



Paternal attachment styles and loneliness as predictors of academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Rivers state, Nigeria

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Abstract

Paternal attachment styles and loneliness, as predictors of academic achievement among secondary school students in Rivers State was examined in this study. Correlational design was used for the study. Two research questions were formulated and two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A sample size of 513 senior secondary one (SS1) students was drawn using Taro Yemen formula. The multistage sampling technique was used to draw nine secondary schools in Rivers State. Instruments used for data collection were; Father-child Relationship Inventory (FCRI), Social and Emotional Behaviour towards Relationship Network (SEBTREN), with a Cronbach Alpha of 0.78 for (FCRI) and 0.72 for (SEBTREN). Linear regression and one way ANOVA method were used for data analysis. The study revealed that paternal attachment styles predicted students' academic achievement. Loneliness had a moderate relationship with academic achievement. Recommendations were made that fathers should ensure that the secure attachment style dominates their child rearing practices. Fathers and teachers should at the observation of loneliness behaviour in their students consult the counsellor for therapeutic processes.

Keywords: academic achievement, father attachment, loneliness, adolescents

Introduction

Nigeria's educational system is confronted with plethora of challenges of which academic achievement is one of such challenges. Nigeria has recurrently in recent years, experienced dismal academic achievement at the basic education level, especially at the junior secondary certificate examinations. Rivers State, one of Nigeria's 36 States is no exception. Academic achievement is of great importance and concern to the society. Results of academic achievement enable us to determine the relative rank or position of individual student with regard to their performance. Thus, parents, teachers, and the society have expressed horrendous concern over this issue of worsening students' achievement in public examinations.

The Nigerian Examinations Committee (NEC) of West African Examination Council (2013) [21] enumerated what it felt were responsible for the poor academic performance observed for the past years in her communiqué issued after its 55th meeting held in Lagos, Nigeria. The factors included dearth of basic instructional materials and infrastructure, shallow knowledge of the subject matter, disregard for correct interpretation of questions before attempting them, poor command of the use of English Language, poor knowledge of examination technique, poor handwriting and poor remuneration of teachers. Success in education is highly essential to Nigeria's development, as the National Policy on Education 5th edition, states that "Education is an instrument for national development and social change; it maximizes the creative potentials and skills of the individual for self-fulfillment and general development" (section 1; sub section 3 A & C: 2008 pp 10) [14].

Ward, Stocker and Murray-Ward (2006) [22] defined academic

achievement as the consequence of education; which measures the scope an institution, teacher or student have achieved educational goals as communicated in scores, or grades. However, Ezike and Bamiro (2015) [11] citing Education Loisir et Sport Quebec noted that the support and availability of the parents is prominent in the list of factors responsible for students' poor academic achievement. Furthermore, it may be attributable to paternal styles of attachment; and or loneliness.

The extent or depth of success achieved at the end of an academic effort indicates academic achievement. It alludes to percentiles or teachers' given grades particular to specific learning as defined by examination marks in academic subjects (Awan, Noureen, and Naz 2011) [4]. Academic achievement therefore, refers to a child's score measured on either standardized tests or teacher made tests. It is also how well a student has met age or grade equivalent standards set forth by the government or prescribed examinations, and sometimes may just mean how well a child is progressing in school. Ihem, (2016) [13] further stated that performance result that indicates the extent to which a student reproduces or represents accomplished goals specifically that were the center of activities in an instructional environment is academic achievement. Consequently, secondary school students academic achievement is an important indicator for the evaluation of the educational system, as well as the efforts and activities geared towards the fulfillment of this objective.

Paternal attachment is an interpersonal bond at relationship level (Hwang Ray 2012) [12], which includes attitudes, behaviors, and values fathers engage in with their children, that influence the children's emotions, behaviors, and social development. Thus, personal relationship quality with fathers

and the mental representations of salient transactional processes or experiences, derived from the subjective perceptions of the adolescent of the father's attachment bonds, have an influence on psychosocial development and functioning of the secondary school students. Consequently, irregular fathers' reactions may create a chaotic surrounding for negative reinforcement of adolescent opposition which may inhibit the adolescents' smooth psychosocial development including academic achievement.

Paternal attachment provides a distinct contribution to moral and intellectual development (Carlson 2006^[5]; Darling and Steinberg 1993^[7]), behavioural outcomes and sex role development during adolescence. Hence, the security in the father child attachment is responsible for the variance in internalizing, externalizing and total behavioural problems in adolescence. Ekeh (2012)^[9] citing Ainsworth and Bowlby defined attachment as a profound and durable love bond that links one individual to the other. Paternal attachment is a flexional bond in a sensitive and responsive social interaction with direct care-giving, nurturance, and companionship by fathers that influence behavioural outcome in children.

Hence, Akhtar (2012)^[2] stated that the different ways of behaving and responding in attachment is known as attachment styles, namely: Secure; Avoidant; and Anxious. Secure Attachment exemplifies caregiver's consistent response to their infant's signal, particularly when the child is frightened or perplexed. These children have learnt to depend on their caregiver for security and support, and promptly prospect their environment interactively.

Anxious attachment on the other hand represents children whose parents are unpredictable in their reaction. These parents confer love and care on these children at their timing, and not essentially in response to the infant's prompts. The child knowing that he/she isn't sure that the caregiver will react when beckoned, assume the responsibility of sustaining the bond between them by clinging at all times.

Equally, avoidant attachment style typifies children whose care-givers often rejected the infants attempt to seek out succour and close bond. This consistent denial gravitates to a yearning in these children to swing their attachment seeking behaviour to evade further emotional agony.

Studies on paternal attachment and academic achievement revealed significant relationship between the two variables. Abikoye, Solarin, and Omosuyi (2013)^[1] examined the influence of parental bonding and bullying on adolescents mental well-being in Ogun State, Nigeria. Result indicate that paternal bonding ($r=.14$; $p<.05$) was significantly related to mental well-being. Suggesting that the greater the adolescents' paternal bonding the better his/her mental well-being and consequent academic achievement. Ithem (2016)^[13] examined attachment styles, cognition, and academic achievement in Imo State, Nigeria. The findings showed a weak relationship between attachment styles, cognition and children academic achievement in Imo State. Also, Ewumi (2012)^[10] examined gender and socioeconomic status as predictors of senior secondary schools students' academic achievement. Results indicate There was a ($r=.083$; $p>.05$) relationship significantly, between academic achievement and socioeconomic status.

Loneliness according to Vanhalst (2012)^[20] citing Heinrich

and Gullone; Peplau and Perlman, is an unpleasant feeling and a negative emotional response that arises due to incongruity concerning anticipated and realized quality of one's familiar relationship. Loneliness is an indicator of relationship deficits which does not originate by staying alone, but by the absence of precise requisite relationships. Therefore, loneliness is an aversive experience similar to nervousness or dejection. However, it is dissimilar to social isolation that mirrors characteristically, personal sensitivity to deficiencies in familiar relationships network. Loneliness has an unwholesome impact on numerous facets of psychological security. Moreover, it usually peaks during the early adolescence period which coincides with the secondary school years. Therefore, being alone necessarily is not loneliness because an individual may be in the midst of people and still feel lonely, while he/she may be alone for a long time without feeling lonely. Lonely individuals have a different social response pattern compared to non-lonely people. In social contexts, they are vigilant to threats, and display temperament characteristics that act as risk factors of their lonely behaviour. Therefore, Rokach (2012)^[17] opined that loneliness is viewed as an unpleasant distressing experience that is embedded in one's personality and social experience.

Research findings on loneliness have variable results. For instance Alhoot and Abdallah (2015)^[3] studied self-esteem and loneliness as factors predicting academic achievement in Malaysia. Findings showed that loneliness singularly didn't significantly predict variance in students' academic achievement, but correlated negatively with academic achievement. ZareiHeydari and Adli (2013)^[23] examined loneliness, social acceptance, and students' academic performance, and findings indicate that loneliness have a positive relationship significantly ($r=0.30$) with academic progress. Ezike, and Bamiro, (2015)^[11] studied the predictive effect of education, occupation, income and wealth of parents (SES) on students' academic achievement in Ijebu-Ode municipality of Ogun state. Results show that the correlation coefficient (r) though negatively correlated, is significant at $P <.05$ ($r = -.170$, $P <.05$), implying a correlation between socioeconomic status of parents and students' academic achievement.

Adolescence is characteristically synonymous with changes in expectations, responsibilities and identities (Rubin, Bukowski, Parker and Bowker 2008)^[18], which might accelerate the tendency to experience loneliness. Loneliness primarily originates from an unsatisfied demand for a close relationship which produces an unpleasant sentimentality (Sullivan in Chen 2015)^[6]. During the secondary school years, changes ensue as a result of environmental vicissitudes, resulting in varied feelings, including loneliness. Lonely students oftentimes relate moods of dejectedness, enagement, dread, and being misunderstood, Booth, Bartlett, and Bohnsack, as cited by Okwaraji, Onyebueke, Nduanya, and Nwokpoku (2016)^[16]. Thus, lonely students are highly critical of themselves, overly sensitive, expressing self-pity or being critical of others. They do not intermingle in school social context, focus on themselves most of the time, and rarely respond to questions in class, un-usually anxious and uncomfortable when in peer gatherings. Therefore, this study examined paternal attachment and loneliness as predictors of

academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statement of problem

Academic achievement may be impeded by inadequate coverage of subject syllabus, non-familiarity with examination format, lack of strong reading habit by students preparing for examinations. Students who are avoidant attached are psychopathologic, due their proneness to externalized negative emotion. Whereas anxiously attached students are prone to internalized disorders, agonizing academic challenges that confront them. Likewise, lonely students' are not vigorous and persistent and easily capitulate on set objectives and goal of academic attainment.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain if paternal attachment styles and loneliness are predictors of academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research questions

1. To what extent does paternal (secure; avoidant and resistant) attachment styles predict the academic achievement of secondary school students from high and low socio economic status families in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does loneliness predict the academic achievement of secondary school students from high and low socio economic status families in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. Paternal attachment styles do not predict significantly the academic achievement of secondary school students from high and low socio economic status families in Rivers State.
2. Loneliness does not predict significantly the academic achievement of secondary school students from high and low socio economic status families in Rivers State.

Methodology

Correlational design was adopted for this study. The study was conducted in three local government areas of Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni; Obio-Akpor and Eleme representing the three senatorial districts of Rivers State, Nigeria. The three

local government areas are semi-urban. The population of the study composed of all senior secondary one (SS1) students in Rivers State. The sample size was 513 students drawn from nine secondary schools in three LGA's using Taro Yemen formula. While income and type of accommodation, was used to determine socio economic status of the students. The sample was composed of 173 students from high SES and 330 students from low SES families in Rivers State. The instruments used for the study were an SES scale developed by the researcher which was annexed as part of the father-child subscale of (IPPA), and the short version of the social and emotional loneliness scale (SELSA). The instrument was made up of 50 items. There validity and reliability was determined using factor analysis and it yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0.78 and 0.72. Linear regressions and one way Anova was the data analysis technique adopted for answering research questions and testing hypotheses.

Results

Below is presented the results of the study

Research question 1: To what extent does paternal attachment styles predict academic achievement of students from high and low socio economic status families in Rivers State?

Hypothesis 1: Paternal attachment styles do not predict significantly the academic achievement of secondary school students from high and low socio economic status families in Rivers State.

Table 1: Simple linear regression showing the extent paternal attachment styles predict academic achievement of students from high and low socio-economic status families in Rivers State.

	R	R ²	Adj.R ²	Std. Error	β
High	0.62	0.38	0.21	2.21	0.32
Low	0.43	0.18	0.13	2.01	0.12

Table 1: Shows the regression coefficient (R) for students from high socio economic status families is 0.62 and 0.43 for students from low socio economic status families. The coefficient of determination R² value for high is 0.38, and for low is 0.18 respectively.

Table 2(a/b): one way (ANOVA) showing the extent paternal attachment style predict academic achievement of students from high and low socio economic status families in Rivers State.

ANOVA							
High	Sum of sq.	df	mean sq.	F	α	sig	Result
Regression	15.860	2	14.930				Significant
Residual	1675.603	171	4.342	1.453	0.05	0.023	(Rejected)
Total	1690.860	173					
ANOVA							
Low	Sum of sq.	df	mean sq.	F	α	sig	Result
Regression	23.656	2	20.493				Significant
Residual	2345.676	328	4.048	2.786	0.05	0.032	(Rejected)
Total	2369.332	330					

The ANOVA table 2a and b reveals calculated F value of 1.453 for high SES and 2.786 for low SES students with a sig.

value of 0.023 for high SES and 0.032 for low SES students respectively. Since the sig value (p 0.023 and 0.032<0.05) is

less than 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The alternate hypothesis that paternal (secure; avoidant and resistant) attachment styles do predict significantly, academic achievement of students from high and low socio-economic status families in Rivers State is accepted.

Research question 2: To what extent does loneliness predict the academic achievement of students from high and low socio economic status families?

Hypothesis 2: Loneliness does not predict significantly the academic achievement of secondary school students from high and low socio economic status families in Rivers State.

Table 4(a/b): one way (ANOVA) showing the extent loneliness predict academic achievement of students from high and low socio-economic families in Rivers State.

ANOVA							
High	Sum of sq.	df	mean sq.	F	α	sig	Result
Regression	30.613	2	20.398				Significant
Residual	2758.698	171	6.488	2.765	0.05	0.023	(Rejected)
Total	2789.311	173					
ANOVA							
Low	Sum of sq.	df	mean sq.	F	α	sig	Result
Regression	31.876	2	23.352				Significant
Residual	2806.543	328	8.876	3.645	0.05	0.031	(Rejected)
Total	2838.419	330					

The ANOVA table 4a and b reveals calculated F value of 2.765 for high SES and 3.645 for low SES with a sig. value of 0.023 for high SES and 0.031 low SES respectively. Since the sig value (p 0.023 & 0.0031 < 0.05) is less than 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. The alternate hypothesis that loneliness does predict significantly, the academic achievement of students from high and low SES families in basic science and technology subject in Rivers State is accepted.

Summary of results

1. It was found that paternal attachment styles accounted for 0.38% of the variance in the academic achievement of students from high SES and 0.18% of the variance in the academic achievement of students from low SES families in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Loneliness explained 0.57% of the variation in the academic achievement of students from high SES families and 0.28% of the changes in the academic achievement of students from low SES families.
3. Paternal attachment predicted significantly the academic achievement of students from high and low SES families.
4. Loneliness predicted moderately academic achievement of students from high and low SES families.

Discussion

Linear correlation coefficient (R) for paternal attachment styles amongst students from high SES families academic achievement is 0.62, while that of students from low socio economic status families is 0.43, indicating significant relationship. The determining coefficient (R^2) revealed that 38% of the variation in students from high SES families, academic achievement can be explained by paternal attachment styles. While 18% of the variance in students from

Table 3: Simple linear regression showing the extent loneliness predict academic achievement of students from high and low socio-economic status families in Rivers State.

	R	R^2	Adj. R^2	Std. Error	β
High	0.76	0.57	0.17	2.25	0.42
Low	0.53	0.28	0.09	2.19	0.36

Table 3: shows the regression coefficient (R) for student from high socio economic status families is 0.76 and for students from low socio economic status families is 0.53 in Rivers State. The coefficient of determination R^2 value for high is 0.57 and low is 0.28, respectively.

low SES families academic achievement are accounted for by paternal attachment styles. Therefore, paternal attachment styles predicted significantly, students from high and low SES Families academic achievement in Rivers State. These findings are in tandem with Ojimba (2013) ^[15] and Ewumi (2012) ^[10] studies which revealed the existence of positive association between students' achievement academically and SES in Rivers and Ogun States, Nigeria, respectively. Furthermore, Ugwuja (2010) ^[19] study established that students from high SES families performed better academically than students from low SES families in Enugu State, Nigeria. The findings of Ugwuja (2010) ^[19] are in tandem with this research results. The result of this research shows that students from high SES families achieve better academically than students from low SES families. This can be explicated by the verity that students from high SES families enjoy considerable advantage, such as having subject textbooks, and extra home lesson teacher, because their father can afford to provide these necessary learning facilities and materials compared to students from low SES families. Likewise, loneliness correlation coefficient (R) for academic achievement of students from high socio economic status families is 0.76, while students' from low SES families is 0.53, indicating a significant association. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for students from high SES is 0.57, which also accounts for 57% of the variance in the academic achievement for students from high SES families in Rivers State. Likewise, the coefficient of determination (R^2) for low SES students is 0.28. Thus, 28% of the variation of the academic achievement of students from low socio economic status families in Rivers State is accounted for by loneliness. Therefore, loneliness predicts significantly, the academic achievement of students from high and low SES families in Rivers State. Demir and Tarhan (2010) ^[8] study established a

negative association between academic achievement and loneliness, indicating an academic achievement decrease as loneliness increases.

Recommendations

Paternal attachment, especially the secure style should be strongly encouraged as it appears to guard against childhood delinquent behaviours which is common with the insecure attachment style, and peer influence which are capable of derailing academic achievement. Loneliness based on the findings of this research has a very low association with academic achievement, as this implies a grave consequence for the future of students experiencing loneliness, especially for their academic and career advancements.

Similarly, the findings in this study that paternal attachment and loneliness predicted significantly academic achievement of both high and low socio economic status secondary school students in Rivers State.

This impels teachers and fathers to pay greater attention on their children both in the classroom and at home where loneliness or delinquent behaviours are usually displayed. So that in addition to other measures the child should be referred to the school counsellor for remediation.

Conclusion

Paternal attachment styles and loneliness as predicting academic achievement among secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria have been ascertained to have a relationship with socio economic status. Insecurely attached students' academic achievement could be inhibited due to their being prone to externalized behaviours. Loneliness can as well hinder students' academic achievement. This is because students with loneliness shy away from social gatherings either in the classroom or outside, their level of concentrations and assimilation may decline and this may result in academic underachievement. It therefore becomes imperative that fathers, teachers and concerned adolescents should employ necessary measure to ameliorate loneliness and insecure attachment influence on our secondary school students' academic achievement.

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