

Domestic Chores in Childhood as predictors of Cognitive Skills and Academic Achievement of pupils in Badagry Local Government Education Authority

Fowowe Simeon Sunday¹, Olawole Omilola Amina², Ola-Alani E.K PhD³

¹Department of Early childhood Care and Education, Lagos State University of Education, Oto/Ijanikin, Lagos State,

simeonfowowe@gmail.com, 07065730467

²Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, Kwara State University Malete, Nigeria,

omilolaolawole39@gmail.com, 09052323159

³Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

Abstract: *This study examined the impact of domestic chores as predictors of cognitive skills and academic achievement of pupils in Badagry Local Government Education Authority. It employed two research questions and one research hypothesis which was tested at 0.05 level of significance. It used the descriptive survey research design and the population comprised all pupils in Badagry LGEA, Lagos State. The Simple Random Sampling Technique was used to select 120 pupils in Badagry LGEA, Lagos State and researchers' designed questionnaire was used to elicit response from the respondents. The questionnaire contained 10 items in a 4 likert-scale; ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. The instrument was validated by experts in Early Childhood and Primary Education and to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, test retest method was used. The instrument was reliably tested at $r = 0.70$ and descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and percentage was used for demographic information and research questions, while inferential statistics of t.test was used for the only research hypothesis. Findings of this study revealed that the extent at which pupils are involved in domestic chores in Badagry Local Government Area, Lagos State is high; the academic achievement of male pupils is more affected by domestic chores than that of female pupils; and there is no significant difference in the impact of domestic chores on male and female pupils' cognitive and academic achievement in Badagry LGEA. It was concluded that, domestic chores can highly impact pupils' cognitive and academic achievement in Badagry Local Government Area of Lagos. Based on the findings, it was recommended, among others, that parents should be informed that domestic chores can affect pupils' cognitive and academic achievement in school, hence the need to give appropriate chores to pupils.*

Keywords: Domestic Chores, Pupils, Academic, Achievement

Introduction

We all need to feel needed and to know that we are making contributions even as kids but they cannot feel that way if there are no chores they normally do and make contributions to the family. Parents might think their children are too young but the children may be more capable than they think as children can do a lot of chores at an early stage if encouraged. According to Murry (2019), getting clothes to the laundry or cleaning up after dinner should be part of their daily routines. Parents wait too long because they believe the children should be prepared first. Many children play games with their older siblings but abhor doing chores and resented their parents for making them endure doing them. However, it turns out that children might owe their parents an apology for all those tantrums about washing the dishes as a new study, published in the Journal Australian Occupational Therapy has suggested that making the child do chores on a regular basis might have improved his or her executive functioning – the working memory, ability to think flexibly, and self-control. It may even have improved his or her academic performance in the long run.

Children who regularly prepare meals for the family or weed the garden may perform better in other areas of life, such as academics or problem-solving based on a pool of more than 200 guardians and parents of kids between the ages of 5 and 13. Caregivers were asked about their children's chores – what they did, who they were worked for (themselves, their family, or pets, for example), and of course, whether they actually followed through and completed these tasks. Then, the researchers analyzed the data using statistical regression tests to establish whether helping out around the house was related to executive function. According to the study, the majority of household duties call for people to exercise self-control, pay attention, plan, and switch between tasks, all of which help with the development of executive functioning.

The majority of households surveyed stated that their kid played with the pet and gave it food and water. As a result, the non-significant results most likely do not indicate a low level of engagement. It is possible, however, that activities like pouring water into a bowl is not complex or challenging enough to support the development of executive functioning, as opposed to tasks, like cooking that involves several steps. Even while the study had certain drawbacks, such as the fact that it didn't take into consideration the children's socioeconomic status, which is known to be associated with executive function and the amount of home work that kids are expected to do, the findings nevertheless have significant significance. Executive function is a crucial set of cognitive abilities,

and the researchers hope that their research will provide new opportunities for both children and adults who wish to develop this area of cognition.

Household duties are beneficial to the family and children and household chores are a great learning opportunity for kids. Children learn about self-care, household maintenance, and family care through tasks. They gain knowledge about how to prepare food, clean, organize, and maintain a garden, among other life skills. Children gain experience with interpersonal skills, such as effective communication, negotiation, cooperation, and team work through chores. When kids participate in family activities, it makes them feel capable and accountable. Even if they do not enjoy the chore, if they persevere, they will feel the satisfaction of doing it.

Moreover, sharing household duties can improve communication between families and lower tension. When kids pitch in, parents have less work to do and chores get done faster. As a result, the family will have more time to spend having fun together. To encourage kids to participate in housework, it is ideal to start by selecting chores that are appropriate for kids' ages and skill levels. Too difficult tasks can be risky or even dangerously aggravating, and too easy tasks may be uninteresting. If the parents select tasks appropriate for their age, even small kids may assist with chores. It can begin with straightforward tasks like packing toys. Such chores demonstrate the value of the child's participation. It is crucial to consider duties or chores that will involve the youngster in taking care of the entire family. One easy one is, having the child assist with setting the table or emptying it. These kinds of jobs are likely to instill a sense of engagement and responsibility in the youngster. This can support the notion that everyone in the family contributes to the smooth operation of the home. Children older than six years can choose the chores they would like to perform.

Doing the work with the children until they can do it alone and being clear about everyone's responsibilities for the day or week are some ways to encourage them to participate in chores. To make them easier to recall, parents can put them in writing, expressing appreciation for the children's efforts and expressing an interest in how they were completed while applauding good behavior and use a chore reward chart to keep track of completed tasks while awarding modest incentives like selecting a TV show or family meal. Age-appropriate chores for kids include: Toddlers (2–3 years): Gather toys and books. Preschoolers (4-5 years): Set the table for meals, assist with meal preparation under supervision, assist with helping to sort clean clothes into piles for each family member, ready to fold, and assist with grocery shopping and putting groceries away. Children in school age (6 to 11): water the garden and interior plants, feed the pets, assist with hanging out and folding laundry, remove trash, assist with food planning and shopping, assist with meal preparation and serving, all under adult supervision.

Most of the studies up to this point have focused on the relationship between gender domestic roles and school enrolment. It has been commonly observed that in many countries, the majority of working children are enrolled in school. For example, Ravallion and Wodon (2010) found that increases in enrolment in a sample of girls in Bangladesh were not associated with appreciable decreases in gender domestic roles. They concluded that the adverse consequences of child labour on human capital development are likely to be small. However, it is possible that working children remain enrolled in school but do not attend as regularly. Several recent studies have examined that possibility. Boozer and Suri (2011) studied children aged 7-18 in Ghana and it was concluded that an hour of child labour reduced school attendance by approximately 0.38 hours. Children who are already financially supporting their family may be less motivated to succeed in school, which will negatively impact both their learning and future chances.

Mohammed (2019), in his comparative study on the performance of pupils from Addis Ababa and other parts of the country, found that gender roles performed by pupils after school, such as herding by boys, fetching fire wood, and fetching water had an effect on their academic performance. Tsige (2011), in her study on the performances of pupils in primary schools, found that girls were more affected in performing domestic roles; especially, those whose mothers were working had great impact on their performance.

According to Victoria and Mario (2016), pupils' involvement in gender domestic roles affects their academic achievement. In a study they conducted which aimed at establishing how gender domestic roles affected their performance, they used unique data on 3rd and 4th graders in 9 Latin American countries. Least squares estimates of the impact of children involvement on gender roles test scores were biased downward, which realized statistically significant relationship. Average math and language test scores were 16% and 11% worse, respectively, for children who worked one standard deviation above the mean, in line with predictions of the negative effects of child labour on educational outcomes.

Jemeson and Luza (2012) explored the impact of one child's working on their siblings. Because earlier born children are able to command higher wages than their younger brothers and sisters, this additional income may allow parents to send the late born siblings to school. They found that in Brazil, first-born males were more likely to work than their younger siblings. Last-born male children were less likely to be child labourers than their older siblings. For girls, first-borns are less likely to go to school than later born girls. This possibility that child labour adds schooling opportunity through income reallocations within the household has not been adequately explored. While gender domestic roles appears to be associated with reductions in school attendance, it still does not follow that child labour lowers the development of marketable skills. Many schools in developing countries are of poor quality so that children may receive better informal or on-the-job training outside school. On the other hand, changes in attendance would understate the adverse effect of child labour on human capital accumulation if a child who attends school despite working is too tired to learn or has no time for homework.

Lillydahl (2020) reported that male pupils in school actually raised grade point average (GPA) as long as the pupils worked less than 13.5 hours per week. Working more than that had no adverse consequences on performance. Ehrenberg and Sherman (2017)

concluded that domestic work had little effect on performance of female pupils than male, although it raised the probability of dropout and lengthened the time to graduate. School attainment is presumed to decrease as child labour increases because working while in school disturbs the learning of basic numeracy and literacy. The more the child works, the lower the school attainment.

Francavilla, Guarcello, and Lyon (2013) investigated the effect of domestic work on progress of male and female pupils in school. The analysis focused on school and domestic work experiences (up to the end of secondary school) of individuals who were aged 15-25 at the time of the survey, irrespective of whether they lived with their families or on their own. The gender difference in the propensity to work is particularly strong at the level of secondary school. Moreover, non-working girls are significantly less likely to succeed in school at any school level. Hence, there is a gender gap amongst nonworking children. However, this gap disappears for working children after school entry. The study revealed that male students significantly is affected by domestic work than their counterparts. Using data on 3rd and 4th graders in Latin America, Sánchez, Peter, Orazem, and Victoria (2013) discovered that performance on mathematics and language tests was lower in all countries tested when the child worked outside the home, and the impact grew larger when the child reported working many rather than few hours.

Heady (2013) used data from a unique Living Standards Measurement Survey in Ghana that also included student test results. He discovered that child labour had a significant impact on learning achievement in reading and mathematics but had a relatively little impact on school attendance. Even after adjusting for the child's natural ability using Raven's test, the effect persisted strongly. The negative impact of child labor on students' learning was linked to weariness or a lack of motivation in academic performance rather than child time in school because attendance was unaffected.

Victoria and Mario (2011) found out that pupils' involvement in domestic roles affects their academic achievement and the findings indicated that 13 (76.5%) strongly agreed that gender roles by pupils affected their academic performance while 4 (23.5%) agreed. In the statement that sought whether pupils come to school late because of house chores, 3 (17.6%) strongly agreed, 8 (47.1%) agreed, 3 (17.6%) were undecided while the same number of head teachers disagreed with the statement. Pupils' responses showed that sometimes they were late for school because of the domestic roles that they performed. This was stated by 103 (49%) pupils, while 32 (15.2%) stated to the affirmative and 64 (30.5%) denied.

Statement of the problem

As the review of the literature suggests, there are very few studies of the impact of domestic chores on cognitive and academic achievement at the primary education level. Most studies are still in working paper form, so it is probable that there are other studies which the researchers are not yet aware. Nevertheless, these are the gaps in knowledge of the damage caused by gender domestic roles based on the literature that has been identified. This study therefore aims at filling the gaps. It is not known if there is a threshold level of hours of work at which damage begins, or if any child labour causes damage. Results from this study are expected to fill that gap. There are only few studies that have examined the long-term consequences of gender domestic roles, and work on long-term effect on academic

performance and this work is expected to further advance

Research Question

The following research questions were raised and answered:

1. To what extent are pupils involved in domestic chores in Badagry Local Government Area, Lagos State?
2. To what extent do domestic chores of male and female pupils affect academic Achievement.

Research Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant impact of domestic chores on male and female pupils' cognitive and academic achievement in Badagry Local Government Area, Lagos State.

Research Methodology

Descriptive survey research design was used for this study. The population comprised all pupils in Badagry Lagos Local Government Area, Lagos State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 120 pupils in Badagry LGEA, Lagos State and researchers' designed questionnaire was used to elicit response from respondents. The questionnaire contained 10 items in a 4 likert-scale; ranging from strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree. Instrument was validated by experts in Early Childhood and Primary Education. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, test retest method was used. The instrument was reliably tested at r = 0.70. Descriptive statistics of mean, standard deviation and percentage was used for demographic information and research questions, while inferential statistics of t.test was used for research hypothesis.

Results

Research Question One: To what extent are pupils involved in domestic chores in Badagry

Local Government Area, Lagos State?

Table 1: Table showing the extent at which pupils are involved in domestic chores in Badagry Local Government Area, Lagos State

| S/N | ITEM | SA | A | D | SD | MEAN |
|-----|--|----------|----------|----------|--------|------|
| 1 | I come to school late because of the domestic chores I perform at home | 38(34.5) | 48(43.6) | 22(20.0) | 2(1.8) | 3.11 |

| | | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|----------|----------|----------|--------|------|
| 2 | I always perform some chores at home and it prevent me from doing my homework | 47(42.7) | 45(40.9) | 15(13.6) | 3(2.7) | 3.24 |
| 3 | I have many chores at home that prevent me from reading my books | 38(34.5) | 48(43.6) | 18(16.4) | 6(5.5) | 3.07 |
| 4 | I always get tired after doing my home chores | 46(41.8) | 43(39.1) | 19(17.3) | 2(1.8) | 3.21 |
| 5 | The chores I perform at home does not affect my studies | 36(32.7) | 49(44.5) | 17(15.5) | 8(7.3) | 3.03 |
| 6 | Performing domestic chores improves my cognitive ability and academic achievement | 52(47.3) | 39(35.5) | 15(13.6) | 4(3.6) | 3.26 |
| 7 | My parents help in doing the chore together which helps me finish fast and allows me time to read | 41(37.3) | 46(41.8) | 19(17.3) | 4(3.6) | 3.13 |
| 8 | I am fully involved in all domestic chores at home and it has nothing to do with my academic achievement | 47(42.7) | 45(40.9) | 15(13.6) | 3(2.7) | 3.24 |
| 9 | While performing my domestic chores I recite what I was taught in school | 46(41.8) | 51(46.4) | 12(10.9) | 1(0.9) | 3.29 |
| 10 | Performing chores at home affects my mental ability and achievement in school generally | 38(34.5) | 49(44.5) | 15(13.6) | 8(7.3) | 3.06 |
| Weighted mean 3.16 | | | | | | |

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Table 1 above shows the extent are pupils are involved in domestic chores in Badagry Local Government Area, Lagos State. It was revealed that the I come to school late because of the domestic chores I perform at home (3.11), I always perform some chores at home and it prevent me from doing my homework (3.24). I have many chores at home that prevent me from reading my books (3.07), I always get tired after doing my home chores (3.21), The chores I perform at home does not affect my studies (3.03), Performing domestic chores improves my cognitive ability and academic achievement (3.26), My parent help in doing the chore together which helps me finish fast and allows me time to read (3.13), I am fully involved in all domestic chores at home and it has nothing to do with my academic achievement (3.24), While performing my domestic chores I recite what I was taught in school (3.29), and Performing chores at home affects my mental ability and achievement in school generally (3.06). The overall weighted average mean was 3.16 which indicated that the calculated mean (3.16) is greater than the fixed mean (2.50). This showed that the extent at which pupils involved in domestic chores in Badagry Local Government Area, Lagos State is high.

Research Question Two: To what extent do domestic chores of male and female pupils affect academic achievement.

Table 2: Table showing extent that domestic chores of male and female pupils affect academic achievement.

| | Gender | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|--------|--------|----|-------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Gender | Male | 59 | 32.59 | 4.97 | 0.65 |
| | Female | 51 | 30.53 | 5.41 | 0.76 |

Table 2: Shows the extent that domestic chores of male and female pupils affect academic achievement. Male respondents having the mean of 32.59; while female respondents having the mean of 30.53. From the analysis above, it is evident that male respondents were found with the highest mean than female respondents, which implies that, the academic achievement of male pupils are more affected by domestic chores than female pupils.

Research Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant impact of domestic chores on male and female pupils cognitive and academic achievement in Badagry LGEA.

Table 3: Summary of t-test result showing the impact of domestic chores on male and female pupils cognitive and academic achievement in Badagry LGEA.

| | Gender | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | T | F | df | Sig | Decision |
|--------|--------|----|-------|-----------------------|------|------|-----|------|----------|
| Gender | Male | 59 | 32.59 | 4.97 | 2.08 | 0.17 | 108 | 0.68 | Not Sig |
| | Female | 51 | 30.53 | 5.41 | | | | | |

Table 3 shows summary of t-test result showing the impact of domestic chores on male and female pupils cognitive and academic achievement in Badagry LGEA. It was revealed that respondents in private schools had mean score 27.90 with standard deviation 3.94 while respondents in public schools had mean score 27.36 with standard deviation 4.11, the T_{cal} was -0.46, degree of freedom 48, F was 0.95 and significant level of 0.34 ($P > 0.05$). This implies that there is no significant difference in the impact of domestic chores on male and female pupils cognitive and academic achievement in Badagry LGEA. Therefore, the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant impact of domestic chores on male and female pupils cognitive and academic achievement in Badagry LGEA was not rejected.

Discussion of findings

The results of this study showed a high level of student involvement in household duties in Badagry Local Government Area, Lagos State. This suggests that students' academic success in Badagry LGEA, Lagos State, is significantly impacted by household tasks. This result is consistent with Victoria and Mario's (2011) conclusion that students' participation in household duties has an impact on their academic performance. According to the research, students frequently get to school late due of household responsibilities, which negatively impact their academic performance.

Additionally, it was discovered that male students' academic success is more negatively impacted by household duties than female students. This research suggests that home duties have a greater impact on male students' academic achievement than on female students. This might be the case because female students are more adept at multitasking and can successfully handle household duties without having an adverse effect on their academic performance. This conclusion contradicts Ehrenberg and Sherman's (2017) finding that domestic employment had no impact on the academic performance of female students compared to male students, while increasing the likelihood of dropping out and delaying graduation. Because working while in school interferes with learning basic numeracy and literacy skills, it is assumed that school achievement will decline as child labor rates rise. The more the child works, the lower the school attainment

Last but not least, the results showed that household duties have no appreciable effect on either the cognitive or academic achievement of male or female students in Badagry LGEA. This discovery backs, according to Lillydahl (2020), male students' grade point averages (GPAs) increased when they worked fewer than 13.5 hours per week while attending school. Performance was not harmed by working longer than that. This result contradicts Francavilla, Guarcello, and Lyon's (2013) findings, which looked at how domestic work affected male and female students' academic advancement regardless of whether they lived with their families or on their own, the study is focused on the educational and domestic work experiences of people who were 15 to 25 at the time of the survey (up until the completion of secondary school). At the secondary school level, the gender gap in tendency to work is very pronounced. In addition, girls who do not work have a considerably lower likelihood of excelling in school at any grade level. As a result, there is a gender gap among children who are not employed. However, for working children, this difference vanishes once they start school. The research found that male students were more negatively impacted by household work than their female counterparts.

Conclusion

Domestic duties might have a significant impact on students' cognitive and academic progress in Badagry Local Government Area, Lagos State; according to the study's findings, domestic tasks also have a greater impact on male students' academic achievement than female students', despite the fact that there was no discernible difference between male and female students' cognitive and academic achievement in Badagry LGEA.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Children should be assigned age appropriate chores, and parents should be told that household duties can affect students' cognitive and academic performance in school.

2. Both male and female students should be encouraged to participate in acceptable household tasks as this can enhance academic performance and cognitive ability in one way or another.
3. School administrators should be informed that domestic chores do not necessarily affect pupils' cognitive and academic achievement, so special attention should be given to the latecomers or absentees in order to find out their reasons for coming late or being absent in school.

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