

## Family Size Influence of Students' Attitude and Performance in Literature- In- English in Public Secondary Schools

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**Abstract:** The study aimed at finding out the family size influence on students' attitude and performance in Literature - in -English. Self-structured questionnaires were drawn to elicit information from 320 SS2 Students who were randomly selected from 8 secondary schools. The questionnaires were duly completed by the respondents from two local government areas in Ondo State. Only 317 respondents filled their questionnaires completely. The questionnaire comprised two sections. Section A consisted of respondents demographic status which include the name of school, class, sex, family size and position in the family while section B dealt with questionnaire on students' attitude in literature in English.

Data collected were subjected to frequency counts and simple percentage. Findings showed that percentage of students from 1-2 family size was 5.99%, that of 3-4 family size was 38.8% while that of 5-6 family size was 28.8% the family size of 7-8 was 21.6% while the family size of 9-10 was 5.99%. The implication was that the families having 3- 10 children stand the risk of inadequate care in terms of provision of essential academic materials and adequate monitoring which could have influence on the attitude and performance of secondary school students in Literature - in -English.

**Keywords:** Family Size, Attitude, Performance.

### 1. Introduction

Literature - in - English remains one of the core subjects in senior secondary school of which its importance cannot be overemphasized. In fact, it is a prerequisite for admission for any student who wants to study law, English or Literature. However, the rate of failure of students in this subject over the years is becoming worrisome. In most cases, teachers are blamed for the low academic performance of students without actually finding out other related factors that can contribute to students' academic challenges.

As far as academic performance is concerned, most people are quick in pointing accusing fingers to either the child or the teacher. Family size in one way or another may contribute to either low or high performance of the students in school. For instance, it is presumed that when a family size is large, there may tend to be no adequate concentration on the child by their parents as regards provision of necessary materials for effective learning, proper monitoring of school work and prompt payment of school fees.

Qaiser, Ishtiaq, Zaitoon & Wahab (2012) pointed out that there are varieties of factors that account for the poor and unsatisfactory academic performance of students which include illiteracy of the parents, domestic challenges, large family size, lack of parental involvement and control, low socio economic status and family structure such as intact family and single parenthood [1]. Lee (2008) declares that children from large families are found to do worse in school than children from small families. The present economic situation in the country is playing an adverse role in many families [2]. There are many students in public schools who could hardly afford daily meals. Many of these students engage in menial labour to sustain the family especially after school hours, weekends and holidays. Some students are found hawking in the streets and at road junctions to augment the needs of the family. Despite the deplorable situations of these students, they still need to face the rigour of concentrating in their academic activities which in most cases do not favour them. The curriculum of Literature - in - English has to cover the three genres which include prose, drama and poetry [3]. Each of the genres is subdivided into African and Non African. In essence, students are expected to read at least two recommended texts on each of the genres including six African poetry and six non African poetry in order to have a credit pass in their external examinations conducted by West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council NECO. Despite the fact that both examination bodies agreed to harmonize the syllabus for these subject, yet students need to acquire all the recommended texts. The poor performance of students in this subject may be as a result of their family size which may invariably prevent them from pursuing their carrier to tertiary level of education.

## 2. Purpose of the study

The study aimed at finding out whether family size including the child him/herself would have any influence on the attitude and performance of students in literature - in - English

### 2.1 Research questions

1. Does family size have influence on students' performance in Literature - in - English?
2. Does family size have influence on students' attitude in Literature - in - English?

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Design

The research design used to pilot the study was a descriptive design of a survey type.

### 3.2 Population

The population consisted of all senior secondary school students in Ondo State.

### 3.3 Sample and sampling Technique

The study sample consisted of 320 SS2 Literature in English students drawn from eight schools who were purposively drawn from Ondo West and Ondo East Local governments of Ondo State. The samples were purposely selected from the urban areas of the two local governments in order to capture various types of families needed for the study.

### 3.4 Instrument

Self structured questionnaires were used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaires were in two sections. Section A elicits information about the students' school, class, position in the family and family size while section B elicits

information on students' attitude and performance in literature - in - English. However, out of 320 questionnaire items drawn to elicit information, Only 317 questionnaires were duly filled by the respondents.

### 3.5 Validity

The self structured questionnaires were given to literature - in - English teachers who are examiners in WASSCE and NECO to ascertain both face and content validity

### 3.6 Research procedure

Prior the exercise, Permissions were sought from the school principals for approval and assistance of all those who were needed to administer the questionnaires.

Simple random sampling was employed to carry out the study. Eight schools were selected from urban areas of Ondo West and Ondo East Local Government Areas where various type of families reside. Questionnaires which consist of students' demographic, attitude and performance of students were administered to all the samples of which only 317 were recovered.

### 3.7 Data analysis

Data collected were subjected to frequency counts, simple percentage and graph.

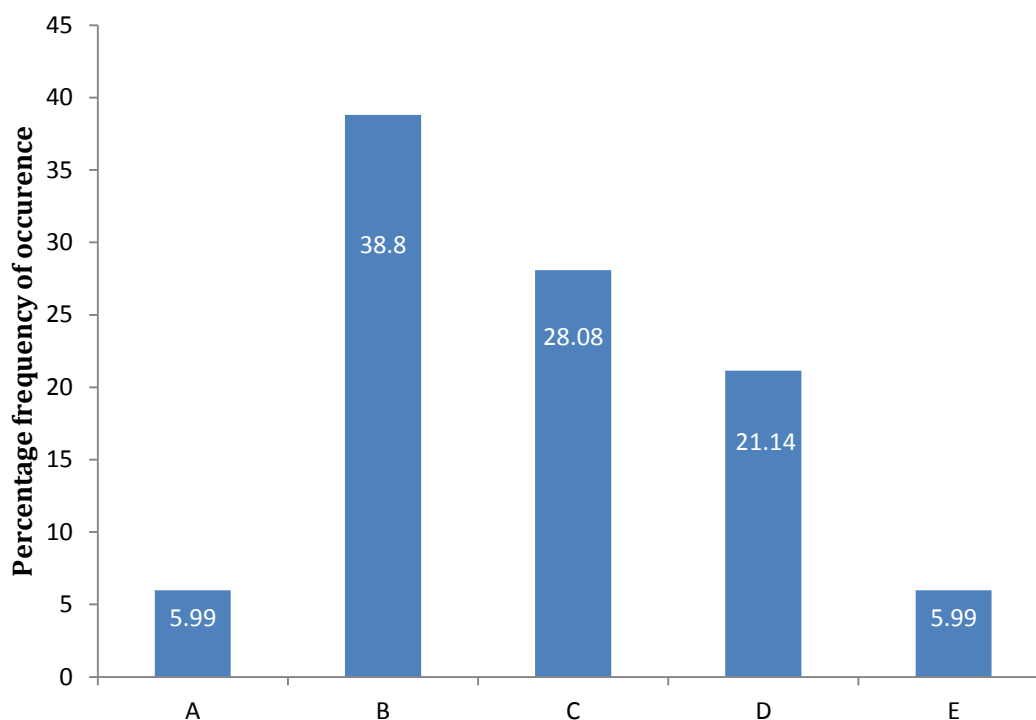
## 4. Results

Table 1: Revealed the number and percentage of the family size having 1-2 numbers is 19(5.99).The family size having 3-4 numbers is 123(38.8) The family having 5-6 numbers is 89(28.8). The family size having 7-8 numbers is 67(21.14). The family size having 9-10 numbers is 19(5.99).

Result revealed that the family size having more than four members including the child himself is 65.93 which is a high percentage. The implication is that students who came from such large families are prone to inadequate provision of Literature-in-English textbooks. Such students resolved in having the key-points or summarized version of Literature - in - English textbooks which in most cases do not treat the contents into details. Findings revealed that some students could not afford any of the Literature-in-English textbooks at all. Ngulat (2010) asserts that ability of the learner to perform well in academics is often determined with various factors some of which are beyond the control of the learner [3]. Also, Chowa (2012) declared that family size and its structure contribute to students' academic performance [4]. This corroborates with the view of Odok (2013) that students from large numbered families are characterized with poor upbringing such as poor attention, indiscipline malnutrition insufficient funds which negatively have impact on students' performance [5].

**Table 1.** The table revealed the family size of the respondents and their percentage

Family size	N	%
1-2	19	5.99
3-4	123	38.8
5-6	89	28.8
7-8	67	21.14
9-10	19	5.99



**Figure 1.** A bar chart showing students family size and their percentage

**Keys:** A= family size 0-2, B= family size 3-4, C= family size 5-6, D= family size 7-8, E= family size 9-10

**Table 2.** Questionnaire on Students' attitude in Literature - in - English

ITEMS	Yes	%	No	%
Do you like Literature - in - English as a subject ?	302	95.27	15	4.73
Are you forced to offer Literature - in - English as a subject ?	03	0.95	314	99.05
Do you attend Literature-in - English class regularly?	306	96.53	11	3.47
Do you have all the necessary reading materials for Literature - in- English?	85	26.81	232	73.19
Do you like your Literature-in-English teacher ?	301	94.95	16	5.05
Do you have the key-points texts on Literature - in -English?	275	86.75	41	12.93
You don't have Literature - in-English text books at all?	243	76.65.	74	23.34
Do you do your assignments in Literature - in - English regularly?	91	28.71	226	71.29
Are you able to participate in discussion during Literature-in-English class ?	124	39.17	193	60.88
You are passive during Literature - in - English class because you do not have the reading materials?	236	74.44	81	25.55

## 5. Discussion

The findings in table 2 revealed that 302(95.27) of the respondents declared that they like Literature - in - English as a subject. While a few percentage of 3(0.95) declared that they were forced to offer the subject. The implication is that students' interest in a subject without provision of necessary academic materials cannot yield the best academic performance. Based on the responses of the students, it was discovered that 306(96.53) attend Literature - in - English class regularly but just 85(26.81) have all the necessary prescribed materials on the subject. The implication is that success cannot be achieved without having reading materials on the subject. Since literature as a core subject in the curriculum cannot be thought in abstract, all students as a matter of compulsion must possess Literature - in- English prescribed textbooks that could enhance their performance in the subject. Most of the students from large families fall into this category. This confirms the assertion of Lee (2008) that children from large families are found to do worse than children from small families. Also, Booth and Kee (2006) affirm that children from large families perform poorly and have lower level of education [6]. 301(94.95) of the respondents declared that they like their Literature - in - English subject teacher. This implies that class management and attitude of the teacher is not a major problem affecting students' performance in literature. This corroborates with Odumbe, Simatwa and Ayodo findings (2015) that high teacher experience is one of the major factors that enhance students' performance [7]. Also, 275(86.75) of the respondents declared that they make use of key-points notes on Literature - in - English. The implication is that the summarized texts otherwise called key-points notes do not usually cover all the contents of the prescribed literature texts. 243(76.65) of the respondents claimed not to

have any prescribed literature textbooks. This implies that good performance cannot be achieved when there is inadequate provision of prescribed academic materials. Olalekan, Osakinle and Onijinginn (2013) affirm that taking care of children and making provisions for their educational needs are very important in determining the academic performance of students [8].

Also, 91(28.71) of the respondents declared that they do their assignments regularly. The implication is that parents' inadequate provision of prescribed literature textbook for their children cumulates to students' inability to carry out their assignments on the subject. There is no gainsaying that this would have negative influence on students' performance. Gabriel (2013). affirms that children's academic attainment depend on the inputs of time, money, attention and resources [9]. He further says that unavailability of study materials would certainly impede students' academic progress. 124 (39.17) of the respondents claimed to have active participation during Literature - in - English class. This invariably resulted into 236(74.44), a higher percentage of the respondents who were passive during the lesson. This corroborates with the view of Billing (2012) that students become delinquent they are most deprived of love and provisions especially academic materials that could enhance their performance [10].

## 6. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that the current poor economic situation of most families especially students from large family size, has exposed secondary students to undesirable challenges which include acquisition of relevant Literature-in English textbooks that could enhance good performance in both internal and external examinations. This could

invariably lead to students' poor performance or total drop-out of school. It is also concluded that students from large family size proper provisions and monitoring that could encourage and enhance academic performance. Therefore, large family size in no doubt has negative influence on students' attitude and performance in Literature-in-English.

## Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that parents should be sensitized on the need to make education of their children and wards a priority by making adequate provision for them.

Parents should be encouraged to give birth to only a sizable number of children which they can afford to cater for and provide adequately for their academic needs.

Government should make adequate funding into education system such that would cater for the less privileged by providing academic materials including relevant and current textbooks that could enhance students' academic performance.

Philanthropists are also encouraged to give more financial and material supports to education in order to academic performance of the students especially in Literature - in - English in Nigerian secondary schools.

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