

Managing Learners' Diversity and Academic Performance in Economics among Senior Secondary School Students

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Abstract

This study examined managing learners' diversity and students' academic performance in Economics in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised all the 7,251 students in the senior section in public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone in the 2022/2023 academic session. Using the multistage sampling technique involving stratified and simple sampling techniques and the Yameni formula, a total number of 279 SS2 students were systematically drawn from the population of the study. The instruments for data collection were Learners' Diversity Questionnaire (LDQ) and Economics Performance Test (EPT). The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha, which ranged from .75-.80. Data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis at .05 level of significance. The results of the analyses showed that family structure and cultural diversity are all significantly related to students' academic performance in economics. Based on the findings, it was recommended that parents of children from low social status should give their children the best moral upbringing at home before enrolling them in school. Parents should prepare their children psychologically, socially and academically to confidently learn and adapt to the language, culture, dressing patterns and positive values of their host community, particularly when they belong to a minority group, to avoid feeling inferior or intimidated by other children.

Keywords: Managing, Learners Diversity, Academic Performance, Economics.

Introduction

Academic performance of students in secondary school in the West African Examination Council Examination (WAEC) in recent times has shown to be abysmal, and the ugly trend has been

maintained all through the school level (Adaramaja et al., 2024). This is even more in a critical Social Science subject like Government, Geography, and particularly Economics. Economics is one of the most important subjects in secondary schools in Nigeria as it studies man's behaviour in the use and management of resources to meet human needs. Economics is the study of how individuals, firms and governments make choices concerning the allocation of scarce resources to satisfy unlimited wants (Anderson, 2024); similarly, Samuelson and Nordhaus (2010) define Economics as the study of how people and society choose to employ scarce resources with alternative uses to produce goods and services (Sowell, & Emerson, 2010). The study of Economics is important to learners and society because it develops critical thinking, financial literacy, decision-making and an understanding of production, consumption, employment, markets and public policies. For senior secondary school students, academic performance in Economics is particularly important because it reflects the extent to which they have acquired the knowledge and analytical skills needed for further education and responsible economic participation. However, differences in learners' abilities, backgrounds, learning styles and educational needs make effective management of learner diversity essential for improving students' academic performance in Economics. It is a course with the choice that informs and influences one daily lifestyle. The study on learner diversity and students' academic performance in Economics highlights the significance of recognising and addressing the diverse needs of learners in educational settings.

Academic performance is undoubtedly one of the methods used to assess a student's ability, capability, talents, and even success when the student graduates with open context. Academic performance as defined by Bartolome (2021) is a measure of the indicative and responsive capacities that convey, in an estimated fashion, what a person has learned as a result of an educational or training process. In Nigeria, the academic performance of students has been a topic of concern among educators, policymakers, and stakeholders. The issue of poor performance cuts across subjects including Economics. Many students in Economics in Nigerian secondary schools are not performing well in both internal and external examinations. If this situation is not promptly addressed, the entire system may collapse, thereby jeopardising the future of the country and resulting in a shortage of competent economic planners and analysts. Table 1 gives a clear description of the academic performance of Nigerian students in Economics in the West African Examination Council (WAEC) examination.

From table 1, for each of the years under review, more than 50 per cent of the enrolled students failed the summative evaluation at that level. This situation has attracted so much attention from educators, scholars, governments, NGOs and international agencies. Students' poor academic performance may sometimes be influenced by learner diversity, as students differ in their backgrounds, abilities, learning styles, prior knowledge and educational needs. Learner diversity refers to the variations among learners in areas such as socioeconomic status, culture, language, academic achievement and learning abilities (Farooqi, et al., 2024; Mezzanotte, 2022). Recognising and effectively managing these differences is therefore essential for creating inclusive learning environments and improving students' academic performance in Economics.

Learners' diversity is dependent on the family structure of the learner or student and the family structure diversity refers to the dynamics that exist within a society. This can include nuclear families, single-parent families, blended families, same-sex parent families, and more (Ahmed, 2024). Family diversity can influence students' academic performance in Economics through

various factors such as parental involvement, socioeconomic status, and access to resources (Yang, 2023). For example, students from economically disadvantaged families may face financial barriers that limit their access to educational resources, which can impact their academic performance in economics.

Table 1: Result of Senior Secondary School III Economics Students for the period 2019-2021

Examination year	Total enrolment	No. of students Pass%	No. of students Fail%
2019	360(100%)	167(46.39%)	193(53.61%)
2020	620(100%)	257(41.45%)	363(58.54%)
2021	789(100%)	331(41.98%)	458(58.05%)
Total	1,769 (100%)	755(42.68%)	1,014(52.96%)

Source: Examination and Certificate Unit, Cross River State Ministry of Education (2023)

Students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds may face language barriers, varying interpretations of economic concepts, and different perspectives on economic systems, leading to unique challenges and opportunities in the classroom. Cultural diversity refers to the presence of multiple cultural groups within a society or educational setting. It encompasses differences in ethnicity, language, religion, customs, and traditions. Cultural diversity can influence students' performance in Economics by enriching classroom discussions with diverse perspectives and experiences (Gulzar, et al., 2024). However, cultural diversity can also present challenges, such as language barriers or differing educational expectations, which may affect students' engagement and performance in economics (Brent, 2005).

It is important to note that the relationship between these forms of diversity and students' academic performance in Economics is complex and multifaceted. While diversity can bring unique perspectives and strengths to the study of Economics, it can also pose challenges and disparities that need to be addressed through inclusive teaching practices, targeted support, and equitable educational opportunities. Schools and educators play a crucial role in recognising and valuing diversity, creating inclusive learning environments, and providing resources and support tailored to the diverse needs of students. It is against this background that this study is being proposed to investigate the relationship between learners' diversity and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Economics in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The academic performance of students in Economics in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria has continued to decline, giving much concern to scholars and stakeholders across board. The inability of students to pass Economics in WAEC (as shown in table 1) is a threat to the educational development of the study area. It is so important that the ugly trend be halted for the future of the state and the country at large especially now that Nigeria is dire need of brilliant and ingenious economist to find solution to the economic quagmire the country finds itself. The poor academic performance of students in Economics is serious problem.

Several efforts have been made to resolve the problem. Educators and scholars have made several publications to address the issue of poor academic performance by students. Several local and international conferences on students' academic progress have been held. Governments and international agencies have pumped so much money into the education sector. All of this is to

enhance students' academic performance. However, and regrettably, this problem has not been solved.

Despite efforts to ensure inclusive education, the impact of learners' diversity on students' academic performance in economics remains largely unexplored. This is more so in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. This area, characterised by its unique social, economic, and cultural dynamics, houses a diverse student population with varying educational experiences, socioeconomic backgrounds, and learning needs. Due to the lack of comprehensive research addressing the relationship between learners' diversity and students' academic performance in economics, it has been difficult to state categorically the role of learners' diversity in the problem of students' academic performance.

Therefore, by exploring the relationship between learner' diversity factors and students' achievements in economics, this research intends to identify specific challenges and opportunities associated with learners' diversity that affect academic performance. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer this question: Does learners' diversity such as family structure and cultural diversity relate with students' academic performance in Economics in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to critically ascertain the influence of managing learners' diversity and students' academic performance in Economics in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The study hopes to find out whether there was any relationship between learners' diversity and students' academic performance in Economics.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How does family structure relate with students' academic performance in Economics?
2. How does cultural diversity relate with students' academic performance in Economics?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study

1. There is no significant relationship between family diversity and academic performance of students in Economics
2. Cultural diversity does not significantly relate with academic performance of students in Economics.

Method

The area covered by the study was the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was survey design. The population of the study comprised all the one thousand (1000) students in the senior section of public secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State in the 2022/2023 academic session. However, for the purpose of this study, only SSS 2 was considered. This population, according to Cross River State Education Board (2023) is 7,251 students. The sample involved in the study was 300 which was randomly selected. The Data for the study was collected through the use of questionnaire and achievement test. Using the multistage sampling procedure involving stratified and simple sampling techniques and the Yameni formula, a total number of 279 SS2 students were

systematically drawn from the population of the study. The instruments for data collection were Learners' Diversity Questionnaire (LDQ) and Economics Performance Test (EPT). The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha, which ranged from .75-.80. Data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis at .05 level of significance.

Learners' diversity

All around the world, students differ in academic performance level, learning rate and learning styles. Worrisome still, there are students who are differing in ethnicity, culture, social class, home language and gender. Some have disabilities and some are gifted or talented in one or more areas. These students in these situations are called learner diversity or student diversity. Learner diversity refers to both the group and individual differences in our students, it exists in every classroom and it can have a powerful effect on learning. These learners are influence by several factors or sources which are language, gender, culture and socioeconomic status (Redmon, et al., 2021).

Learners' diversity occuppies most discussions in education. According to Brent (2005), diversity in education usually refers to the effects of gender and ethnicity on students' performance. Our classrooms are heterogeneous combination of pupils who come with diverse identities. Centre for Excellence and Teaching (2008) observed that our classrooms are filled with diversity and each student is culturally unique and brings a core set of values, perspectives, concerns and agendas to the learning environment. Understanding the individuality of each student, apart from stereotypes, is important for effective teaching." According to Watson, et al., (2007), students are individuals who differ in the ways in which they learn, as there are different learning styles, modalities, interests, talents and personalities, all of which affect the ways in which teachers design instruction. It further refers students who, because of gender, ethnic background, socioeconomic status, learning styles, disabilities, or limited English proficiency, may have academic needs that require varied instructional strategies to help them learn.

As noted by Yin and Chai (2020), every human being is unique, as all are born with unique strengths and weaknesses while some are born into a unique family in a specific time space within a particular socio-cultural context and interact with the world and others. Some develop unique understandings of others. Regardless of the unique qualities each individual possesses, everyone needs to learn and develop. In any well-developed region, the recognition of diversity in learners' characteristics and the common need for all learners to develop potential to the fullest undergirds the missions, policies, and practices of education entities.

According to Usman, and Madudili, (2019), students with different backgrounds and abilities may have distinct learning needs, preferences, and levels of prior knowledge, which can influence academic engagement, comprehension, and overall achievement in Economics. Furthermore, the interaction between students' characteristics and instructional approaches can either enhance or hinder learning experiences (Umoru, & Haruna, 2018; Ibrahim et al., 2018).

According to Cornelius-Ukpepi, Edu and Ndifon (2017), the range of diversity among pupils may be in their language, ability, culture, development, learning styles, gender, socio-economic status, etc. The authors held that this diversity among students may have some impact on their learning outcomes. However, diversity factors influencing learner academic performance, according to Centre for Excellence and Teaching (2008), include the following: Socioeconomic Status: Students from different socioeconomic backgrounds may have varying access to educational

resources, financial constraints, and exposure to economic concepts in their daily lives, which can affect their engagement and performance in economics education.

Centre for Excellence and Teaching (2008) further noted that instructional practices have implications for in this discourse; understanding the impact of learner diversity on students' academic performance in Economics can inform instructional practices aimed at addressing the diverse needs and enhancing the learning experiences of all students. Strategies such as differentiated instruction, culturally responsive teaching, inclusive pedagogies, and the use of technology can help create an inclusive classroom environment that promotes equitable learning opportunities and supports the academic success of students with diverse backgrounds and abilities.

Family Structure Diversity

A family is a unit of social life built on emotional ties such as marriage, blood ties, and adoption. It's characterised by a common dwelling, economic cooperation, and reproduction of offspring. An ideal family structure is beneficial to a child's well-being because it ensures that the youngster will receive adequate support, strength, and stability from the family. As the cornerstone of civilisation, the family is crucial to a child's whole development (Bartolome, 2021). "Family structure" is a word that refers to the members of a household who are tied by marriage or heredity, and it is most commonly used when there is at least one child under the age of 18 living in the home. Two-parent, one-parent, and "living with neither parent" are the terms used today to describe these configurations (e.g., adoptive families, grandparent families or other relatives, foster care families, institutionalised children). Other changes in family life since the mid-1940s have resulted in more intricate family structure designations, such as blended families, single-parent plus partner families (cohabiting couples of opposite sex and same-sex, multigenerational families, and binuclear families) (Palsey, & Petren, 2015). Xing (2023), family structure is how the members of a family are constituted. It contains both demographic factors and emotional pattern factors. The effects of family members' demographic size and emotional ties on physiological, psychological, and behavioural aspects have been widely concerned by society. The author classified family structure into four parts, which are one-child and non-one-child families, single-parent and non-single-parent families, trunk families, and orphaned. Family diversity refers to the difference in family background. It entails differences in family history, training, socioeconomic background, educational background and religious background of the family the learner comes from.

The researchers further mentioned the other factors to include lack of textbooks, poor teaching method, absence of professional growth and development of teachers and the student's language background. Based on these findings, the researcher outlined measures capable of enhancing improved students' academic achievement in the subject. This study revealed that it is not only mother tongue that influences students' academic performance. However, mother tongue is one of the factors. The influence of mother tongue lies on its interference in spelling, pronunciation, etc. Students who come from a home that mostly speak English or whose parents are fluent speakers of English language may not find it difficult to cope with the instructional dynamics in an English-speaking school. Conversely, Kosonen (2005) opined that students are more likely to enrol and succeed in school when they are given an opportunity to learn in their mother tongue, while Benson (2002) noted that parents of such students usually communicate their teachers and are fully involved in the learning of their wards. According to Hovens (2002), education-based mother

tongue has a significant benefit on disadvantaged group of children especially those from rural areas as well as girls that don't seem to have enough exposure to an official language, who also have the tendency to longer stay in school. This category of learners does better as they don't repeat grade as much if they receive instructions in their mother tongue. In a study by Chisunum and Ejie (2014) on the importance of English language in Nigeria, students' poor performance in English Language examinations, attitudes of students toward instruction, communicative competence and the importance of mother tongue as a medium of instruction; suggestions were made to the effect that the use of mother tongue should be made compulsory so as to enable the children to have a mental translation of all concepts presented in English and also to gain sufficient meaning of the concepts. They also noted that a citizen that is literate even only in the mother tongue will be sufficiently equipped to live a useful and meaningful life in the fast-changing world.

Cultural Diversity

Cultural diversity refers to the difference in the cultural and/or ethnic origin of learners. Everyone comes from a particular place, and there are certain perceptions and world views that are shared by people in such communities or cultural origin. Cultural diversity is the quality of diverse or different cultures, as opposed to monoculture. It has a variety of meanings in different contexts, sometimes applying to cultural products like art works in museums or entertainment available online, and sometimes applying to the variety of human cultures or traditions in a specific region, or in the world as a whole. It can also refer to the inclusion of different cultural perspectives in an organisation or society (UNESCO, 2009). Diversity recognises the differences between people and includes different factors, such as religion, political orientation, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, race, ethnicity, language, socio-economic status, and family structure. Cultural diversity in the classroom involves celebrating those differences and creating a culture of inclusion and acceptance among students and the greater school community.

The importance of cultural diversity in a classroom, according to GoGuardian (2019), is that a lack of diversity and inclusiveness in the classroom can lead to students feeling isolated, can lead to increased stress levels for minority or otherwise marginalised students, and cause them to be victims of bullying at higher rates. Minority students, LGBTQ students, and students who engage in behaviour that deviates from accepted gender norms are considered at higher risk of being bullied, which can lead to problems with academic performance, decreases in mood, and even suicide attempts. Intentionally creating learning environments in which students are empowered to acknowledge and celebrate differences is paramount to their safe education and protection.

Educators agree that teachers who are culturally responsive and proficient, and perhaps diverse themselves, can help address racial disparities in student achievement. Part of an educator's job is to help students understand the impact of each of their lives on one another and their ability to impact and shape the world at large. By encouraging and celebrating diversity in your classrooms, you can empower students to feel safe, build healthy relationships, and make meaningful impact on others. Safe learning spaces are diverse learning spaces.

The study adopted the multistage sampling technique involving stratified and simple sampling techniques. The population was stratified into Local Government Areas (LGA). The stratified sampling technique was used to select LGAs in the education zone. The simple random sampling was actually used to select the elements in the population. This technique involves the selection of respondents in such a way that each member of the population is given equal opportunity of being

selected. Accordingly, the seven local government education authorities (LGEA) were given equal opportunity of being selected. The 'hat and draw' method was used. Their names were written in pieces of papers, folded and put in a container from which four (4) were be selected. After that, the same process was employed to select the number of schools to be used. On getting to the schools, the simple random sampling was used to select the students (respondents). This time around, the 'yes' or 'no' method was used. Students in the school had to pick from a basket containing folded pieces of papers on which it is written 'YES' 'NO'. Whoever picks 'YES' was selected and used for the study. The study sample consists of 279 respondents in the study area. This was derived from the Yemini formula for calculating sample. The formula and calculation are presented below:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where N = 7251
1 = constant
e = error (.05)

Therefore,
Sample size (n) = $\frac{7251}{1 + 7251 (.05)^2}$
= $\frac{7251}{1 + 18.13}$
= 279.03, approximately 279.

Table 2: Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient estimate of the scales in the instrument for the study

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	A
Family background diversity	6	12.12	3.00	.77
Cultural diversity	6	12.74	3.22	.76
Academic performance	20	13.08	4.71	.75

Table 3: Coding sheet for the questionnaires

S/N	Item	Unit	Code	Column
1.	Sex	Male	1	2
		Female	2	
2	Age	12-15years	1	3
		16-19years	2	
3	Family structure diversity	Add scores on items of section B of the LDQ	1-6	6
4	Cultural diversity	Add scores on items of section B of the LDQ	7-12	7
5	Academic achievement	Economics Performance Test (EPT)	13-18	8

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between family structure diversity and students' academic performance in Economics.

The variables in null hypothesis 1 are family structure diversity (independent variable) and students' academic performance in Economics (dependent variable). The null hypothesis was tested using data from 270 secondary school students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria (the sample was actually 279, however, only 270 were fit for use). The Pearson product moment correlation Analysis was used for the data analysis and the result obtained was presented in table 5. Table 5 showed the result of the Pearson product moment correlation Analysis indicating the relation between family structure diversity and students' academic performance. The result showed that at $p=0.05$ level of significance and 268 degrees of freedom, the calculated r of 0.61 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value of r (0.61) is greater than the significance level (0.000), it implies that the result is significant marking the rejection of the null hypothesis. To that effect, the relationship between the social diversity and students' academic performance is significant. This result indicates that the family structure diversity has a significant relationship with students' academic performance. On the direction and magnitude, the result shows a positive and strong relationship between the variables, which implies the more favourable the family background, the higher the academic performance.

Table 4: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of family structure diversity and students' academic performance (N=270)

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r-cal.	p-value
Family structure diversity	270	14.33	1.75	0.61	0.000*
Students' academic performance	270	16.81	2.56		

* $P<0.05$, $df=268$, $r\text{-cal}=0.61$.

Hypothesis 2: Cultural diversity does not significantly relate to students' academic performance in Economics.

The variables in null hypothesis are cultural diversity (independent variable) and students' academic performance (dependent variable). The null hypothesis was tested using data from 270 students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The Pearson Product Moment Relationship Analysis was used for the data analysis and the result obtained was presented in table 6. Table 6 showed the result of the Person Product Moment Correlation Analysis to determine the relation between cultural diversity and students' academic performance. Result of analysed data collected from 270 students in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 268 degrees of freedom, the calculated r of 0.73 is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value of r (0.73) is greater than the significant level (0.000), it implies that the result is significant marking the rejection of the null hypothesis. To that effect, the relationship between the cultural diversity and students' academic performance is significant. On the direction and magnitude, the result shows a positive and

average relationship between the variables, which implies a culturally advantageous group of learner's have a higher to for better academic performance.

Table 5: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of cultural diversity and students' academic performance (N=270)

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	r-cal.	p-value
Cultural diversity	270	14.43	1.75	0.43	0.000*
Students' academic performance	270	16.81	2.56		

*P<0.05, df=268, r-cal=0.43.

Discussion

Family structure diversity and students' academic performance

The first hypothesis directing this study states that there is no significant relationship between family structure diversity and students' academic performance in Economics in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. It was the finding of this study that the nature of the family a child comes from has a way of interfering with the level of academic output of the students. Some students come from single parent home while others are from intact family, yet others from small family and others from large families. Each of these has its unique implication on the academic performance of the student. This finding agrees with Uwaifo, (2008), who found out that there were substantial variations in academic achievement between pupils from single-parent families and those from two-parent families. The findings also revealed substantial variations in male and female pupils' academic performance when comparing two types of family configurations. Based on these findings, it was suggested that school counsellors be employed in all schools and that they provide required support to kids, particularly those from single-parent families, in order to help them overcome their emotional issues. The position of this author implies that children from household based on single-parent upbringing do not give room for proper training of the child because only one parent cannot look at the child effectively.

Still in line with the present finding, Xing (2023) research focused on exploring the impact of various family factors on student academic performance, such as family structure, parental relationships, and family economic status conditions, and found that some family factors will have a direct impact on students' academic performance, for example, family income and education investment. They also concluded that family structure, family relationships, and the like are more likely to affect children's physical and psychological conditions, therefore influencing their academic performance. More so, Sial et al. (2023) took up a study that looks at how high school students' academic performance is affected by family engagement. Examining the effect of family participation on high school students' academic achievement was the aim of their study, which also focused on the ways in which parents may support their children's academic endeavours to promote positive results. The study's conclusions show that family involvement has a significant and positive impact on children' academic achievement, including improved grades, improved attendance, and an increased desire to learn. This is similar to the study of Alabi et al. (2021), whose focus was the impact of familiar instability and students' academic performance. From the

data they collected from secondary school students in South West Nigeria, the analysis's conclusion demonstrated a strong correlation between secondary school students' academic success (junior and senior) and familial instability. Based on the results, it was suggested, among other things, that couples use marriage counsellors to help them resolve conflicts inside the marriage. All of this demonstrates a strong relationship between family background and students' academic performance in Secondary schools in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Cultural diversity and students' academic performance

The second hypothesis guiding that directed the study stated that cultural diversity does not significantly relate to students' academic performance in Economics Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. This hypothesis was rejected by the statistical analysis it was subjected to. It was therefore concluded that cultural diversity significantly relates to students' academic performance in Economics. It was noted that students from diverse cultural background perform more than those from less diverse cultural background. Therefore, some students are bound to perform better academically than others. This finding concurs with Marvi, (2023), whose finding showed that "It is amazing I got the same replies from every all teachers such as 100 per cent said they get more knowledge from mix cultural pupils, because they are from the different back ground too, as well as they have different skills, and if they accept each other this unity gives strength. And understand each other points of view."

Similarly, Anna, (2012) argued that minority children experience difficulties in school because of poor home environments which do not provide them with the socialisation experience of white middle-class children. Still other researchers argue that the cause of poor school adjustment and performance lies in the low socioeconomic status of the minority groups. The implication of this result is that students from minority ethnic background perform less than those from the major ethnic group. This further implies that multiculturalism affects those from minority group while those from majority benefit. Again, Unimna, et al., (2019) examined the relationship between the percentage of immigrant students and the reading and mathematics performances of native and immigrant students across nations. In line with research on cultural diversity, results indicated performance benefits as the percentage of immigrant students increased across nations. Interestingly, these effects remained significant for both native and immigrant students, once several other predictors of test performance at the national, school, and individual levels were controlled for. These findings challenge the assumption that the increasing presence of immigrant students in educational institutions represents a threat to native students' academic performance. Potential mechanisms are proposed and discussed, offering new avenues for research.

Conclusion

Diversities in learning process and among individual learners have a strong relationship with students' academic performance in Economics in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Because of the diversities that exist among learners or students, different teaching-learning approaches are needed to enhance smooth learning. Students come from different family, social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds to be in one classroom to receive same tutelage. While some are from single family structure with poor attention, others are from intact home with full attention from both parents. While some students are from high social class with all the necessary privileges, others are from low social background with its attendant disadvantages. Again, whereas

some students are from culturally vibrant or dominant groups others are from the minority. Each of these dispositions play a significant role in the educational output of students. Thus, this study provides empirical evidence that learner diversity – family structure diversity and cultural diversity – has strong relationship with secondary school students' academic performance in Economics in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. Economics teachers should try to develop a personal relationship with students so that they might be able to find out some personal information about the students especially their family background. Students found to come from broken homes, single parent homes or orphaned children should be given special attention by the teacher to enhance the rebuilding of their distorted emotional state for the purpose of achieving well academically.
2. Children should learn to internalise the culture of the community they find themselves. They should strive to learn the language, culture, way of dressing and other wholesome worldviews peculiar to their host community if they are minority in the area.

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