

INFLUENCE OF EDUCATION ON INTERGENERATIONAL SOCIAL MOBILITY AMONG GRADUATE WORKERS IN LAGOS STATE: SOCIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS.

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Abstract

This study examined influence of education on intergenerational social mobility among graduate workers in the Eti-Osa Local Government area of Lagos State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 240 graduate workers from twenty (20) different companies across four district areas of the local government. The research instrument, a researcher-made questionnaire titled; Influence of Education on Intergenerational Social Mobility Questionnaire (IEISMQ) was used for data collection. A descriptive research design was adopted in the study. Three hypotheses were tested using the Analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that parents' educational attainment, occupational attainment and geographical settlement significantly influenced respondents' social mobility. In the light of the findings, the study recommended that the government and her agencies involved in policy formulation and implementation should formulate appropriate policy that will promote equal access to education and remove any obstacle standing in the way of realization of Education for All (EFA) agenda. Also, the government should ensure effective implementation of Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, all children within the school age are to be enrolled in school and an appropriate penalty be meted out to defaulters.

Keywords: Intergenerational social mobility, Occupational attainment, Educational attainment, Horizontal social mobility, Vertical social mobility

Introduction

Education is a social process which is common to all human society, though, with variations in terms of structure, content and methodology. Education has variedly been defined based on the purpose it is meant to serve and the discipline in perspective. Roshni cited in Emeri (2014) defined education as a process of

imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the power of reasoning and judgments, and generally preparing one's self or others intellectually for mature life. According to Corwin cited in Daramola (2003), through education, a society transforms the uninitiated and seemingly alien beings into robust trustees of its own resources and ideals. It is through education that the child learns the cultural values, that is, the norms, the aspirations, the value, the beliefs, and so forth of the society he/she belongs.

Education plays an important role in socializing the individual to fit into and perpetuate the social system. Education thus, performs the function of passing the collective consciousness and culture, of a pre-existing society. According to Durkheim (1858-1917), in educational institutions, the behaviour is regulated to accept the general moral values through the formal curriculum and the hidden curriculum. Educational institutions sort out learners for future market. It plays the role of grading learners' outcome to fit them to different future jobs. High achievers will be trained for higher jobs and low achievers will be fitted in less important jobs. The behaviour of member of society is regulated in such a way that they accept their roles in the society according to their social status. In contemporary society, most adolescents spend greater part of their lives in institutions where they receive formal education. This form of education is regarded as a major agency of socialization in these societies and more often than not it is the means through which one can move from one social class to another (Bilton, et. al.; Giddens and Duneier, cited in Noah, 2009).

Essentially, education is necessary for preparing children for adult life in terms of acquisition of diplomas and degrees to determine one's credentials for a job. In contemporary Nigerian society, education is regarded as a basic yardstick for the placement of people into important social positions. Social mobility refers to the amount of movement from one stratum to another. It describes the nature and amount of change in social position overtime. (Oni, 2014). Social mobility is the ability to be able to move up the hierarchy (embourgeoisement) or down the hierarchy (proletarianisation) from one social group to another. Social mobility is a type of movement but it is not physical movement over geographical space although social mobility could involve, and be brought about by, physical mobility. It is movement in the social space, the shifting or changing of statuses or class positions. Social mobility is a social process that takes place among individual members or groups in a society, as they interact with each other. It is a process by which individuals or groups move from one status to another; or from one class or stratum to another. Social mobility describes the volume and quality of movement among strata. That is, the kind of movement that people make between the different social classes. Analysis in social mobility may be an individual, or a social group or a nation (Zerihun, 2005)

Intergenerational social mobility represents change in social class of an individual in relation to their parent. It represents the difference between the social class of parent and offspring. Zerihun (2005) described this type of social mobility to involve the movement up or down, between the social class of one or two generations of a family, or a social group. In this mobility, we look at change in the status position of the family over two or more generations, i.e., the social position of the grandfather, the father and the son. If a child, for example, whose father was an upper-class person as a result of his wealth becomes only a labourer in his own time, then he has experienced a downward intergenerational social mobility

The avenues of social mobility are the doors through which a person moves upward in the social hierarchy. The major avenue to social mobility in most modern societies is access to appropriate modern education. Change of profession/ occupation and geographical mobility are also avenues. There are also some sudden or short cut avenues to social mobility. These include windfall gains in terms of inheritance, gambling, theft or financial corruption, winning a lottery game, etc. Such mobility is rare, bearing in mind that most inheritance is within the same social group. The opportunities for upward social mobility are great in modern societies which have open systems. In such societies, there is freedom of vertical social mobility, and any member of a society may move up or down the social hierarchy. There are no legal and/or traditional restrictions that are put on social mobility on either direction. What count a lot are personal merits, competitions and efforts for achievement. On the other hand, in societies with closed system vertical, especially upward, is very difficult. In such societies, individuals born to a certain social position remain within that category for their lifetime. The most important determinants here are not individual's achievements merits or personal effort, but what counts most are one's ancestry, racial background, family background, religion, sex, ethnicity, etc. (Henslin and Nelson, cited in Zerihun, 2005)

The role of education in promoting social mobility is among the central issues in contemporary sociological and political debate. In modern societies, education has become an increasingly important factor in determining which jobs people enter and in determining their social class position. This has led some scholars to believe in the advent of open and meritocratic societies but the empirical evidence has cast doubts on this (Cristina and Lindsay 2005). In many countries the relationship between family background (i.e social origins) and educational opportunity is still strong. People from more advantaged social classes have higher chances of embarking on a long educational career and gaining higher level qualifications than those from less advantaged classes (Shavit and Blossfeld, cited in Cristina and Lindsay, 2005). The acquisition of higher

educational qualifications results in a clear advantage when they enter the labour market.

Although education has been found to be a crucial intervening link between the social background of individuals and their later class destination in industrial societies (Müller and Shavit, cited in Cristina and Lindsay (2005), but to what extent is this claim valid in a developing country like Nigeria? Inequality in education is one of the most alarming social problems in the contemporary Nigeria society due deteriorating quality of some government schools; more and more parents are willing to send their children to private schools, in spite of exorbitant tuition fees. These schools generally generate better interest in learning because of smaller class size, higher academic standards, better teacher-student contacts and greater discipline. Family income is one of the factors affecting access to education. Government schools in rural and remote areas of Nigeria are almost non-functional, making it difficult for students of rural communities and of poor families to have equal access to quality education. This results in low literacy rates. In spite of various special affirmative programmes by the government, a huge proportion of the students from low social origin have been unable to break out of the clutches of traditional occupation and the vicious circle of poverty. It is against this background, that this study examined the influence of education on intergenerational social mobility among graduate workers with particular reference to the situation in Eti-Osa Local Government of Lagos state. Eti- Osa Local Government houses the headquarters of many multinational companies operating in Nigeria and accounts for 25% of labour force concentration in Lagos state and about 7.4% of labour force concentration in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). Consequently, the local government will no doubt provide access to the class of people (graduate workers from all works of life) that are considered the primary target for the study.

Statement of the Problem

Social life is competitive, with the best and the brightest rising to the top of the social hierarchy and the slow and weak at the bottom. *“Poverty therefore was nature’s way of excreting ... unhealthy, imbecile, slow, vacillating, faithless members of the society in order to make room for the fit who were duly entitled to the reward of wealth “(Lewis, 2002).* This reasoning by the structural functionalist assumes that the economic and social hierarchies found in society reflect a single dimension – cognitive ability. In effect, society is a meritocracy developed by a sorting process. It assumes that people who possess high mental ability are likely to excel and move upward on the social ladder (irrespective of their social origin) thereby ensuring social class by level of intelligence. This line of argument underestimates the influence of environmental factors that could make or mar the struggle of an individual in competing for life chances. Factors

such as, access to qualitative education, parents level of education, family income size, rural –urban settlement, gender, ethnicity, etc. contributed in no small way to social stratification that is found in most countries of the world today. Although it is arguable that education is perhaps one of the surest routes to overcome social handicap, many scholars are however, of the opinion that education rather than eliminate social stratification tends to promote it due largely to inequalities that are embedded in education (Oni and Dube, 2019).

Studies have shown that education and the acquisition of educational qualifications are important means through which middle class families pass on their social and economic advantage to their children (Philip, Diane and Carol, 2013). In these circumstances, education, rather than promoting greater social mobility, may in fact reduce it. It is therefore the interest of the researchers to validate this claim or refute the claim. This research work therefore, investigated the influence of education on intergenerational social mobility among graduate workers in Lagos State.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of education on intergenerational social mobility among graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos state. The study specifically intends:

1. To determine influence of parent's educational attainment on educational attainment of graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos state.
2. To ascertain influence of parent's occupational attainment on occupational attainments of graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos state.
3. To determine influence of parent's geographical settlement on social mobility of graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos state.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses (Ho) are proposed to guide the attainment of the study objectives:

1. Parent's educational attainment does not influence educational attainment of graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area Of Lagos State
2. Parent's occupational attainment does not influence occupational attainment of graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area Of Lagos State
3. Parent's geographical settlement does not influence social mobility of graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area f Lagos State

Research design,

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design in order to achieve the main goal of the study which is to describe the data and characteristics of the variables being studied (education and intergenerational social mobility)

Population

The study population of this study comprised of all graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos state.

Sample and sampling technique

Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 240 graduate workers from twenty (20) different companies across four district areas of the local government, namely; Ikoyi, Obalende, Victoria Island, and Lekki. Five (5) companies were randomly selected from each district and a total of 12 graduate staff were drawn using simple random sampling technique from each company giving a total of two hundred and forty (240) graduate workers which constituted the study sample.

Instrumentation

A self-designed questionnaire titled Influence of Education on Intergenerational Social Mobility Questionnaire (IEISMQ) was used in data collection. Section A addressed the demographic characteristics of the participants. Section B consist of educational qualification of parents, geographical settlement of parents, income, as well as their pattern of social mobility. Section C consist of questions on factors that reveal pattern of social mobility or immobility as well as the perceptions of the respondents on social mobility.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The validity of the instrument was established through experts' opinion, after which necessary corrections were affected to obtain the final draft of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was established through pilot study using test – retest method. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.76. Hence, the instrument was considered reliable and used for the study.

Administration of Instrument and Method of Data Analysis

The questionnaires were administered on the respondents in their specified locations. The questionnaires were collected after ascertaining that they have been duly completed in readiness for statistical analysis. The formulated hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Result and Discussion

Hypothesis One: Parent's educational attainment does not significantly influence the educational attainment of graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area Of Lagos State

Table 1: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Influence of Parental Educational Attainment on Educational Attainment of Graduate Workers In Eti-Osa Local Government Area

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	61.682	10	6.168	6.851	.000
Within Groups	206.168	229	.900		
Total	267.850	239			
Between Groups	56.126	10	5.613	4.121	.000
Within Groups	311.870	229	1.362		
Total	367.996	239			

Significant at 0.05, df. = 10 and 229, $F_{cal} = 6.851$; $F_{tab} = 4.10$

Evidence from table 1 indicates that the ANOVA comparison yielded a calculated F-value of 6.851. This is greater than the table value of 4.10 given 10 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that parental educational attainment influenced respondents' educational achievement. **Hypothesis 2:** Parent's occupational attainment does not significantly influence occupational attainment of graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Influence of Parental Occupational Attainment on Occupational Attainment of Graduate Workers In Eti-Osa Local Government Area.

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	88.407	6	14.734	13.433	.000
Within Groups	255.577	233	1.097		
Total	343.983	239			
Between Groups	79.486	6	13.248	12.077	.000
Within Groups	255.577	233	1.097		
Total	335.063	239			

Significant at 0.05, df. = 6 and 233 critical, $F_{cal} = 13.433$; $F_{tab} = 2.92$

The result shown on table 2 indicates that the ANOVA comparison yielded a calculated F-value of 13.433. This is greater than the table value 2.92 given 10 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that parental occupational attainment influenced respondents' occupational achievement.

Hypothesis 3: Parents' geographical settlement does not significantly influence social mobility of graduate workers in Eti-Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Table 3 : Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Influence of Parental Geographical Settlement on social mobility of Graduate Workers In Eti- Osa Local Government Area

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	69.556	6	11.593	10.533	.000
Within Groups	256.428	233	1.101		
Total	325.983	239			
Between Groups	78.035	6	13.006	11.818	.000
Within Groups	256.428	233	1.101		
Total	334.463	239			

Significant at 0.05, df. = 10 and 229 , Fcal = 10.533 ; Ftab. = 3.22

The result shown on the table 3 indicates that the ANOVA comparison yielded a calculated F-value of 10.533. This is greater than the table value 3.22 given 6 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This means that the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis was accepted and it was concluded that parental geographical settlement influenced respondents' geographical settlement.

Discussion of Findings

Hypothesis one states that parents' educational attainment does not influence respondents' educational attainment and this was rejected as the finding showed a significant influence. This implies that respondents' educational attainment is influenced by their parents' educational level. This finding confirms Blau and Duncan in Phillip, Diane and Carol(2013), that the important factor affecting whether a son moved to a higher social status than his father was the amount of education the son received. A high level of education is a scarce and valued

resource and one for which people compete vigorously. Due to the increased awareness regarding the importance of higher education, a large number of persons are trying to avail of the same to increase their social standing as a result. Shervin (2018) also confirms that parental education attainment boosted the educational mobility of the offspring. This effect is due to the positive effect of parental education on the academic success of their children as well as the education orientated mind set and value system of families in whom parents are educated. His study affirms that the role of parental education attainment is a robust driver of academic success and attainment of the children. He emphasized that, it is considerably more difficult to achieve high education attainment for children if their parents are not able to educationally support them, probably due to their low education. The positive influence of educational attainment and children educational achievement was also corroborated by Erola et al. (2015).

Hypothesis two which states that respondents' parental occupational attainment does not influence respondents' occupational achievement was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. In other words, the finding shows that respondents' parental occupational attainment influenced respondent's occupational achievement. This finding corroborates Richard (2007) who confirmed that the relationship between parents' and children's education accounts for relatively little of the relationship between parents' and children's occupational classes. Hence, intergenerational class mobility patterns do not simply echo intergenerational educational mobility patterns. However, he affirms that an examination of the direct and indirect effects of parents' educations and classes on children's occupational attainment shows parental education to play a substantial role in the intergenerational transmission of advantage and indicates that part (but not all) of the relationship between class origin and occupational attainment can be explained in terms of the intergenerational transmission of cultural capital. In contrast, a substantial part of the indirect effect of parental class via children's qualifications does not reflect parental education. Hence, the conversion of parental economic resources into children's educational credentials also appears important. Similarly, Erola, Jalone and Lehti (2015) opined that parental education, class and income influenced social mobility, because a certain kind of education (or lack of it) leads to certain occupations, in turn providing a certain level of income. These shared effects are more or less indistinguishable. The shared effects also cover the effects of any unmeasured factors that correlate with all three socioeconomic characteristics. For instance, advantageous parental social networks may consist of their peers from school, their social connections in the labour market, and acquaintances met during leisure. One type of social network might be specific to one of the above-mentioned socioeconomic characteristics but might also be associated with all of them. In the same vein, some parental skills and traits related to their education may be helpful for the

children only because they offer the parents access to a certain kind of occupation. This finding agrees with Glick and Miller in Noah (2005) that there is a progressive increase in the average amount of annual income associated with each increase in education. That is, educational achievement can be associated with the monetary return. The finding also agrees with Imoagene in Yusuf (2005) that there is a positive association between years of schooling and level of occupational attainment and income in most countries. Specifically, that occupational attainment and entry into elite positions in the society seem to be dependent, more than anything else, on credentials.

Furthermore, the findings of the study show that hypothesis three, which states that respondents' parental geographical settlement does not influence respondents' social mobility was rejected while the alternative hypotheses was accepted. In other words, the finding shows that respondents' parental geographical settlement influenced respondent's social mobility. This finding is in agreement with a survey by the British Government (UK Homeland Office, 2019) on the influence of geographical settlement on social mobility which reveals that children from poor socioeconomic background are less mobile than their counterparts from high socio-economic background. The study argued that one way of looking at differences in social mobility would be to look at actual social mobility outcomes by comparing the incomes achieved in adult life by people who grew up in disadvantaged circumstances across different local areas. The study (UK Homeland Office, 2019) confirms that the life chances of those who grew up in a given local area, is quite different from the outcomes of all young people who live in a certain area and attended nursery schools and colleges in another area. This means that there is a very big difference between outcomes on a residence and on a service location basis. Scholars such as Erola et al (2015), Philips et al (2015) and Satapathy (2010) also corroborate the view that there is significant difference in social mobility based on geographical settlement of parents.

Conclusion

The study has found that respondents' educational achievement and occupational achievement was influenced by respondents' parental educational attainment, and parental occupational attainment. Similarly, it found that fathers' geographical settlement influenced respondents' social mobility. The importance of the finding is that education determines the number of life chances, for instance, income and social status. Finally, the study has demonstrated that education is a very important determinant of social mobility, especially in developing countries. Therefore, efforts meant to improve the life chances of the people must necessarily involve an improvement in their educational attainment.

Sociological Implications of the Findings

The findings of the study reveal that education has strong influence on intergenerational social mobility. It confirms that parental educational attainment, geographical mobility and occupational attainment influenced the educational attainment, geographical mobility as well as the occupational attainment of the child. Consequently, the quality of human capital that will be available to the future generation depends largely on the education the current generation receives. Therefore, those who are excluded or denied the opportunity of formal education today will no doubt influence the quality and quantity of workforce that will be available in the nearest future. Essentially, education is necessary for preparing children for adult life in terms of acquisition of diplomas and degrees to determine one's credentials for a job. In contemporary Nigerian society, education is regarded as a basic yardstick for the placement of people into important social positions.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings reported, the following recommendations are made

1. Government and her agencies involved in policy formulation and implementation should consider the findings of this study in formulating appropriate policy that will promote equal access to education and remove any obstacle standing in the way of realization of the Education for All (EFA) agenda.
2. Similarly, the findings of the study should serve as a wakeup call for government as far as implementation of Universal Basic Education(UBE) is concerned by ensuring compliance in other to ensure that all children within the school age are enrolled in school and the appropriate penalty is given to defaulters. (both parents and pupils).
3. Government should endeavour to sustain the current policy of no tuition fees at the nation's ivory tower to encourage children from low socioeconomic background to seek higher education
4. Government and non-governmental organizations should also consider granting scholarship to brilliant indigent students as a way of encouraging them to further their education.
5. Parents and guardians should be sensitized on the benefits of education to encourage them to send their child(ren) and ward(s) to school.
6. Cultural practices and social vices such as; early marriage, child abuse and child trafficking should be discouraged.

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