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INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES AND ITS EFFECTS ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

CASE OF G.B.H.S. MENDONG AND NESCAS YAOUNDE

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this study was to investigate the effects of individual differences on students' academic performance. To appropriately carry out our research, the researchers had three objectives which were to verify if socio-economic status is a cause of individual differences and its effects on students' academic performance, to verify if the environment and heredity are causes of individual differences and if they have an effect on students' academic performances.

We made use of primary data which was collected using questionnaires. These questionnaires were addressed to students of G.B.H.S Mendong and NESCAS selected from a population of 74 and using the random sampling technique we had a sample of 60 students from whom responses were obtained. The data was analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) 26 and the results of the effect analysis revealed that overall, individual differences positively affects students' academic performance and more specifically, socio-economic status, Environment and hereditary all have a positive effect on students' academic performance but with hereditary having a little or insignificant effect. Based on these results, the researcher humbly recommends that the teachers, school administrators, guidance counsellors and the government play their respective roles to ensuring that the goal of education which is increased performance be attained despite individual differences by student. Many short comings were encountered during this research work such as limited time, financial limitation and difficulties encountered when administering the questionnaires. The researcher suggested that further research should be carried out on this same topic since only two schools were researched on in the Mfoundi division of Yaounde IV and that other areas such as motivation and individual differences and its effects on students' academic performances.

KEY WORDS: *individual differences, hereditary, socio-economic status,*

INTRODUCTION

Human evolution is the lengthy process of change by which people originated from apelike ancestors. Scientific evidence shows that the physical and behavioral traits shared by all people originated from apelike ancestors and evolved over a period of approximately six million years. One of the earliest defining human traits, bipedalism (the ability to walk on two legs) evolved over four million years ago. Other important human characteristics such as a large and complex brain, the ability to make and use tools and the capacity for language developed more recently. Many advanced traits including complex symbolic expression, art and elaborate cultural diversity, emerged mainly during the past 100,000 years.

Humans are primates. Physical and genetic similarities show that the modern human species, *Homo sapiens*, has a very close relationship to another group of primate species, the apes. Humans and the great apes of Africa, chimpanzees and gorillas share a common ancestor that lived between 2-8 million years ago. Humans first evolved in Africa and much human

evolution occurred on that continent. The fossils of early humans who lived between 2-6 million years ago come entirely from Africa. The process of evolution involves a series of natural changes that cause species to arise, adapt to the environment, and become extinct. All species or organisms have originated through the process of biological evolution. In animals that reproduce sexually, including humans, the term species refers to a group whose adult members regularly interbreeds, resulting in fertile offspring that is, offspring themselves capable of reproducing. Modern humans are called *Homo sapiens*. Evolution occurs when there is change in the genetic material, the chemical molecule DNA which is inherited from the parents and especially in the proportions of different genes in a population. Genes represent the segments of DNA that provides the chemical code for producing proteins. Information contained in the DNA can change by a process known as mutation. The way particular genes are expressed, that is how they influence the body or behavior of an organism develop during its life and this is why genetically inherited characteristics can influence the likelihood of an organism's survival and reproduction.

Evolution does not change any single individual. Instead, it changes the inherited means of growth and development that typify a population (group of individuals of the same species living in a particular habitat). Parents pass adaptive genetic changes to their offspring and ultimately these changes become common throughout a population. As a result, the offspring inherit those genetic characteristics that enhances their chances of survival and ability to give birth, which may work well until the environment changes. Over time, genetic change can alter a species overall way of life, such as what he eats, how it grows and where it can live. Human evolution took place as new genetic variations in early ancestor populations favored new abilities to adapt to environmental change and so altered the human way of life.

Human beings, of all creatures, are endowed with characteristics that are specific to them. Such Characteristics are found in their structure and their behavior. They may look superficially alike in terms of the above characteristics whereas profoundly they may not necessarily be alike. As regards intelligence, sizes, height and even attitudes, each individual has his or her individual specificities that make them different from one another. In our society and schools today, these differences or specificities are seen clearly as some students of the same age and class, perform and behave differently. While some are very fat, short, dark in complexion, shy, timid and slow in class, some are tall, fair in complexion, smart and intelligent. All these characteristics reflect their different socio-economic status (background) and environment. At

the same time some exhibit certain behaviors unique to them, inherited from their parents and other family members. Despite the efforts of the government in training guidance counsellors for schools, teachers and the appointment of senior discipline masters, vice principals and principals, coupled with the institution of varied teaching methods, learners behavior and performances have remain very different even though they all function within the same learning milieu or classroom. Their intellectual, emotional, physical, mental and psychological differences make them individually different from one another hence their different performances. While some perform so well, others are very slow and perform poorly. Given the fact that most of them come from different socio economic backgrounds as well as physical environments and that they possess certain inherited traits from their parents and other family members, individual differences are a cause for concern in an educational establishment.

Historically, during the ancient time even though individual differences were evident in the physical and intellectual traits people portrayed, people were all expected to have certain standard behaviors, attitudes, values, and virtues without which he or she would be considered an outcast or a social misfit who needed to be exiled from the community. Every child was expected to be polite, respectful, hardworking, and intelligent to understand whatever he or she was being told very fast. This is because learning was by telling. Children were taught through story- telling and by simply imitating what their parents were doing in the farm or during hunting in the forest or at festivals or events in public places or at home. Also, people differed in terms of their tribes and religion. The muslims had their ways of life and emphasized certain virtues which were different from those of the christians. It was a taboo to see a young muslim girl moving without a scarf on her head not to talk of the women. Today some of these ancient traits still prevail with the muslims where we see some in our schools with scarfs on their heads and others with platted hairs. In ancient times the Spartans in Greece believed that the only skill their male children could possess was that of the military to build strength and bodies fit to confront enemies during wars and as such their males were sent to grow in the camps with other males to be trained. At the end of the training they acquired the desired skills. Knowing what their culture expected of them, they had the courage and the zeal to go through the rigors of the training successfully.

According to Gagne (2000), the level of pre-requisite skills acquired by students may differ from student to student, implying that instructions must meet the needs of the individual learners. He determined that a set of ordered intellectual skills should be made up of instructional plan for

teaching a particular concept. This is to affirm that individual differences among learners is a reality. Vygotsky believes that the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the prime determinant of individual differences and development among students. He defines the zone of proximal development as the discrepancy between the child's capacity to solve problems independently and the child's ability to solve problems with assistance. He maintains that social interaction with a more knowledgeable person is critical for cognitive development. This interaction helps the child attain a higher level of development than can be achieved alone.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Gay (1996) defines a problem as an issue of concern, which attracts the researcher and needs investigation. While in school as a teacher for some years now, the researcher realized that students often behave differently from their peers, friends and mates and most often, students of the same size, height and background behave alike. The researcher realized while teaching in the rural area some three years ago that students there are very polite, respectful and more hard working despite their limited resources. Coming to town, most students are from well to do families who are rich and at times being dropped in school in big cars influences the teachers to begin to ponder in a different way. These students are at times very proud, arrogant and disrespectful to their teachers and mates as seen in the constant fighting, stabbing and killing of both teachers and students by students. This consequently affects the students negatively.

It is for this reason that the researcher coins this problem and topic "Individual differences and its effects on student's academic performance", As a result of the aforementioned, the researcher suspected that the socio-economic status, environment and heredity of certain traits by students from their parents could play a major role by affecting their academic performances either positively or negatively.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

According to Cambridge learners Dictionary (2002:892), an objective is something that you are trying to achieve, in other words objective is the aim of carrying out a project. In this research there are two categories of objectives, that is the general and specific objectives.

To verify if individual differences has some effects on student's academic performance.

Specific Objectives

*To verify if socio-economic status is a cause of individual differences and its effect on student's academic performance.

*To verify if the environment is a cause of individual differences and if it has an effect on student's academic performance.

*To verify if hereditary is a cause of individual differences and if it has an effect on student's academic performance.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to Wikipedia, a research question is a question that a research project sets out to answer. The research questions here are general and specific and are as follows;

General Research Questions

*To what extent does individual differences affect student's academic performances?

Specific Research Questions

*To what extent is socio-economic status, a cause of individual differences and does it affect student's academic performance?

*To what extent is the environment a cause of individual differences and does it affect student's academic performance?

*To what extent is hereditary a cause of individual differences and does it affect student's academic performance?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This work will be of significant to school administrators, guidance counsellors, teachers and to the government.

***To the School Administrators**

As concern the administrators of the school, the outcome of this research work will enable them understand that no two students are the same irrespective of their looks. Also they will come to understand that students are individually different from one another and obviously their

academic performances will not be the same. This will help them adopt better strategies to bridge the gap individual differences has created the school milieu.

***To the Guidance Counsellors**

To the guidance counsellors, this work will enable them to apply their professional knowledge and skills to identify and be able to solve some of the problems students face as a result of individual differences so as to improve on student's academic performances.

***To the Teachers**

This research work will be of great significance to the teachers because they are those in charge of delivering the content of the curriculum to the students in class. The goal of the teacher is to see that the students succeed in acquiring all the competences set. For the teachers to accomplish their objectives, they must be able to deal with students individual differences for Gagne (2000), says the level of pre-requisite skills acquired by students may differ from student to student thus this work will enable the teachers to understand what Gagne holds. This is because he acknowledges the fact that individual differences has a relationship with student academic performances and if learners are not drilled with respect to these difference results or academic performance will not meet the set goals and objectives thus, this work will equip the teachers on these differences.

***To The Government**

The aim of every government is to ensure a maximum level of education of his citizens. To this effect, the government tend to create school, trained teachers and curriculum designers who help in piloting the educational affairs in the country. For this reason, this piece of world will help the government to lay emphasis on the training of specialist who will be able to properly orientate the students and inculcate in them certain values, skills and attitudes which bring to minimum the issue of individual differences and its effects on students academic performance.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will handle the following components; Basic concepts and theoretical frame work.

BASIC CONCEPTS

Individual Differences

According to Skinner (1989), “Today we think of individual differences as including any measurable aspect of the total personality”. It is clear from this definition of individual differences that it comprehends every aspect of human personality which is in some manner measurable. Skinner also underscores that individual differences among student comes from a different setting in which their learning behavior has been shaped and reinforced in various ways. Therefore, what may be considered a positive reinforce for one student or group of students may not promote positive behavior for others. This change in behavior is the point at which learning occurs. In line with Skinner’s view, some students come from environment or homes where they are motivated to perform well through gifts, promises and are hailed by sweet names and praises to enable them excel. So if in school the same approach is not used by a teacher who is on the contrary resorts to hate speech, threats and use of corporal punishment to reinforce discipline, then that teacher has missed it all. This will hinder such students from attaining the objective of the content of instructions thereby negatively affecting the academic performance of the students. But if the teacher is able to cue up from where the home environment stopped, that is prior knowledge and condition from home, then success is ensured as far as instructional attainment goals are concerned.

Also Cv. Good (2000), sees individual differences as “the variation or deviations among individual in regard to a single characteristic or a number of characteristics those differences which in their totality distinguish one individual from another”.

The above views are very vita because these measurable differences are common in the society and above all the school where you have students of both sexes, different heights, sizes, complexions, attitudes, skills, traits, temperaments etc. For the teacher who is the one whom the students are under his or her direct control to realize the instructional objectives, most be able to identify and endure the different character traits of these students to be able to guide them study effectively despite their individual differences.

Socio- economic status and individual differences.

Socio- economic status is the total measure of a person’s work experience and of an individual’s or family’s economic and social position in relation to others. (Wikipedia).

Morgan and Maczuga, (2009) research indicates that children from low socio- economic status household and communities develop academic skills slower than children from high socio-economic groups. For instance, low socio-economic status in childhood is related to poor cognitive development, poor language, memory, socio emotional processing and eventually poor income and health in adulthood. The school systems in low socio-economic status communities are often under resourced, negatively affecting student's academic performance.

Following this view, students from high socio-economic background are provided their basic needs in time. School needs such as fees, uniforms books, shoes. This consequently grants the students a calm mind for studies unlike students from poor and low socio-economic status who have no books, shoes and above all fees and while in class he or she is constantly in fear of the fact that the administration will come in at any time to send him out for not meeting up with the school requirements. Such a student cannot be psychologically stable to study and produce quality results. On the other hand, the students from the high socio-economic status is psychologically stable and comfortable in studies.

Bourdieu (1986), posited that capital can present itself in three fundamental forms and that economic capital is the source of all other forms of capital. Economic capital can be used in pursuit of other forms of capital for example family income can be used to pay for organized after-school activities, to access elite educational opportunities or to build up valuable social networks (Lareau 2011). Children from disadvantaged background are constrained by the limited financial possess (Crosnoe and Cooper 2010). As such, economic capital determines the extent to which parents can offer financial support to children's or students' academic pursuits. The perception of social status is very wide and many aspects can contribute to elucidate on the hierarchies of social status. For instance, achievement, individual merit wealth, occupation, family background and style of life might explain individual's social status within a social group (Omale, 2015). The term socio-economic status means that a society ranks individuals on a scale, with some being born into a certain situation. While all individuals possessing a certain characteristics on which the hierarchy is based. Some individuals have a higher degree of it, from which springs their superior standing in the society.

Weber, (1978) sees social status as an effective claim esteem in terms of positive or negative privileges. He distinguished social status from economic status by unfolding it as a

positional and relational entity of social structure. Previous studies on social status by both Weber (1978) and Bourdieu (1984), revealed that social status is relatively a position of members within social groups.

Dion, Berscheid and Walster (1972), hypothesized that people attribute desirable personality characteristics to physically attractive others and in addition, that people expect physically attractive others to lead better lives than unattractive individuals. To check on their hypothesis, Dion et al. asked male and female subjects to rate people shown in photographs on 27 different personality traits. The photos had previously been selected to represent three different levels of attractiveness and each subject judged one attractive, one average and one unattractive person. Subjects were also asked to assess which people would be most likely to have a number of different life experiences (such as divorce, professional success or a happy marriage) and which would be more likely to engage in each of 30 different occupations. As anticipated, many more socially desirable personality traits were attributed to attractive individuals, who were also expected to have more competent spouses and to have happier marriages. These differences were not affected by sex of the person making the judgment or by the sex of the person about whom the judgments were being made.

Thus, we tend to assume that the physically attractive are more interesting people, hold higher-prestigious jobs and have more socially desirable characteristics than the unattractive. These assumptions are reinforced daily via advertisements in which beautiful people appear in elegant cloths, lounging in tastefully appointed rooms, or at their desks in private offices. Also in schools teachers tend to pay more attention to physically attractive students than the unattractive ones. This makes the physically unattractive ones to be shy, afraid and psychologically traumatized. This encourages the physically attractive and discourages the unattractive one thereby affecting their academic performances. Students who are physically attractive are loved by their peers which adds esteem to their morals giving them some kind of confidence that they are the best and can succeed in everything especially their academics. Back at home some parents desire their physically attractive children and sometimes go everywhere with them than the physically unattractive ones. They sometimes use the physically unattractive as maids to be doing all the house chores, stay in the room when visitors come around and even consider some as bad luck. All these attitudes towards them lead them to depression and consequently poor academic performance. A group of male students agreed to cooperate in establishing a shy and

inept girl as a social favorite. They saw to it that she was invited to college affairs that were considered important and that she always had dancing partners. They treated her by agreement as though she were the reigning college favorite. Before the year was over she had developed an easy manner and a confident assumption that she was popular. These habits continued her social success after the experiment was completed and the men involved had ceased to make efforts. This is clear that physically unattractive individual students can be motivated by involving them in activities in the class and out of class activities to build in them self- confidence and their inert potentials. This will lead also to improve their academic performances.

Every individual has an idea of what it means to live in poverty (Lewit et al. 1997). But the image is not necessarily the same for everyone. Although the concept of poverty might be straight forward and recognizable, a person living in poverty does not have the means to acquire the necessities of living reasonable comfort. Poverty in measurable terms is very complicated.

Poverty also negatively affected children's mental well-being. Children who experience even short term periods of poverty suffered more frequently from emotional and behavioral problems (Brooks-Gunn et Duncun, 1997). Furthermore, children without access to life-sustaining resources were more likely to suffer from depression and experience high levels of stress (Currie, 2005). Even though poverty might increase the risk of children suffering from mental problems, it equally decreased the likelihood that the child would have access to mental health care to counteract the negative effects (Children's Defense Fund, 2007). Some researchers maintained that persistent poverty was a significant indicator of later behavior problems, which likely manifested when the child entered school (Korenmen, Miller and sjaastad, 1995). An examination of the effects of poverty on childhood development would be incomplete without some attention given to the impact of this condition on cognitive development. Few individuals deny the ability of the first years of child's life to hinder or advance future development, both physically and cognitively. Regrettably, children who live in low-income home settings suffer many cognitive setbacks than those from high income homes. This is because such children needs are met and it enables them study conveniently. But those from low income homes who sometimes cannot meet their health bills, talk less of proper feeding, perform poorly academically than those from high –income families.

Environment and individual differences.

Human development is fundamentally contextual. Without the specific and active support of a nurturing environment, no child would thrive or even survive. Given this dependence on external environmental resource, it is not surprising that humans register process and respond to many different aspects of their social and physical environment. However, individuals differ substantially in such sensitivity and responsively, with some being more and others less responsive to the same environmental conditions. Individual differences in the behavioral response to environmental factors can be seen across many species from pumpkinseed, fish, zebra finches, mice and non-human primates to humans.

-The pattern that seems to emerge consistently is that some of the members of each of those species tend to be bold, aggressive and impulsive when approaching new situations, behaving less aggressively and more cautiously and fearfully. These two prototypical behavioral types have been described as hawks and doves, reflecting two different behavioral strategies proactive versus reactive coping.

-That evolved over time, each characterized specific advantages and disadvantages for health and reproductive fitness

-Similar behavior differences have been described in humans in many psychological frameworks, including extra and introversion, behavior activation and inhibition high and low reactive temperaments, psychological stress etc. Teachers must be able to diagnose the current level of behavior of the students and create an environment that allows for various rates of progression to fit the needs of the individual students. The idea is to begin each learner at a point where they can produce desired responses and be reinforced for those responses.

Furthermore, teachers have to make the learning environment which is the classroom and school environment very conducive to accommodate learners from both low and high socio economic status, slow and fast learners and above all students with different physical appearances (tall and short, able and disable), so as to arouse their interest in learning and ensure high academic performance which is the educational goal of every society. Both Bruner and Vygotsky emphasize a child's environment, especially the social environment, which adults should play an active role in assisting the child's learning. They both emphasized the social nature of learning, citing that older people should help a child develop skills through the process

of scaffolding. Scaffolding refers to the steps taken to reduce the degrees of freedom in carrying out some task so that the child can concentrate on the difficult.

According to Vygotsky, in order to facilitate a child's cognitive development, an adult should determine two things. First the adult should determine the child's present knowledge by observing the child as he works alone without adult help. Second, the adult should determine what the child can do with adult guidance. When a child is working alone without the guidance of an adult, we can see the actual development level of the child, that is what the child can do and cannot do. When the child is working with an adult we can see his potential development level, that is what the child can do under the best conditions. However, in understanding the different mental processes that are in the process of maturing, the teacher will be able to meet the needs of the students. Vygotsky believes that when schools leave too much for the students to do without teachers' guidance, this will slow down the child's cognitive development process thereby negatively affecting the child's academic performance and vice versa.

Heredity and individual differences

To the layman, genetic explains why people are alike, why children resemble their parents and why certain traits run in the families. But equally important is the fact that genetics explains why individuals are different. The major biological advantage of sexual reproduction is that it ensures that no two individuals are alike, the total complement of genes (identical twins excepted). Man has, at least 25000 genes (and probably more) and with random mating the odds against two individuals obtaining the same set are astronomical. For all practical purposes, such an event can be regarded as an impossibility. Even this selective mating, as is usual in humans, the odds against identity or even close similarity in total gene complement are very great even large enough to be considered virtually impossible. According to Burns R.B. et al (1984), heredity is the set of genes received. Anything that occurs from the moment of fertilization on its environmental. According to Burns, extreme environmentalism in which hereditary factors are discounted, individual differences in intellect, personality, performance etc., are all the outcome of learning and experiences. Differences in the quality of the environment cause inequalities between individuals.

The role of genetics factors by themselves are a determinant of human attributes, behavior and performance is limited and restricted essentially to physical characteristics (example eye

color) and medical problems (associated with chromosomal irregularities) A small chromosome count is the cause of monglism or down's syndrome which account for about 25 of admissions to hospitals for the severely mentally subnormal. Females with a missing x chromosome (Turner's syndrome) tend to suffer from a relative difficulty in spatial perception. Among high- grade subnormal patients with behavior abnormalities, there is a significant excess of males with an x chromosome (kliefelter's syndrome).

Males with an extra Y chromosome are generally found to excess institutions for the hard-to- manage, persistent criminals. For instance, in a special hospital in Scotland for such cases one patient in 35 was found to have an extra Y chromosome, compared with about one in 700 among newly born males in Scotland. The incidence of XYY and XXY chromosomal abnormalities has been noted by Telfer et al (1968) in a male criminal population in the United States.

Still under heredity, the concept of nature and nurture have a relationship .Nature refer to the biological or genetic predispositions' impact on human traits, and nurture describes the influence of learning and other influences from one's environment. It is understood that certain physical traits, as well as the susceptibility to most physical and mental health disorders tend to run in families. Specifically, whatever illnesses your parents, grandparents, siblings and other biological family members have does not guarantee you will inherit them, but it does increase the likelihood that you may develop them. As with all human traits, intelligence is now understood to be the result of some combination of both nurture and nature. While genes have a great influence on the size and biochemistry of the brain, its full development does not usually occur until after the first 20 years of life. Also, the heredity of intelligence tends to vary between different aspects of cognition. Intelligence and subsequent learning also are viewed as being largely molded by the environment the person grows up in both before and after birth (European college of Neuropsychopharmacology, 2007; kan et al, 2013).

According to Nesterak (2015), exposure to community violence increases the likelihood of anxiety, depression and other negative behaviors and vice versa. However, this therefore means that certain traits in humans are inherited (nature) while others are copied from other humans around us (nurture). As far as heredity and individual differences is concern, student's differences in intelligence, behavior and even physical appearance are as a result of nature and

nurture. According to (Dengerink, 1971), he states that subjects who strongly fear social disapproval are less aggressive than subjects who do not fear social disapproval. However, both types of individuals become much more aggressive as provocation from another person increases to the point where both types show an equally high level of aggression. In the similar vein, subjects high in the need for social approval are less aggressive than subjects low in need (Taylor, 1970), though differences between the two types are minimal when provocation from another person is high.

Rotter (1966), developed a control scale. People who score high on the scale have an External Locus of Control. Such people believe that the rewards they experience and the things that happen to them are largely in the hands of others. Their own efforts to control their world do not benefit them very much. In contrast, people with an internal Locus of Control believe that what happens to them and the rewards they received depend on their own efforts and actions. In all of the above analysis, some students believe that they perform well in school because their parents are intelligent and they inherited intelligence from them, which is possible, while others think their success is as a result of their hard work. However, most students portrays traits that are from their parents more and which affects their academic performances.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bruner Dobson's constructivist theory (2012)

Individuals defers in what type of prior knowledge they bring to a learning task, each individual has a cognitive structure built from prior learning experiences, which differs from any other learner. The instructor should adjust instruction to fit the learner's current state of understanding. Bruner believes that every individual has the ability to acquire knowledge. The key to reaching each individual with knowledge is instruction. Bruner thinks that each individual learn best through a process of discovery. Bruner classifies an individual's cognitive ability using three stages, enactive (use of manipulative), iconic (use of visual images) and symbolic (use of language and reasoning).

The Enactive (0-1), the first kind of memory. This mode is used within the first year of life (corresponding with Piaget's sensorimotor stage). Thinking is based entirely on physical actions and infants learn by doing, rather than by internal representation (or thinking). It involves encoding physical action, based information and storing it in our memory. For example, in the

form of movement as a muscle memory, a baby might remember the action of shaking a rattle. This mode continues later in many physical activities, such as learning to ride a bike. Many adults can perform a variety of motor task (typing, sewing a shirt, operating a lawn mower) that they would find difficult to describe in iconic (pictures) or symbolic (word) form.

The Iconic (1-6 years): Information is stored as sensory images (iconic) usually visual ones, this is conscious; others say they don't experience it. This may explain why when we are learning a new subject, it is often helpful to have diagrams or illustrations to accompany the verbal information. Thinking is also based on the use of other mental images (icons), such as hearing, smell or touch.

The Symbolic (7 years onwards): This develops last. This is where information is stored in the form of a code or symbol, such as language. This mode is acquired around six to seven years old (corresponding to Piaget's concrete operational stage). In this stage, knowledge is stored primarily as words. Mathematical symbols systems, such as music. Symbols are flexible in that they can be manipulated, ordered, classified etc. So the user isn't constrained by actions or images. He sees these stages as developing and accumulating of knowledge during the learner's educational process and does not link the stages necessarily to age or physical development. This aspect of Bruner's theory demonstrates an individual difference, which is the rate at which learners move through stages. Students should be provided with materials, tools and activities that matched to and capitalize on their developing individual cognitive abilities.

Bruner would alter curriculum and instruction based on an individual learner's interest. In this vein he will allow the students to change topics rebuild and revisit the curriculum while simultaneously varying learning mode and pace to meet an individual learner's needs. Each individual constructs a world through representation of his or her experiences with it. Education is concerned with assisting each individual in developing or constructing a world. The personalization of knowledge, that is marking it meaningful and useful in regards to the learner's thinking, attitudes and feelings create interests in learning. If instruction does not meets the individual's needs that is their prior knowledge, mental models they bring to the learning environment, then learning will not occur successfully for that individual.

Albert Bandura's social learning theory (1977)

Bandura (1977) states; 'learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behavior is learned observationally through modeling from observing other one forms an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasion this coded information serves as a guide for action'. In this line, students by observing the atmosphere or nature of an environment which is calm and peaceful will certainly emulate such calm and peacefulness even while at school. On the other hand students from aggressive and violent environments will observe and emulate violent behaviors also which will affect their academic performances negatively. That is why some students turn to be more humble and others very aggressive and arrogant.

Equally, students from families of high socio-economic status will be motivated to exceed the statuses of their parents in future taking into consideration that their high socio-economic background serves as their model for success, so as to continue the family's prestigious status. On the other hand, students from low socio-economic status whose parents are illiterates and sometimes due to the hardships and low financial stands feel discouraged to continue their education. This is since they observe their parents as their model and considering that their parents didn't go to school, yet they are still going on with their daily lives. This affect their academic performances leading most of them to drop out of school.

Self- efficacy is another phenomenon which influences individual behavior or differences in students. According to Albert Bandura,(1997) self -efficacy which is simply 'the power of believing you can' states that ' people's belief in their capabilities to produce desired effects by their actions'. He holds that efficacy beliefs play a crucial role in psychological adjustment, psychological problems, physical health as well as professionally guided and self -guided behavioral changes strategies. Self- efficacy is concerned not with what one believes he will do but with what one can do. Self-efficacy is not self- esteem. Self-esteem is what I belief about myself and how I feel about what I feel about myself. Efficacy beliefs in a given domain will contribute to my self-esteem only in direct proportion to the importance I place on that domain. The development of efficacy beliefs is influenced by the responsiveness of the environments to the child's attempts at manipulation and control. Environments that are responsive to the child's action facilitates the development of efficacy beliefs, whereas non responsive environments retards this development. The development of efficacy beliefs encourages exploration, which in

turns enhances the infant's sense of agency. The child's social environment (especially parents) is usually the most important part of his or her environment. Thus children usually develop a sense of efficacy from engaging in actions that influences the behavior of other people, which can facilitate or hinders the development of this sense of agency not only by their responses to the child's action but also by encouraging and enabling the child to explore and master his or her environment.

From the above analysis, students who have high self-efficacy driven from the responsiveness of their social environments will perform higher or better than students whose social environment are non-responsive. This is because their development of self-efficacy beliefs has been retarded. For instance, students from social environments where swimming is a habit will certainly perform well in a swimming competition at school than one who has never known anything about swimming from his own environment.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter involves the research methodology. It is a branch of logic which studies principles and procedures of a scientific investigation. It is the procedure followed by the researcher to collect data from the field. This chapter consists of the following issues; research design, area of study, population of study, research sample and sampling techniques, instrument for data collection, validation of the instruments, administration of instrument, method of data analysis.

RESEARCH DESIGN

It specifies how data related to a given problem is collected and analyzed. It provides a procedural conduct for a given investigation. In this research, the researcher is looking at the influences of individual differences and its effects on students' academic performance. Here we will be using the quantitative approach such as the questionnaire to collect data on the field This is to enable all the students to be able to express themselves freely.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY

According to Tamukong (1993) 'population refers to all members of the group concerned' According to the researcher, population can also be defined as a group of elements. It

may be a things, animals or people having some common observable characteristics. There are three types of population in research.

This is the population available to the researcher. It is the total number of individuals available on whom the researcher has the possibility of coming in contact with. It is the population that the researcher can have access to and it is on this population that the sample is drawn. This population is estimated in numbers and presented in the form of a table. Thus our accessible population will be made up of the form three a students of government bilingual high school Mendong and the lower sixth students of NESCAS Etou-egbe

Table 1; Distribution of accessible population per school

SN	NAMES OF SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE (%)
1	Government bilingual high school Mendong	40	54.05
2	NESCAS Biyem-Assi	34	45.95
	Total	74	100

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020.

From the above table, one can see the schools, the number of students and percentages. In our research because of financial constraints and lack of sufficient time to carry out research on all individual students, we are obliged to extract a sample population.

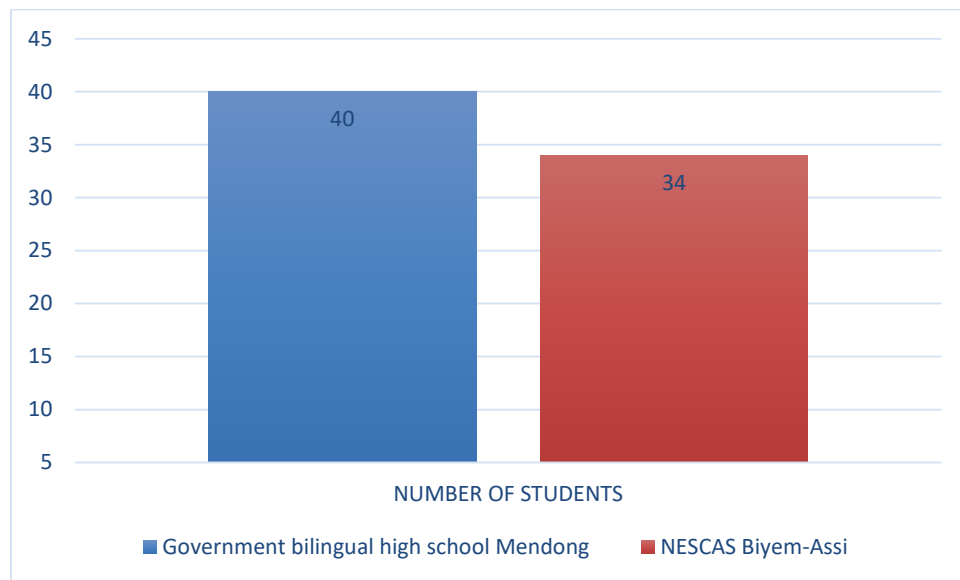


Figure 1: Distribution of accessible population per school.

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020

From the above figure, one can see that the bar which is higher represents GBHS Mendong with 40 students while the shorter one represents NESCAS Etou-egb with 34 students. This gives a total accessible population of 74 students. Therefore the percentage of population of GBHS Mendong is higher than that of NESCAS.

RESEARCH SAMPLE

A sample is a part of the accessible population selected by the researcher to carry on the study with. Sampling methods are the ways which enables us to have sample of our study, these are the ways which enables us to extract from the accessible population. As far as this work is concern, the sample size is 60 students drawn from a total of 74 students gotten from GBHS Mendong and NESCAS Etou-egbe.

Table 2: Sample Size

SN	Names of schools	Class	Total Population	Sample Size
1	Government bilingual high school Mendong	3A	44	40
2	NESCAS Biyem-Assi	LSA	30	20
	Total		74	60

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES.

The sampling technique to be used in this study is the simple random sampling technique. The researcher proceeded by attributing on pieces of papers one number to each of the 74 students in the accessible population and they were put in a box. 60 were picked randomly by each student without putting any back. The other 14 students who did not have numbers were asked to go and sit down quietly. The sixty who pick were those to answer the questionnaires. This was intended to find out the effects of individual differences on students’ academic performances.

Instruments for data collection

The instrument used for data collection here is the questionnaire. A questionnaire is set of well-structured question written on a sheet with spaces provided for the respondents to reply to the questions. In this work twenty questions were set following the different variables to be

answered all. This instrument is good and advantageous because it is addressed to many students at a time in order to obtain maximum information needed for the study. Responses on the questionnaire are based on YES or NO. Hence the questionnaire is represented as follows:

- The preamble in which we have stated the objectives of our study and also the way to be followed in order to better answer the items.
- Two items on the identification of respondent that is age and sex.
- Four closed items related to our independent variables. In these items, the respondent has some alternatives.
- The last section concerns the percentages of success scored which aims at gathering information about the dependent variable of our research.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTRUMENT AND DATA COLLECTION

The researcher went to the schools and met the various school principals and presented her research permit with the questionnaires, they received her with love led her to the various classes where with the permission of the teachers on duty allowed her carry on with the administration of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the students to answer after they were educated on the academic importance of the research and the need for them to answer with all honesty. They were expected to answer YES or NO depending on their opinions. All the copies that were administered came back, ensuring a 100 return rate. Therefore, collection rate (CR) will be calculated as follows;

$$CR = \frac{\text{number of questions distributed}}{\text{number of questionnaire collected}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

$$CR = \frac{60}{60} \times \frac{100}{1} = 100\%$$

Methods of data analysis

After collecting the questionnaire, we proceeded by manually taking into consideration the answer given by the sample. The result obtained will be written in frequencies on a regrouping manner.

ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

In this section of the research work, we present the results obtained from the field survey by providing a summary of the results on tables and graphs indicating the frequency distribution and percentages of responses.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by school

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	GBHS Mendong	40	66.7	66.7	66.7
	NESCAS	20	33.3	33.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2019

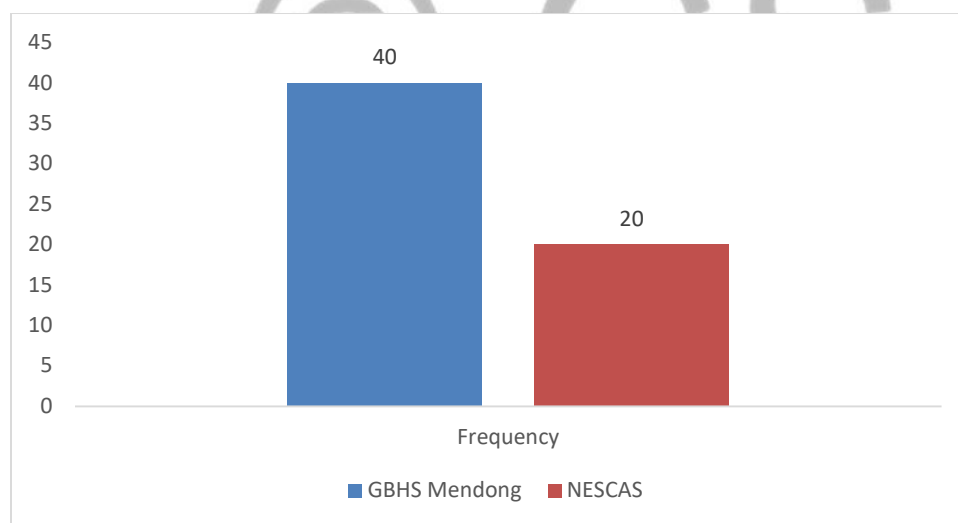


Figure2: Distribution of respondents by school

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020

The above table and figure reveals that 40 of the 60 respondents representing 66.7% of the respondents came from the Government Bilingual High School (GBHS) Mendong. Also, 20 of the 60 respondents came from the National Educational Service College of Arts and Science (NESCAS) representing 33.3% of the respondents.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	19	31.7	31.7	31.7
	Female	41	68.3	68.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020

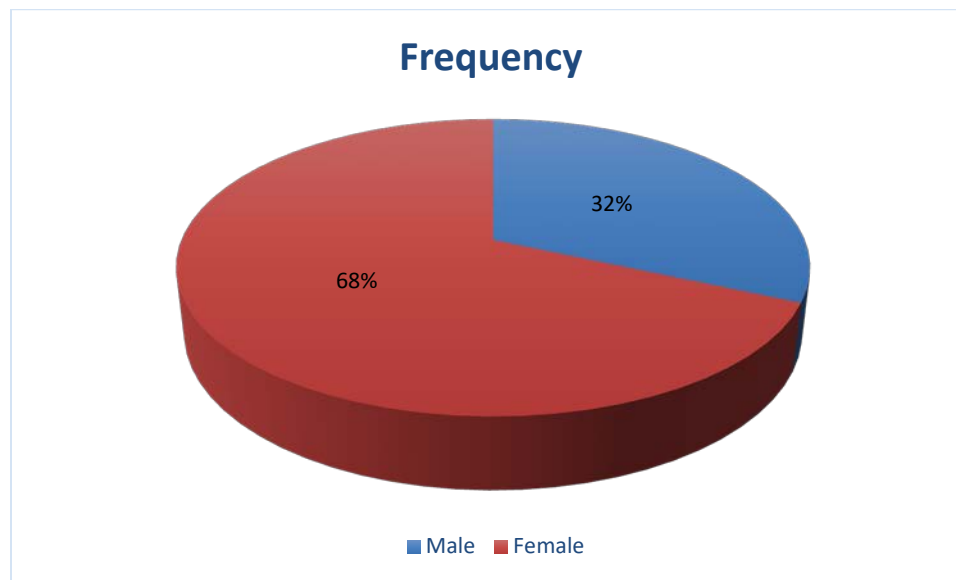


Figure 3: Distribution of respondents by Gender

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020

The above table and figure reveal that 41 of the 60 respondents representing 68.3% of the respondents were Female while 19 of the 60 respondents were Male representing 31.7% of the respondents.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10 - 15	48	80.0	80.0	80.0
	16 - 20	12	20.0	20.0	100.0

	Total	60	100.0	100.0
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Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2019

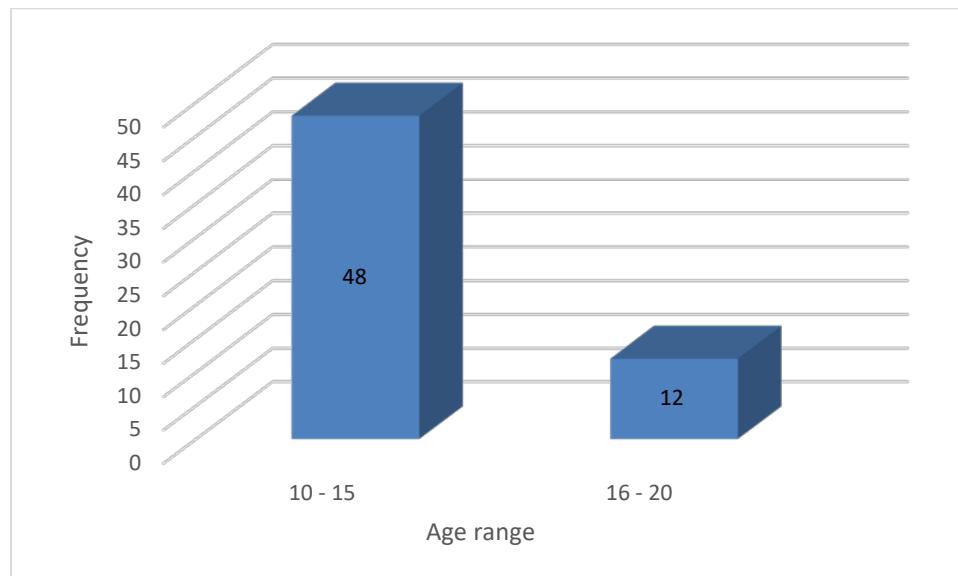


Figure 4: Distribution of respondents by Age

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2019

The above table and figure shows that 48 of the 60 respondents representing 80% of the respondents were between the age 10 – 15 years while 12 of the 60 respondents were between the age of 16 – 20 years representing 20% of the respondents.

Table 6: Socio-economic status and individual differences

No	Question	Yes		No	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
1	Are your fees always paid on time?	49	81.7%	11	18.3%
2	Are your parents educated?	49	81.7%	11	18.3%
3	Do your parents have white collar jobs?	22	36.7%	38	63.3%
4	Has the school administration ever sent you out of class for fees drive?	15	25.0%	45	75.0%
5	Do you have all of your textbooks?	11	18.3%	49	81.7%
6	Does the lack of textbooks affect your academic performance?	24	40.0%	36	60.0%

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020

From the above table it is seen that in question 1 and 2, 49 of the 60 respondents representing 81.7% of the respondents answered yes to that their fees are paid on time and their parents are educated while 11 of the 60 respondents answered no to these questions representing 18.3% of the respondents. 22 (36.7%) answered yes and 38 (63.3%) no to question 3. Also, 15 (25%), 11 (18.3%) answered yes to questions 4 and 5 respectively while 45 (75%), and 49 (81.7%) answered no to these questions respectively. Finally, in question 6, 24 representing 40% of the respondents answered yes to that their lack of textbooks affect their academic performance while majority (36) representing 60% of the respondents said their lack of textbooks doesn't affect their academic performance.

Table 7: Environmental and individual differences

No	Question	Yes		No	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
1	Do your parents or guardian help you with your homework?	43	71.7%	17	28.3%
2	Do you have enough time at home to study?	50	83.3%	10	16.7%
3	Do your parents or Guardian quarrel at home often?	13	21.7%	47	78.3%
4	Does the quarreling affect your studies?	11	18.3%	49	81.7%
5	Do you feel comfortable studying where you live?	49	81.7%	11	18.3%
6	Do you have a peer group in which you study together?	12	20.0%	48	80.0%
7	Do your teachers respond to your problems with love?	40	66.7%	20	33.3%

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020

From the above table it is seen that in question 1, 43 of the 60 respondents representing 71.7% of the respondents answered yes to that they are being helped with their assignments while 17 of the

60 respondents answered no to these questions representing 28.3% of the respondents. For question 2, 50 (83.3%) answered yes and 10 (16.7%) answered no to that they have enough time to study home. Also, 13 (21.7%), 11 (18.3%) answered yes to questions 3 and 4 respectively while 47 (78.3%), and 49 (81.7%) answered no to these questions respectively which implies majority of the respondents' guardians do not quarrel and better still quarreling does not affect their study. 49 (81.7%), 12 (20%) answered yes to questions 4 and 5 respectively while 11 (18.3%), and 48 (80%) answered no to these questions respectively. Finally, in question 7, majority of the respondents; that is, 40 representing 66.7% of the respondents answered yes to that their teachers respond to their problems while 20 representing 33.3% of the respondents answered no.

Table 8: Heredity and individual differences

No	Questions	Yes		No	
		Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %
1	Did your parents study up to the university level?	25	41.7%	35	58.3%
2	Do your brothers and sisters do well in school?	55	91.7%	5	8.3%
3	Do you perform well in class in your tests and examinations?	41	68.3%	19	31.7%
4	Do you have any particular difficulty you have not let your teachers to know?	33	55.0%	27	45.0%
5	Do you have brothers and sisters at the university level?	33	55.0%	27	45.0%
6	Are your family members having any particular health problem affecting you in school?	11	18.3%	49	81.7%

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020

The table above shows that in question 1, 25 of the 60 respondents representing 41.7% of the respondents answered yes to that their parents studied up to the university level while 35 of the 60 respondents answered no to this question representing 58.3% of the respondents. For question 2, 55 (91.7%) answered yes and 5 (8.3%) no to that their brothers and sisters do well in school.

Also, 41 (68.3%) answered yes and 19 (31.7%) answered no to question 3. Equally, 33 (55%) of the respondents answered yes to questions 4 and 5 respectively while 27 (45%) answered no to these questions respectively. Finally, in question 6, 11 representing 18.3% of the respondents answered yes to that their family members have particular health problem affecting their schooling while majority (49) representing 81.7% of the respondents said their family members do not have health problems affecting their schooling (academic performance).

Table 9: Analysis of Individual differences; variables to academic performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	6.195	1.310		4.728	.000
	Socio-Economic Status	0.064	.122	.072	.527	.601
	Environment	0.051	.106	.065	.487	.628
	Heredity	0.011	.125	.012	.085	.932

Source: Kebuya/Yewoh, 2020

The above table shows the following results; firstly, the constant with a coefficient of 6.195 indicates that in the absence of individual differences, other variables will have a significantly positive impact on the academic performance of students.

More so, it equally reveals that Socio-economic status has a positive effect on academic performance of students. The coefficient of 0.064 indicates that a 1% improvement in socio-economic status will lead to a 6.4% increase in academic performance of students.

In the same light, the table reveals that Environment has a positive effect on academic performance of students. The coefficient of 0.051 indicates that a 1% improvement in Environment where students live will lead to a 5.1% increase in academic performance of students.

Finally, it equally reveals that Heredity has a positive effect on academic performance of students. The coefficient of 0.011 indicates that a 1% adoption of heredity will lead to a 1.1% increase in academic performance of students. However, this is insignificant thus we can conclude that heredity affects academic performance to a lesser extent.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter treats discussion of findings, implications of findings, recommendation, limitations of the study, suggestion for further research and conclusion.

Discussion of Findings.

This study sought to know the effect of individual differences on students' academic performance of government bilingual high school Mendong Yaounde (GBHS MENDONG) and National Educational Service College for Arts and science Etou-egbe Yaounde (NESCAS). Findings of the study were presented and discussed following the research questions and variables as follows;

Socio-economic status and individual differences

From the effect analysis, it is revealed that Socio-economic status has a positive effect on academic performance of students. The coefficient of 0.064 indicates that a 1% improvement in socio-economic status will lead to a 6.4% increase in academic performance of students. This is in line with the posits of Morgan and Maczuga (2009), whose research states that children from low- socio-economic status households and communities develop academic skills slower than children from high socio-economic groups. This is because they believed that children from high socio-economic groups are provided with their basic school needs such as fees, books, uniforms foods, shoes etc unlike those from low-socio-economic groups. All these according to them boost student's cognitive development thereby leading to a positive effect on students' academic development. Also, Bourdieu (1986), posited that economic capital is a source of all other form of capital. He said economic capital in the form of family income can be used to pay organized after school activities for their children and students and by so doing a slow student will be followed up to meet up with expected academic performance. Hence leading to a positive effect on individual students' academic performance.

Environment and individual differences

In the same light, the table reveals that Environment has a positive effect on the academic performance of students. The coefficient of 0.051 indicates that a 1% improvement in Environment where students live will lead to a 5.1% increase in academic performance of students. This is in line the view of Vygotsky who says when the school leaves so much work for the students to do without teachers guidance it will negatively affect the students and if students are assisted by teachers and parents it will affect the students' academic performance positively. As seen in question one among the set of questions under environment which states thus; do your parents and guardian help you with your homework? Out of the 60 students 43 answered yes and only 17 answered No. Secondly, in question 2, which read; do you have enough time to study at home?, out of the 60 respondents, 50 answered yes. This is to ascertain that environment to an extent has a positive effect on students' academic performance.

Heredity and individual differences.

Finally, it equally reveals that Heredity has a positive effect on academic performance of students. The coefficient of 0.011 indicates that a 1% adoption of heredity will lead to a 1.1% increase in academic performance of students. However, this is insignificant thus we can conclude that heredity affects academic performance to a lesser extent. In line to this Rotter (1966), states that people who score high on the scale have an external locus of control. He says such people believe that the rewards they experience and the things that happen to them are largely in the hands of others. In contrast, people with an internal locus of control believe that what happens to them and the rewards they received depend on their own efforts and actions. From the above analysis, some students believe that they perform well in school because their parents are intelligent and they inherited intelligence from them, which is possible, while others think their success is as a result of their hard work. However, both notions affect students' academic performances.

IMPLICATION/ CONCLUSION/ SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It is realized in conclusion under findings that students from high socio-economic status have a greater possibility of performing better than those from low status. Equally, students from more peaceful, loving and comfortable environments behave politely, humbly, obediently and perform well academically than those from hostile, violent and uncomfortable environments.

Therefore, the result of the above training sessions will improve on the effects of individual differences on students' academic performances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The work will be significant to school administrators, teachers, guidance counsellors and the government.

➤ To School Administrators

This work will enable school to understand that no two students are the same irrespective of their looks. For even twins don't have the same level of intelligence physical skills and moral conduct. This will help them adopt better strategies to bridge the gap individual differences has created within the school milieu.

➤ To Teachers

To the teachers, they will see the need to be patient and observant with students taking into consideration their individual differences which is as a result of their different socio-economic statuses, environments and different inherited traits from their parents and closed relatives. This will make them to adopt different approaches and strategies in handling individual students behaviors and this can be done through the following ways;

- ❖ The teachers should be able to master the names of the students as knowing them by names tells them that the teacher knows them particularly, hence motivating them to keep a good relationship with their teacher and consequently good behavior and hard work.
- ❖ Teachers should be of good conduct and morals to students as they look up to them for moral values that are positive and acceptable in the society. When correcting the students teachers should avoid insulting and humiliating words.
- ❖ Teacher should involve every learner to participate in learning in and out of the classroom. This should be done by pairing slow learners with fast learners so as to narrow the gap between learners.
- ❖ Teachers should be able to identify students individual worries and differences causes and endeavor to help them solve them, if possible meet the parents of such students in order that together they can help solve the student's problem to enable he or she perform well academically.

To Guidance Counsellors

This study will contribute to enriched the professional knowledge of counsellors to be active in performing their counselling duties to students especially students who suffer from complexes from certain inherited traits from their parents, low socio-economic complex and even students who are arrogant and impolite to teachers and classmates due the fact that they come from well to do backgrounds and environments. If done this will go a long way to improve and curb the negative behavior of students which occurs as a result of individual differences resulting to a generally acceptable behavioral trends which will lead to general improvement in academic performances of the students.

➤ To The Government

The plight of every government towards education is to ensure that illiteracy records a zero percent amongst its citizens. When we talk of education here we mean formal education. This work will be of great benefit to the government in that through it. The government will put in place strategies on how the curriculum can be restructured to meet the needs of each individual student that is favoring the low income background students as well as the physically challenged. Also the government should provide in-service training opportunities and refresher courses where new teaching methods and approaches of handling the problems of individual differences can be handled so as to improve students' academic performances.

Also, this work will enable the government in the training of specialist to properly orientate and inculcate values, skills and attitudes which bring to minimum the issue of individual differences and its effects on students' academic performances.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

In carrying out this study, the researcher encountered the following problems; time factor limited finance and difficulties in administering the questionnaires.

➤ Time Limitation

The fact that many things were to be done in a short time was a problem to the researcher, who needed time to continue her studies, going for teaching practice, preparing lessons, writing exams and so on made the process very difficult.

➤ Financial Limitation

The researcher faced a lot of financial constraints during this study given the fact that money was needed for transportation to school, typing and photocopying of documents, questionnaires and research project, buying of didactic materials for teaching practice, card board papers for the production of charts for lessons. Money was also needed for the buying of handouts and textbooks in the whole course making the study a costly one.

➤ Difficulties in Administering the Questionnaires

The students became very excited and all wanted to participate in answering the questionnaire irrespective of the fact that a population was sampled from the accessible population, this made the class to be noisy making the researcher to use more time than expected to administer the questionnaires.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researchers suggest that further research should be carried out in the following areas;

- Teacher's attitudes towards students and its effects on student's academic performances.
- The use of drugs by students and its influence on individual differences in student's academic performances.
- Motivation and individual differences and its effect on student's academic performances.
- Also, this researcher made use of only two schools to collect data, further research should make use of more schools, to give the research a wider scope and add more validity to the topic.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this study was to find out if individual differences affects student's academic performance, the analysis of data collected from the field enables the researcher to draw the conclusion that socio economic status, environment, and heredity, have a positive effect on student's academic performance. However it was seen that, heredity had an insignificant impact on student's academic performance. Thus, from the result of findings and interpretation the researcher concluded that ascertained that individual differences affects student's academic performance.

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