannot earn enough to support a family, because of inflation and rises in food prices and transportation costs.

The national minimum wage adopted by the federal government but rejected by most states, falls far short of what is needed to cover housing, food, education, healthcare, and transportation, rural dwellers live in cement or mud houses with thin or thatched roofs and have no running water for the most part. Water and electricity services in the cities are erratic. There is, therefore, much despair throughout Nigeria (Akande, 2009). Although, there is no known measure to show the depth and magnitude of poverty in Nigeria, the signs of poverty are, however, highly visible in all facets of life whether materials or non-material. Many Nigerians cannot even meet the basic necessities of life, while many people continue to fall below poverty level.

Influence of Ghetto Environment on Students' Life Chances

In the words of Gordon (2000), Slum-dwellers who make a third of the world's urban population, live in poverty no better, if not worse than rural people who are the traditional focus of poverty in the developing

world. For children with low resources and poor environment, the risk factors are similar excuses, such as juvenile delinquency rates, higher levels of teenage pregnancy. Research has found that there is a high risk of educational underachievement for children who are from low-income housing circumstances. These children are at a higher risk than other children for retention in their grade, and even not completing their high school.

According to Gidden (2006), individuals are able to secure housing on the basis of their existing projected resources. He explained that neighborhoods vary greatly in terms of safety, environmental conditions and availability of services and public facilities. Disadvantaged individuals and people in low socio-economic class are the ones mostly found residing in ghetto environment. In this deprived communities, high unemployment and menial jobs opportunities abound and this places strong strains on family life. Crime and juvenile delinquencies are prevalent qualities of life in the ghetto.

Research Questions

Research questions are as follows:

- (1) Do students in ghetto secondary schools suffer more deprivations than their counterparts in private secondary schools in their formative years?
- (2) Could the extent of deprivations suffered by students in their formative years be strongly linked with the father's educational status?
- (3) Is there significant relationship between the mothers educational status and the extent of deprivations experienced by senior secondary school students in the formative years?
- (4) Could the number of children in the family determine the extent of deprivations in the formative years?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses shall be tested in this study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the extent of deprivations experienced in the formative years between students in ghetto public secondary schools and students in ghetto private secondary schools;
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the extent of deprivation experienced in the formative years based on the father's educational status among the public and private ghetto secondary school students;
- Ho₃: There is no significant difference between the extents of deprivations experienced in the formative years when examined among secondary school students whose mothers are of different educational status;
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between the extent of deprivation experienced in the formative years and none of the children in the family of the ghetto secondary school students.

Research Methodology

The research is a survey research. The choice of this design is in conformity with the submission of Akuezuilo and Agu (2003), which a survey research is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a people or items considered to be representative of the entire group. The survey research is aimed at establishing the correlation between deprivations in formative years on an individual's life chances with a particular reference to ghetto areas in Lagos State, Nigeria. The deprivation in formative years shall be taken as the independent variable while its impact on life chances shall be the dependent variables. According to the data collected from the local education district, the population consisted of 128,000 students in 42 ghetto schools in Lagos State. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 250

students from 42 ghetto secondary schools. This selection made adequate provision for fair and equal representation of male and female students. The instrument for data collection was a 20-item questionnaire, titled, "DFYLCQ" (Deprivations in Formative Years and Life Chances Questionnaire). The questionnaire was given face and content validity by an expert in tests and measurement. The test and retest scores of the sample were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and the reliability of 0.85 was obtained.

Results

Table 1 shows that 79.8% of students in ghetto secondary schools attested to the fact that they were not assisted by their parents in learning at home when they were young while 20.2% disagreed. For those in private secondary schools, 11.5% agreed that they were not assisted while 88.5% said they were assisted by their parents in learning at home when they were young.

Table 1

Percentile Analysis of Subjects' Responses

S/N	Item	Ghetto secondary schools-public				Ghetto secondary schools-private				Remark
		Positive		Negative		Positive		Negative		
		FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%	FREQ	%	
1	My parents did not assist me in lesson at home when I was young.	75	79.8	19	20.2	11	11.5	85	88.5	
2	My parents never bought many of the books I needed at school.	76	79.2	20	20.8	9	9.5	86	90.5	
3	My school uniform always got torn or got old before it was replaced.	79	79.8	20	20.2	12	12.4	85	87.6	
4	My parents never came to my school to see my teachers to know how I was doing in school.	3	77.7	21	22.3	11	11.5	85	88.5	
5	I was sent out of school often times because my parent could not pay my schools fees.	82	82.0	18	18.0	10	10.5	85	89.5	
6	I could not go to private nursery and primary school because my parents could not afford it.	81	81.8	18	18.2	11	11.0	89	89.0	
7	My parents could not give me all I needed while I was young, because we are many in the family.	79	80.6	19	19.4	11	11.0	89	89.0	
8	I always feel that my parents were not taking good care of me.	76	79.2	20	20.8	11	11.5	85	88.5	
9	I was not allowed to express my feelings as a child, I was always being shouted down.	76	80.0	19	20.0	11	11.5	85	88.5	
10	My parents rarely took me to the hospital for treatment whenever I feel sick in my early years.	75	79.8	19	20.2	11	11.5	85	88.5	
11	I grew up in a crowded neighborhood	90	92.8	7	7.2	11	11.5	85	88.5	
12	I used daily hawk goods to assist my parents.	89	89.0	11	11.0	11	11.5	85	88.5	
13	I always had my breakfast before I go to school.	11	11.5	85	88.5	73	79.3	19	20.7	
14	Fish, egg, meat, and milk were always generously included in my meal.	11	11.5	85	88.5	79	80.6	19	19.4	
15	I used to beg my schoolmates and friends to give me food to eat because I was not well fed by my parents.	10	10.5	85	89.5	14	14.4	83	85.6	

This shows that most parents of students in ghetto public secondary schools never assisted their children in home lesson while the parents of students in private secondary schools were always assisting their children in home lesson/learning when they were young. Perhaps, parents of students in public secondary schools will have to work harder for longer hours that by the time they got home, they might have been too tired to render such assistances knowing fully that the next day would come too soon and the routine of hard labor would commence again. And this will definitely make an impact on the academic performance of their children which may in turn impact on the life chances of their children.

In addition, majority (79.2%) in the ghetto public secondary schools agreed that their parents never bought many of the books they needed when they were young while 20.8% disagreed. The implication of this is that the largest part of the ghetto senior secondary school students were not provided with many of the books they needed, while the largest part of the private school students had many of the books they needed and this will enhance their academic achievement compared to their counterparts in the ghetto secondary schools.

Seventy-nine point eight percent of the ghetto secondary school students ascertained that their uniform always got torn before it was replaced, 20.2% disagreed. While only 12.4% of the private school students gave positive answers while 87.6% disagreed. This revealed that the ghetto secondary schools students suffered material deprivation when they were young and this can inhibit good academic performance.

From the findings, 77.7% confirmed that their parents never came to their school to see their teachers to ascertain how they were doing in school; The implications is that majority of the ghetto parents never went to their children's schools to see how they were doing while larger percentage of the parents of the private secondary school students visited their children's school to see how they were faring.

Also, the socio-economic status of parents determines how punctual students will be at school. The majority, 81.8% of the students from the ghettos secondary school ascertained that they could not go to private nursery and primary school because their parents could not afford it. Few respondents 18.2% gave negative answer compared to the responses of the private secondary school students where 11.0% agreed and 89.0% disagreed. This is in line with the submission of Falodun (2003) who writes that the children from high socio-economic status are privileged to attend school earlier than their age group in less socio-economic status. They type of provisions and assistance, the former, who will give to their children are adequate to help their children to edge out their age groups or classmates who belong to the low socio-economic status and this is the beginning of class formation within the modern society. Bernstein argued that working-class family life fosters the development of restricted codes. In the working-class family, the positions of its members are clear-cut and distinct. Father can simply say "shut up" to his children because his position of authority is unambiguous.

The larger percent of the respondents in the ghetto secondary schools, 79.8% admitted that they were rarely taken to the hospital by their parents whenever they fell sick in their early years while 20.2% disagreed with the assertions. Majority of the students in private secondary schools 88.5% objected to this claim. This corroborates the writings of Goode (1999), Mills (2002) and Best (2005) that the affluent avail themselves of improved health services while such advances by-pass poor people. They may have jobs that do not offer health insurance and may work part-time and not be eligible for employee health benefits or may simply be unable to afford the premiums. Ninety-two point eight percent of the ghettos students claimed that they grew up in crowded neighborhood while a very small percentage 7.2% gave negative answer whereas only 11.5% of the private secondary school students admitted that they grew up in crowded neighborhood and majority of them disagreed with the claim. This implies that most of the students in the ghettos public secondary schools grew up

in crowded environment while very few of the private secondary schools grew up in crowded environment while very few of the private secondary schools lived in such neighborhood. Very little number of students in the ghetto public secondary schools 11.5% agreed to the claim that they used to have their breakfast before going to the school while the majority 88.5% disagreed. Whereas the larger number of students in the private secondary schools 79.3% claimed that they used to have their breakfast before going to the school and 20.7% which is a very small percentage disagreed. This implies that most students in the ghetto public secondary schools had actually suffered material and physical deprivations in their formative years compared to their counterparts in the private secondary schools. This will remarkably bring about inequality in the ability and the academic achievement of the students.

Eleven point five percent of the respondents in the ghetto public secondary schools ascertained that fish, egg, meat, and milk were always generously included in their meals while the majority 88.5% disagreed with the claim. Meanwhile, majority of the respondents 80.6% in the private secondary schools acknowledged the inclusion of these food items in their meals and 19.4% reacted negatively.

This shows that majority of ghetto students are deprived of balanced and nourished meals compared to their counterparts in the private secondary schools.

Kaiser and Delaney (1996) submitted that poor children are much more likely to suffer from hunger, fatigue, irritability, headaches, ear infections, and colds. These illnesses could potentially restrict a child or student's focus and concentration.

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the extent of deprivations experienced in the formative years between students in ghetto public secondary schools and students in private secondary schools.

Table 2

Group Statistics Independent t-Test

Item	Type of school	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i> -value
Deprivation in formative years	Public	102	139.3500	13.0836	40.261	198	0.001
	Private	100	57.1300	15.6803			

Table 2 shows that there is a significant difference between the extent of deprivation, experienced in the formative years between ghetto public secondary school students and private secondary school students (*P*-value < 0.05). Null hypothesis may be rejected. The students in the ghetto public secondary schools (mean = 139.3500) suffered deprivations in the formative years more than their counterparts in the private secondary school with the (mean = 57.1300). This reveals that the social economic status of parents determines the level of deprivations, educational opportunities, and achievement all of which have great influence on one's life chances.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the extent of deprivation experienced in the formative years based on the father's educational status among the ghettos secondary school students and private secondary schools (see Tables 3 and 4).

Table 3

ANOVA Presentation of Deprivations in the Formative Years

	Sum of squares	<i>df</i>	Mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i> -value
Between groups	85,236.060	4	21,309.015	14.269	0.001
Within group	289,712.3	194	1,493.362		
Total	374,948.4	198			

Table 4

Dependent Variable: Deprivations in the Formative Years LSD

(i)Father's education qualification	(j)Father's education qualification	Mean difference (i-j)	P-value
No formal education	Adult education	0.7917	0.970
	Primary education	3.8986	0.826
	Secondary education	13.3716	0.420
	Tertiary education	47.4389	0.004

There is a significant difference between the extent of deprivations experienced in the formative years when examined among secondary school students whose fathers are of different educational status (P -value < 0.05). Null hypothesis may be rejected from the follow-up test (LSD (least significant difference)). It is revealed that the higher the educational status of the students' father, the lower the deprivations suffered by the students in the formative years. The extent of deprivations experienced in the formative years by the students with respect of their father's educational status is the descending order as follows: No formal education > Adult education > Primary education > Secondary education > Tertiary education (see Table 4).

Ho3: There is no significant difference between the extents of deprivations experienced in the formative years when examined among secondary school students whose mothers are of different educational status (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5

ANOVA Presentation of Deprivations in the Formative Years

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	P-value
Between Groups	14,6421.1	4	36,605.279		
Within groups	23,2873.4	195	1,194.222	30.652	0.005
Total	37,9294.5	199			

Table 6

Multiple Comparisons of Dependent Variable: Deprivations in the Formative Years

(i)Father's education qualification	(j)Father's education qualification	Mean difference (i-j)	P-value
No formal education	Adult education	0.3187	0.880
	Primary education	1.8826	0.978
	Secondary education	10.0631	0.342
	Tertiary education	59.3739	0.000

There is significant difference between the extents of deprivations experience in the formative years when examined among secondary school students whose mothers are of different educational status (P -value < 0.05). Null hypothesis may be rejected for the follow-up test (LSD), it is revealed that the higher the educational status of the students' mothers, the lower the deprivations suffered by the students in the formative years. The extent of deprivations experienced in the formative years by the students with respect of their mother's educational status is the descending order as follows: No formal education > Adult education > Primary education > Secondary education > Tertiary education (see Table 6).

There is no significant relationship between the extent of deprivation experienced in the formative years and the number of children in the family of the secondary school students.

Table 7 shows that there is a significant relationship between the extents of deprivation

experienced/suffered in the formative years and the number of children in the family of senior secondary school students (P -value < 0.05). Null hypothesis may be rejected. The relationship is positive ($r = 0.357$). This implies that students whose families have greater number of children experienced greater extents of deprivations in the formative years.

Table 7

Correlations

		No. of children
Deprivations in the formative years	Pearson correlation	0.357
	P -value	0.000
	N	0.200

Conclusion

Nigeria has endemic poverty statistics. Among the committee of nations, Nigeria has been described as poor. Even on the continent of Africa, using selected world development indicators, Nigeria is poorly ranked. As the research findings suggest, the eradication of poverty and inequality has been a continuing concern in Nigeria's governance process and thinking, leading to the implementation of several policies, projects, and programs. These interventions, notwithstanding, the poverty situation in Nigeria is still galloping. As observed, the impacts of these programs and actions have been impaired. Programs designed have obviously failed to halt the problem. These programs have been substantially impaired by corruption, weak administration, and poor inter-sectoral governance systems. As a corrective measure, therefore, the paper recommends that the Nigerian State be reformed to enhance its capacity in the area of poverty alleviation, conducive climate be created for the development of each sector, and inter-sectoral governance system be encouraged. Much is still needed to be done in childcare so that children will not continue to face acute neglect (Blau, 2001).

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