

Teachers and Students' Perception on the Impact of Reference Groups and School Location on Academic Achievement of Secondary Financial Accounting Students in Taraba State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The study was on teachers and students' perception on the impact of reference group and school location on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting in Taraba State. The study had three objectives, three research questions and three null hypotheses. Descriptive survey was used as a design. The population of the study consisted of 8456. Out of these population a sample of 426 were selected. These sample comprises of 63 financial accounting teachers and 364 financial accounting students respectively. Structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. Data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were used while inferential statistics of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was also used. The benchmark of 3.0 was used to agree or disagree with the mean response of the respondent While all the null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level significance. The finding of the study revealed that teachers and students believed that reference group and school location had a positive impact on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State. on line learning activities. The study therefore, concluded reference group and school location had a positive impact on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State. Based on this, the study recommended that Parent teachers association (PTA) should conduct a regular public awareness on the role of family in the education of their wards and also school administrators and teachers should observe the behaviors of their students in the class as they form their various peer group.

Keywords: Reference group, school location, students' academic achievement.

INTRODUCTION

Teachers make judgments (perception) on a regular basis about the ability of students, and their appraisals can have critical implications for curricular and instructional opportunities. This means teacher judgments are strong predictors of future achievement. For instance, Perry, Alvidrez & Weinstern, (1999) demonstrated that kindergarten teacher ratings of children's social competence predicted their third-grade spelling and math achievement as well as IQ scores. Meanwhile, theorists of social perception have long been fascinated with the potential of such judgments to become self-fulfilling prophecies (Babad, 1993). Other example by Alexander, Entwisle, and Dauber (1993) in their examination of teacher ratings of classroom behaviour, found that first-grade teacher ratings on interest participation and attention span-restlessness scales were correlated with student achievement test scores at the end of that year and with student grades over the next 3 years. The result of this study highlights the accuracy of teachers in predicting their students' future achievement and comparing such achievement with other students by way of reference.

Reference is an information about a person provided by someone with whom they are well acquainted. This reference can either be individual or group reference. For instance, group reference is main to set a comparison value for justification, at a given time. According to Tomlinson (2010) reference group is any person or group that serves as a point of comparison for an individual in forming general or specific values, attitudes, or a specific guide for behavior. Laird and Pamela (2006) outline reference groups as follow: individuals, groups, beliefs, attitude and behavior. Others Family background, parents, parents' occupation, instructors, peer group, friends etc (Bankole & Ogunsakin, 2015). Thus, reference groups are regarded as group of individuals with the same opinion, interest and purpose, to achieve educational or organizational goals and objective.

Reference group according to Robert (2010) is classified into two broad groups: normative and comparative. Normative group reference are those references that is influenced through individuals' norms, attitudes, and values through interactions such as parents, sibling, teacher, peer groups, associates and friends. While comparative group reference are those references that is influenced through individual comparison. For instance, group of individuals my aspire to be like other people by following their footsteps, such as celebrities and heroes. Another form of classification is by Mbui (2011) who noted that reference groups could be those used as standards of comparison for self-appraisal; those considered to be informative, experts; or those used as a source of norms, standards and attitudes. For example, peer group.

Generally, peer group means a group of equals. But sociologists apply it to groups made up of persons who are of the same age and often to groups of children or of adolescents. They play a normal part in the process of socialization as they provide experiences to those who are growing up. That is a type that are not available in their own families. The adolescents take solace in interacting with their peers and they prefer to keep longer time with them than with their parents. The peer group therefore has tremendous influence on the adolescent's pattern of behaviour especially on their interests, attitudes, value system, emotional expressions, and interaction patterns and so on. However, the peer group's norms/standards in many cases may run foul to that of the community or society at large. Thus, when the adolescent falls into bad groups, the chances are high that his/her social behaviour would change for bad rather than for good. As expressed by Steinberg (1996) that peers looking for approval and support from their fellow members are inevitable and necessary. And that necessitate their susceptibility into either bad or good groups. Either of these groups are often found within or outside school environment.

School location is the environment where the school is located. The location of school can be classified into rural and urban areas. Urban area is often characterized as populated axis where there are many people. It is most often equipped with social amenities and infrastructural facilities to make life comfortable for the dwellers, and this also promotes teaching in formal education to an extent. Owoeye and Yara (2010) noted that school location in urban areas most times have influence on the achievement of a child compare to those children in the rural area. Owoeye and Yara further explain that school location in urban environment favor child learning; this is as a result of amenities such as electricity, media and other facilities available which facilitate child leaning. On the other hand, rural areas according to Periera (2011) is the area with few populations and people living there and may not have full social amenities and infrastructural facilities as those living in urban area. The education aspirations of a child in rural area lag behind. School location determines to a very large extent the patronage of such a school will enjoy. For instance, the unattractive physical structure of the school building could de-motivate learners to achieve academically. This is what Isangedighi (1998) refers to as learner's environment mismatch. According to him, this promotes poor academic performance, especially in various subjects like financial accounting.

Financial Accounting is one of the subjects offered at secondary school level. According to Asaolu (2002) Financial Accounting is the process of recording, classifying, selecting, measuring, interpreting, summarizing and reporting financial data of an organization to the users for objective assessment and decision making. This means accounting data are processed into accounting information through the use of

accounting principles and conventions. The accounting principles are known as – Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). They are the basic fundamentals which guide accountants in recording, appreciating and assessing accounting information as well as the preparation and interpretation of financial statements. Flegm (2005) defined accounting as the measurement, disclosure or provision of assurance about financial information that helps manager, investors, tax authorities and other decision makers to make resource allocation decision.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Right from the home the students are been influence to make certain carrier choice which may not conform to their academic abilities and at the end of the day perform poorly in the subject. And in some situations, the students strive to behave and act like their dreamed mentors who they may not even have access to and learn or share their difficulties and experiences while growing up in the carrier. These influences had left many students wondering in the path of no return and at the end of the day become frustrated and drop out of school. Another problem associated with this study is the environment in which the secondary schools are located. Secondary schools are located in rural and urban areas and some are well equipped while others are neglected as in the case of rural schools. The question beckoning for answer is whether school location influences students' academic achievement positively or negatively.

The analysis below gives the trends of the poor academic situation in financial accounting in Taraba State from 2014-2018 as follows: 2014 and 2015 the students had a mean percentage score of 48% and 42%. In 2016 and 2017, the percentage mean scores was 45% and 46% respectively and in 2018, the students' mean score was 49% in financial accounting in Taraba States reported by Educational Resource Centre (2019), Jalingo, Taraba State. Now, this raises the question: has reference groups impacted on the academic achievement of students on financial accounting positively? If such trend of poor performance is not addressed, Taraba State in particular and the nation at large may not attain the dream raising professional accountants. This situation prompted the researcher to find out the impact of reference groups on students' academic achievement in the subject.

Purpose of the study

The following objective were raised to guide the study

1. To determine teachers and students' perception on the impact of parental background on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State.
2. To examine teachers and students' perception on the impact of peer groups on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State.
3. To evaluate teachers and students' perception on the impact of urban and rural schools on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba state.

Research Questions

1. What is the perception of teachers and students on the impact of parental background on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State?
2. What is the perception of teachers and students on the impact of peer groups on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State?
3. What is the perception of teachers and students on the impact of urban and rural schools on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba state?

Hypotheses

H_{01} . There is no significant difference between the teachers and students' perception on the impact of parental background and academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba state.

H₀₂. There is no significant difference between the teachers and students’ perception on the impact of peer group and academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba state.

H₀₃. There is no significant difference between the teachers and students’ perception on the impact of urban and rural schools and academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba state.

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study consisted of 8456 financial accounting teachers and students. out of these population, a sample of 63 financial accounting teachers and 364 financial accounting students were selected respectively. This making the total sampled for the study to be 426 respondents. The selection of these sampled were done through the use of Taro Yamane (1964) formular. However, the actual sample were selected through the used of paper balloting system where yes or no was written on a piece of paper and reshuffled in a box for the respondents to picked. Structured questionnaires were used as an instrument for data collection. The instruments were validated by two experts from the Department of Vocational Education, who were not below the rank of a senior lecturer, from Modibbo Adama University, Yola. The reliability of the instrument was equally established through a pilot test that was conducted with 30 respondents comprises both financial accounting teachers and students from Yola Adamawa State using two government secondary schools. The results obtained was analyzed using split-half method. This result from the two groups were tested using PPMC, which give a reliability coefficient of 0.83 and it was adjudged reliable for a data collection (Tracy, 2006). The collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. All those hypotheses with a P-value less than the Alpha value at 0.05 level of significance, were rejected. While those hypotheses with p-value above 0.05 level of significance were retained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study presented data analysis, results and discussion of the findings. The data collected were analyzed to answer the research questions and to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented as follows:

Research Question One: What is the perception of teachers and students on the impact of parental background on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State?

Table 1: Analysis of Mean Average for the Perception of Teachers and Students on the Impact of Parental Background on Academic Achievement of Secondary Financial Accounting Students in Taraba State

S/n	Questionnaire Items	Teacher X	Teacher St. Div	Student X	Student St. Div	Mean AverAge T & S	St. Div AverAge T & S	Rmk
1	Parents’ constant interest in student’s academic activities	4.19	1.10	3.91	1.41	4.05	1.26	Ag
2	Students’ wish to step into their parents’ occupation	2.96	1.56	3.64	1.55	3.30	1.56	Ag
3	Parents’ frequent interaction with their wards	3.46	1.42	3.17	1.58	3.32	1.50	Ag

4	Broken home impacts students' achievement	3.35	1.47	3.46	1.41	3.41	1.44	Ag
5	Cordial relationship between students and their parent's impact on academic achievement	3.65	1.16	3.93	1.31	3.79	1.24	Ag
6	Rich homes impacts students' achievement	2.31	1.09	3.69	1.45	3.00	1.27	Ag
7	Poor homes impacts students' achievement	3.46	1.48	3.40	1.47	3.43	1.48	Ag
8	Lack of parental guidance impacts students' achievement	3.46	1.48	3.55	1.31	3.51	1.48	Ag
9	Parental status impacts students' achievement	3.69	1.29	3.83	1.48	3.76	1.39	Ag
10	Parents as role models impacts students' achievement	2.12	1.37	3.80	1.35	2.96	1.36	Dis
11	Parents' attitude impacts students' achievement	2.73	1.48	3.36	1.50	3.05	1.49	Ag
12	A home that nurtures self-worth impacts students' achievement	3.65	1.35	3.12	1.51	3.39	1.43	Ag
13	A home that nurtures self-efficacy impacts students' achievement	3.81	1.30	3.31	1.49	3.56	1.40	Ag
14	Parents' motivational practices impacts students' achievement	3.85	1.08	3.31	1.50	3.58	1.29	Ag
15	Parent encouragement of wards' persistence on learning impacts students' achievement	4.08	1.23	3.77	1.37	4.00	1.30	Ag
16	Cultural norms and values of the society impacts students' achievement	4.04	1.18	3.47	1.41	3.76	1.30	Ag
17	Family Size impacts students' achievement	4.50	0.58	3.43	1.39	3.97	0.99	Ag
18	Parents' level of education impacts students' achievement impacts students' achievement	4.23	0.86	3.37	1.53	3.80	1.20	Ag
19	Parents' Occupation impacts students' achievement	3.65	1.02	3.18	1.56	3.42	1.29	Ag
20	Parents' social class impacts students' achievement	3.81	1.30	3.43	1.35	3.62	1.33	Ag
21	Monogamous family impacts students' achievement	4.35	0.75	3.70	1.44	4.03	1.10	Ag
22	Polygamous impacts students' achievement	3.62	1.10	3.34	1.49	3.48	1.30	Ag
	Total	3.59	1.21	3.51	1.45	3.55	1.33	Ag

From Table 1 above, presents mean average analysis on the perception of teachers and students on the impact of parental background on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State. The result revealed that items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22,

have all agreed that teachers and students have a positive believe that parental background have an impact on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students. while items 2, 6, 10 and 11 disagreed with the believe that parental background have a positive impact on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students. However, the grand mean of the analysis was 3.59 which is far above thebench mark of 3.0 used for the study. This implies that teachers believed that parental background have a positive impact on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State.

Research Question Two: What is the perception of teachers and students on the impact of peer groups on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State?

Table 2: Analysis of Mean Average for the Perception of Teachers and Students on the Impact of Peer Groups on Academic Achievement of Secondary Financial Accounting Students in Taraba State

S/n	Questionnaire Items	Teacher Mean	Teacher St. Div.	Stud. Mean	Stud. St. Div	Mean Average T & S	St. Div. Ave. T&S	
1	Lack of acceptance by the peer's impacts student's achievement	3.54	1.10	3.31	1.50	3.43	1.30	Ag
2	Acceptance by the peer's impacts student's achievement	3.65	1.26	3.44	1.50	3.55	1.38	Ag
3	Students' atmosphere of freedom among peers' impacts students' achievement	2.19	1.41	3.61	1.47	2.90	1.44	Dis
4	Maintenance of equality among peers' impacts students' achievement	2.27	1.25	3.33	1.43	2.80	1.34	Dis
5	Providing opportunity for the student to play many social roles impacts students' achievement	3.50	1.30	3.21	1.43	3.36	1.37	Ag
6	The students win their independence easily from domination among peer's impacts students' achievement	4.00	0.98	3.89	1.34	3.95	1.16	Ag
7	Set attainable goals for learning impacts students' achievement	3.58	1.27	3.45	1.46	3.52	1.37	Ag
8	Provide motivation for learning impacts students achievement	3.77	1.31	3.38	1.47	3.58	1.39	Ag
9	Provides company for the isolated students impacts students' achievement	3.81	1.30	3.27	1.55	3.54	1.43	Ag
10	Provide the affection needed for learning impacts students' achievement	4.04	1.04	3.46	1.54	3.75	1.29	Ag
11	Peer group provides the main basis for empirical facts impacts students' achievement	3.96	0.92	3.50	1.39	3.73	1.16	Ag
12	Peer group provides the main basis for easy acquisition of learning skill impacts students achievement	3.46	1.39	3.66	1.36	3.56	1.38	Ag
13	Positive attitudes are easily acquired among peers' impacts students' achievement	3.62	1.13	3.67	1.26	3.65	1.20	Ag
14	Negative attitudes are easily acquired among peers' impacts students' achievement	4.04	0.92	3.71	1.38	3.88	1.15	Ag

15	Learning among peers is easily acquired impacts students' achievement	3.88	1.14	3.77	1.33	3.83	1.24	Ag
16	Academic competitiveness among peer impacts students' achievement	4.04	1.11	3.62	1.38	3.83	1.25	Ag
Total		3.71	1.18	3.52	1.42	3.62	1.25	Ag

From Table 2 above, presents mean analysis on the perception of teachers and students on the impact of peer group on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State. The result revealed that items 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 have all agreed that peer group have a positive impact on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students. while items 3 and 4 disagreed with the teachers and students believe that peer group have a positive impact on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students. However, the grand mean of the analysis was 3.71 which is above the bench mark of 3.0 used for this study. This implies that teachers believed that peer group have a positive impact on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State.

Research Question Three: What is the perception of teachers and students on the impact of urban and rural schools on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in the urban and rural schools in Taraba state?

Table 3: Mean Analysis for the Perception of Teachers and Students on the Impact of Urban and Rural Schools on Academic Achievement of Secondary Financial Accounting in the Urban and Rural Schools in Taraba State

Location	N	%	?	Remark
Urban	235	51.15	3.67	Credit
Rural	129	45.32	3.46	Pass

Table 3 answered research question three. The results showed that the urban students obtained 51.15 mean score and standard deviation of 3.67 indicating a credit result in financial accounting while the results for the rural students showed that rural students obtained a mean score of 45.32 and standard deviation of 3.46 indicating a pass result in financial accounting.

Test of Null Hypotheses:

Hypothesis One

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of teachers and students on the impact of family background on students' academic achievement in financial accounting in the urban and rural schools in Taraba State.

Table 4: ANOVA Analysis for Teachers and Students on the Impact of Family Background on Students' Academic Achievement in Financial Accounting in the Urban and Rural Schools in Taraba State

	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Df	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	21.544	7.181	3	6.818	.000	Accept H ₀
Within Groups	442.355	1.053	420			

Table 4 presents the result on the analysis of variance for hypothesis one. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between family background and academic achievement of financial accounting students in secondary schools. The result showed that the sum of square between groups and within the groups are 21.544 and 442.35 while the mean values stood at 7.181. The p-value stood at 0.000 which is less than the alfa value of 0.05 level of significance as such the null hypotheses is rejected. Meanwhile, the F- value is 6.818 which implies that family background had more than 6% impact on the academic achievement of financial accounting students in Taraba State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of teachers and students on the impact of peer groups on students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting in the urban and rural schools of Taraba State.

Table 5: ANOVA Analysis for Teachers and Students on the Impact of Peer Group on Students' Academic Achievement in Financial Accounting in the Urban and Rural schools of Taraba State

	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	Df	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	91.563	30.521	3	26.895	.000	Accept Ho
Within Groups	480.037	1.135	426			

Table 5 presents the result on the analysis of variance for hypothesis two. The results indicated that there is a significant relationship between peer groups and academic achievement of financial accounting students in secondary schools. The result showed that the sum of square between groups and within the groups are 91.563 and 480.037 while the mean values stood at 30.521. The p-value also stood at 0.000 which is less than the alfa value of 0.05 level of significance as such the null hypotheses is rejected. Meanwhile, the F- value is 26.895 which implies that peer groups had more than 26% impact on the academic achievement of financial accounting students in Taraba State.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant difference between the mean achievement scores of urban and rural students in financial accounting in senior secondary schools of Taraba state

Table 6: t – test Statistical Analysis of Difference Between the Mean Achievement Scores of Urban and Rural Students in Financial Accounting in Senior Secondary Schools in Taraba State

Respondents	N	Mean	S.D	Df	T	P – value	Remark
Urban Students	129	51.15	3.67	362	15.048	0.100	Significant
Rural Students	235	45.31	3.46				

P > 0.05 N= Number of respondents, S.D = Standard Deviation

Table 6 shows the t-test analysis of hypothesis three. The result showed that there is a significance difference between the mean achievement scores of urban and rural scores in financial accounting. This is because the students in the urban area had a mean score of 51.15 and standard deviation of 3.67 which is above that of students in the rural areas that had a mean score of 45.31 with standard deviation of 3.46. Above all the p-value stood at 0.100 which is above the alfa value of 0.05 level of significant. Thus, the null hypotheses were retained. This implies that a significant difference exists between the academic achievement of accounting students in the urban and rural areas respectively.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

From the findings of research question 1 in Table 1, revealed that revealed that family background impacted positive on academic achievement of Financial Accounting students in secondary schools in Taraba State. This is also supported by its corresponding hypothesis in Table 4 which revealed that there is a significant relationship between family background and academic achievement of Financial Accounting students in secondary schools in Taraba State. This is corroborated with the findings of Misanya (2018) who asserted that family background positively influenced student academic achievement and that the family which had a specialty in a particular discipline will have most of their wards in such a discipline. This finding is also in line with Kamau (2013) who maintained that parental marital status, family size, parents' education level and family financial status had a positive relationship with academic achievement of students. However, Kamau reported that while the marital status of the parents was not significant in explaining the academic achievement of students, but the type of family, either cohesive or conflictive had an effect in academic achievement. Furthermore, Omeh (2010) reported that Students from educated parents achieve more than those from uneducated parents in academics; students from high-income status parents enjoy considerable advantage in academic achievement than students of low income status parents because their parents were able to afford necessary materials and equipment needed for effective learning in the school; parental level of motivation also influenced students' academic achievement because motivation and reward served as a form of reinforcement for children's learning at school.

From the findings of research question 2 in Table 2, revealed that revealed that peer group had a positive impact on academic achievement of Financial Accounting students in secondary schools in Taraba State. This is also supported by its corresponding hypothesis in Table 5 which revealed that there is a significant relationship between peer group and academic achievement of Financial Accounting students in secondary schools in Taraba State. This is corroborated with Joseph and Emmanuel (2017) who reported that peer influence has great impact on the students' academic achievement as peer influence can make or mar an individual mind set and achievement. Joseph and Emmanuel further explained that when students are glued to friends who love reading those students will also be inclined to the reading habit and same applied in the opposite. To further buttress the finding, Alimi, Ehinola and Alabi, (2012) asserted that peer group has influenced many individuals to greatness and also deterred many to from progress as they constitute nuisance to the society. Alimi, Ehinola and Alabi suggested that in as much as peer group influence the lives of individuals so also it can influence their academic achievement.

From the findings of research question 3 in Table 3, revealed that revealed that students in the urban area have a better academic achievement than those in the rural area in Financial Accounting students in secondary schools in Taraba State. This is also supported by its corresponding hypothesis in Table 6 which revealed that there is a significant difference between urban and rural students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting in Taraba State. This is corroborated with Emmanuel (2005) who reported that students in the rural areas are marred by inadequate facilities and as such affecting their academic achievement unlike their counterparts in the urban centers. In support of the finding, Akinsolu (2010) opined that students' academic achievement are influenced by some factors such as School Location, sex, teachers' personality, peer group, etc. and these factors affect the academic achievement of students. However, the finding is in variance with Owoeye and Olatunde (2010) who reported that school location has no influence on the academic achievement of students as they are treated under the same curriculum and assessed on the same scale.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion of the findings the study concluded that teachers and students believed that reference group and school location had a positive impact on academic achievement of secondary financial accounting students in Taraba State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) should conduct regular public awareness on the role of family in the education of their wards.
2. School administrators and teachers should regularly observe the behavior of students in the class as they form their various peer group.
3. Government should provide incentives to students in the rural areas in order to encourage them for higher academic achievement

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