IMPACT OF MILITARY OFFICERS' OCCUPATIONAL DEMAND ON THE CHILD'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS, KADUNA, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study is carried out to examine the influence of the military officers' occupational demand on their children's academic performance in Secondary Schools in Nigeria. The researchers used descriptive survey design for this study. The population for this study was five thousand six hundred and fifty (5650) respondents. The sample for the study was 622 at 95% confidence and 5% error using Research Advisor sample table 2006. The instrument used for the study was a self-structured Four-Likert questionnaire on the Impact of Military Officers' Occupational Demand on the Child's Academic Performance in Secondary Schools, Kaduna, Nigeria (IMOODCAPSS). The data collected was analysed using the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Findings revealed that frequent transfers and family separation impact negatively to the academic performance of the children in secondary schools in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Additionally, the findings also revealed that if some factors are put in-place it will help remediate or cushion the impact these may have on the students. The study therefore concluded that, the frequent transfers and family separations have brought so much hardship and low academic performance of the children in secondary schools. The study recommends among others that the government and the Nigerian Armed Forces should continue to strengthen family welfare programmes that support the educational and psychosocial needs of military families.

Keywords: Military officers, occupational demand, academic performance

Introduction

Education is a major instrument for individual and national development and social transformation. The academic performance of children is therefore an important concern to parents, teachers, educational administrators, policy-makers and other stakeholders. Academic performance is influenced by a combination of factors, including students' individual characteristics, school resources, teacher quality, peer relationships, socioeconomic conditions and the nature of the home environment.

The family represents one of the most important factors that influences the development children's attitudes towards education and other societal values (Nicosia, et al 2017). Parents influence children's educational development through their expectations, encouragement, supervision, provision of learning materials, communication with teachers, monitoring of school attendance and general support for learning. Kim (2022) posits that constructive parental involvement is positively associated with academic achievement. However, Kim (2022) stated that the strength of the relationship varies according to the form of parental involvement, occupational demand and the educational context.

Military families, however, may experience occupational conditions that distinguish them from many civilian families. Military officers may be required to work long hours, undertake professional training, participate in operations, travel frequently, relocate between postings and, in some circumstances, remain away from their families for extended periods. These occupational requirements may influence the amount of time available for direct parental involvement in children's education (Ananomo, 2021). The issue is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where members of the Nigerian Armed Forces perform

demanding responsibilities associated with national Defense and security. Military personnel may be deployed to different locations and may experience occupational demands that affect family routines. Children may consequently experience changes in residence, schools, caregivers and patterns of interaction with their parents (Wilder, 2014).

However, this is not to say that military service officers produce children with poor educational outcomes. Military families may also possess educational advantages, including disciplined family routines, strong educational aspirations, access to institutional schools and services, social networks, stable income in some circumstances, and parents who place a high value on education. Consequently, the relationship between military service and children's academic performance is complex (Atanda, et al, 2021).

Lyle (2006), posits that military deployment and job-assignment, parental absence and household relocation have adverse effects on children's standardized test performance. Although, Lyle (2006) stated that the effects varied across groups. Similarly, Engel, et al (2010) stated that children in Department of Defense schools, have modest adverse associations between military deployment and academic achievement, with longer deployments and deployment close to testing periods producing larger effects. At the same time, parental involvement shows the quality and nature of educational performance of the child. Castro et al (2015) found that parental involvement had a moderate positive association with academic achievement and reported particularly strong relationships where parents maintained high academic expectations, communicated with children about school activities and encouraged reading habits.

Military officers are commissioned members of the armed forces who occupy positions of leadership, command and professional responsibility. In this article, the term refers broadly to military personnel who have children of school age and whose occupational responsibilities may influence the academic performance of their children.

Academic Performance

Academic performance refers to the extent to which students achieve expected learning outcomes as demonstrated through examinations, continuous assessment, assignments, classroom performance and other recognized educational assessments. Academic performance should not be understood solely as examination scores. Attendance, engagement, study habits, learning motivation, progression and completion may also provide important indicators of educational outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Academic performance remains a central concern in the Nigerian educational system. Although schools are responsible for providing formal instruction, children's educational outcomes are also strongly connected to their home environment and parental involvement. Children of military officers may encounter circumstances that are less common or less frequent among some civilian families. These may include parental absence because of military duties, frequent transfers, relocation from one community to another, changes in schools, separation from familiar friends, demanding parental work schedules and uncertainty **as**sociated with military operations. These have brought poor academic performance of some military children in school.

When a military parent is absent for a considerable period of time, the remaining parent or caregiver may assume additional responsibilities for childcare, household management and educational supervision. The absence of one parent may reduce opportunities for direct academic monitoring and emotional interaction. International research on military deployment has reported associations between

prolonged parental absence and certain adverse academic and behavioural outcomes among children (Nicosia et al. 2017). Abbas et al. (2024) continued by stating that long military deployments were associated with increased odds of reported decreases in adolescent academic performance in their study population.

Frequent relocation may also interrupt children's educational continuity. A child may move from one school to another because of a parent's posting. Differences in curriculum implementation, teaching methods, school resources, peer groups and assessment practices may create adjustment difficulties. However, relocation may also provide opportunities for children to experience new environments and educational institutions.

Another important issue is parental involvement. Military officers may have high educational aspirations for their children but may not always have sufficient time to participate directly in homework, school meetings or other educational activities (Adreriye et al 2025). The distinction between parental commitment and parental physical availability is therefore important. A parent can be strongly committed to a child's education while occupational responsibilities limit physical presence. This was the reason why the researchers sought to examine the influence of Impact of Military Officers' Occupational Demand on the Child's Academic Performance in Secondary Schools, Kaduna, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the influence of military officers' Occupational Demand on the child's academic performance in secondary school in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the impact of frequent transfers on the child's academic performance in secondary school, Nigeria.
2. examine the impact of family separation on the child's academic performance in secondary school, Nigeria.
3. examine the factors to be employed to caution the impact on academic activities of the children in secondary school, Nigeria.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives of the study**,** the following research question were formulated to guide

1. To what extent does the frequent military personnel transfers impact the children academic performance in secondary school, Nigeria?
2. What is the impact of family separation in the military on the children academic performance in secondary school, Nigeria?
3. What is to be done to caution the impact on the academic activities of the children in secondary school, Nigeria?

Conceptual Framework

Military Occupational Demands and Children's Education

Military occupations differ from many civilian occupations because they may involve operational readiness, hierarchical responsibilities, training, deployments and transfers (Olaife 2014). These characteristics can affect family routines. A military officer may have limited control over the timing and location of certain occupational responsibilities. Consequently, family educational planning may need to adapt to changing circumstances.

The potential educational impact can be positive or negative. On the positive side, military families may benefit from: disciplined household routines; emphasis on responsibility and punctuality; strong parental aspirations; stable commitment to children's education; access to military educational institutions in some locations; professional networks; structured family support systems; and parents who encourage discipline and achievement (Yisa et al 2026). However, military service may create challenges such as: parental absence; reduced time for educational supervision; frequent relocation; changes of school; disruption of peer relationships; adjustment difficulties; additional responsibilities for the non-deployed parent; and difficulties maintaining consistent communication during demanding assignments. Therefore, the educational consequences of military service should be viewed as conditional rather than predetermined (Abbas, et al 2024).

Parental Absence and Academic Performance

Parental absence is one of the most frequently discussed pathways linking military service with children's educational outcomes. Military deployment can temporarily remove a parent from the household, during such periods, children may experience changes in daily routines and responsibilities (Andreriye et al 2025). Younger children may particularly depend on regular parental support for homework, reading and school preparation.

Research outside Nigeria provides evidence that prolonged military deployment can be associated with educational challenges. Engel et al. (2010) examined standardized test outcomes among approximately 56,000 children attending Department of Defense schools and found modest adverse effects associated with military deployment. Longer deployments and deployments occurring around testing periods were associated with larger effects.

Lyle (2006) similarly reported that military-related parental absence and household relocation were associated with reductions in children's standardized test performance in the studied population. Nicosia et al. (2017), studying adolescents in military families, reported that long deployments were associated with higher odds of reported decreases in academic performance.

Several protective factors may reduce the impact of absence. These include: regular communication between the deployed parent and children; strong involvement of the non-deployed parent; support from grandparents and extended family; effective school counselling; peer support; stable household routines; access to learning materials; and institutional support from the military (Olaife, 2024). Thus, the effect of parental absence depends partly on the family's capacity to maintain educational and emotional continuity.

Military Relocation and School Mobility

Relocation is another important dimension of military family life. When an officer receives a new posting, the family may move to another city or state. For children, such movement may require adjustment to a new school, new teachers, new classmates and different educational expectations. School mobility may affect academic performance through several mechanisms. First, the child may lose continuity with previous teachers and classmates. Second, curricula and teaching approaches may differ between schools. Third, students may require time to adjust socially and emotionally. Fourth, examinations and assessment systems may not always be synchronized (Yisa et al 2006).

However, relocation is not necessarily harmful in every circumstance. Some children may adapt successfully and benefit from exposure to new educational environments. The outcome may depend on the frequency of relocation, the age of the child, school quality and the level of family support. Lyle (2006) study of military assignments provides evidence that household relocation can have modest negative effects on children's test scores, although the magnitude varies among children and circumstances. Parental Involvement and Academic Performance.

Parental involvement remains one of the most important protective factors in children's education. Castro et al. (2015), in a meta-analysis of 37 studies, found a positive and moderate relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement. The strongest relationships were associated with parental expectations, communication concerning school activities and support for reading habits.

Kim (2022) reviewed 23 meta-analyses involving 1,177 primary studies and reported a positive overall association between parental involvement and academic achievement. Importantly, the review found that different forms of involvement do not necessarily produce the same results, with parental expectations and aspirations showing stronger effects than some forms of homework assistance.

Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory 1979

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides an appropriate theoretical foundation for understanding the educational experiences of military officers' children. The theory proposes that children's development is influenced by multiple interconnected environmental systems. The microsystem includes immediate environments such as the family and school. The mesosystem concerns interactions between these environments. The ecosystem includes settings that indirectly influence the child, such as a parent's workplace. The macro system involves broader cultural, social, economic and institutional structures.

Military service can therefore be understood as an important component of the child's ecosystem. The military workplace may influence the child even though the child does not directly participate in military activities (Castro et al 2015). For example, a parent's deployment may reduce parental availability; a transfer may result in relocation; and military training may affect family routines, it avoids reducing academic performance to a single cause. A child's educational outcome may result from interactions among parental involvement, school quality, peer relationships, socioeconomic circumstances, individual characteristics and occupational conditions affecting the family.

Methodology

The theory is useful because this study was on the Impact of Military Officers' Occupational Demand on the Child's Academic Performance in Secondary Schools, Kaduna, Nigeria. The study used descriptive survey design. The population for this study was five thousand six hundred and fifty (5650) respondents. The sample for the study was 622 at 95% confidence and 5% error using Research Advisor sample table 2006. The instrument used for data collection was a self-structured questionnaire on the Impact of Military Officers' Occupational Demand on the Child's Academic Performance in Secondary Schools (IMOODCAPSS). The data collected was analyzed using the descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation.

The results indicated that frequent military transfers and family separation negatively impacted so much on the children's academic performance. However, it was also discovered that, if some factors are placed on ground, there would be remediation to avert much of these problems. The concluded that the government and the management of the military, have so much to do for the sake of these children to reduce the impact of parent frequent transfer.

Results

RQ1: To what extent does the military personnel transfers impact on the children academic performance in secondary school, Nigeria?

Table 1: Responses of the respondents on the impact of military personnel transfers on the children academic performance in secondary school, Nigeria.

N = 622

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1.	There is always curriculum gaps among the schools involved	420	101	83	18	3.48	0.87	Agreed
2.	There are always difficulties in either credit or transcript transfers	455	98	52	13	3.59	0.89	Agreed
3.	There may be high risks of stress or anxiety on the child due the fear of unknown.	395	158	60	6	3.51	0.87	Agreed
4.	Children always have challenges in gaining and finding good friends to attach with.	386	158	45	9	3.40	0.85	Agreed
5.	This may bring some behavioural changes on the children.	460	95	48	14	3.59	0.89	Agreed
6.	This could lead to the child isolating him or herself from other students.	445	102	45	12	3.59	0.89	Agreed
7.	Lowers the children engagement with the teachers, visa-vise the lessons.	496	78	32	13	3.35	0.83	Agreed
8.	Disrupts some extra-curricular activities of the children.	455	98	23	8	3.52	0.88	Agreed
	Cumulative Mean					**3.01**	**0.76**	**Agreed**

Source: Military schools in Kaduna

From table 1 above, it was discovered that the respondents affirmed that frequent military transfers really affect the child's academic performance. This was observed from the

cumulative mean of 3.01 and the standard deviation of 0.76. They went further to state that frequent military transfers affect the performance of the children tremendously as seen in all the items on the table.

RQ2: What is the impact of family separation of the military officers on the children academic performance in secondary school, Nigeria?

Table 2: Responses of the respondents on the impact of family separation of the military officers on the children academic performance in secondary school, Nigeria.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1.	The children always suffer some emotional trauma or disorder.	445	95	42	10	3.09	0.76	Agreed
2.	Reduces the social involvement of the children in school	398	116	55	17	3.23	0.82	Agreed
3.	Reduces academic concentration in both school and at home	405	132	58	13	3.44	0.86	Agreed
4.	Leads to the child's misalignment in curriculum between the two schools	422	115	72	12	3.52	0.88	Agreed
5.	The child may lack long-term stability in academic planning	399	123	68	11	3.40	0.84	Agreed
6.	Separation could lead to inconsistent communication between the two parents of the child in school.	411	132	58	13	3.49	0.87	Agreed
7.	The child is always in fear of the future of his or her family.	401	144	62	11	3.49	0.87	Agreed
8.	Separation could lead to low parental care.	414	121	65	12	3.47	0.86	Agreed
	Cumulative Mean					**3.39**	**0.85**	**Agreed**

Table 2 discusses the responses of the respondents on the impact of family separation on military children academic performance. In view of this, the respondents agreed completely that family separation impacts so much on the children academic performance. This was indicated on the mean and standard deviation which shows 3.39 and 0.85 respectively.

RQ3: What are the factors to be employed to cushion the impact of military officers' transfers on the academic activities on the children in secondary school, Nigeria?

Table 3: Responses of the respondents on the factors to cushion the impact of military officers' transfers on the academic activities on the children in secondary school, Nigeria?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1.	Parents should always keep proper and accurate records of the academic records of the child.	510	81	21	5	3.75	0.94	Agreed
2.	Parents should choose schools that have military support programmes	482	95	24	8	3.65	0.91	Agreed
3.	Technology devices should be used to maintain learning sequence.	418	135	42	15	3.50	0.87	Agreed
4.	Military officers should prioritize their children education.	425	115	54	10	3.39	0.84	Agreed
5.	Military officers' children should be allowed to enroll in one-on-one online education.	501	66	31	7	3.65	0.91	Agreed
6.	Early reconciliation of the two parents will save the child's situation in school.	400	118	49	23	3.34	0.83	Agreed
	Cumulative Mean					**3.55**	**0.88**	**Agreed**

Table 3 also discussed the factors that could cushion the impact of military officers' transfers on the academic activities of their children in secondary school, Nigeria. The respondents affirmed that these factors, if followed would be able to cushion the impact of both transfers and separation on the military children's academic performance wherever they go. This affirmation was indicated on the cumulative mean of 3.55 and standard deviation of 0.88.

Discussion of Findings

Research question 1 discussed the impact of frequent military transfers on the children's academic performance secondary schools in Nigeria. The responses from the respondent show that there is so much negative impact experienced on the students' academic performance of the students due to their military parent transfers. This is affirmed by the cumulative and the standard deviation of 3.01 and 0.76 respectively. In line with this, Lyle (2006) posits that military deployment and job-assignment, parental absence and household relocation have adverse effects on children's standardized test performance. Although, Lyle (2006) stated that the effects varied across groups. Similarly, Engel, et al (2010) stated that children in the Department of Defense schools, have modest adverse associations between military deployment and academic achievement, with longer deployments and deployment close to testing periods producing larger effects. At the same time, parental involvement shows the quality and nature of educational performance of the child.

Research question 2 also discussed the impact of military officers' family separation on the children's academic performance in secondary school. It was also discovered that the respondents affirmed the family separation generally negatively affects the children's academic performance in secondary school. This affirmation was seen from the cumulative mean and standard deviation with the value of 3.39 and 0.85 respectively. Similarly, Lyle (2006) posited that military-related parental absence and household relocation were associated with reductions in children's standardized test performance in the studied population. Nicosia et al. (2017), studying adolescents in military families, reported

that long deployments were associated with higher odds of reported decreases in academic performance.

Similarly, Nicosia et al. (2017) stated that the absence of one parent may reduce opportunities for direct academic monitoring and emotional interaction. International research on military deployment has reported associations between prolonged parental absence and certain adverse academic and behavioral outcomes among children.

Table 3 discussed the factors to be adopted to remediate the impact of frequent military transfers on the children's academic performance in secondary school. This could also be seen on the cumulative mean and standard deviation of 3.55 and 0.88 respectively. These can be seen as an affirmation from the respondents. In line with the aforementioned, Lyle (2006) stated that several protective factors may reduce the impact of absence of the parents while children are in school. These include: regular communication between the deployed parent and children; strong involvement of the non-deployed parent; support from grandparents and extended family; effective school counselling; peer support; stable household routines; access to learning materials; and institutional support from the military.

Conclusion

The academic performance of military officers' children is influenced by a complex interaction of family, school, child and occupational factors. Military service can create distinctive circumstances, including parental absence, relocation, demanding work schedules and changes in school environments. International evidence suggests that prolonged military deployment and parental absence may be associated with modest adverse academic outcomes in some circumstances.

At the same time, research on parental involvement consistently indicates that constructive parental expectations, communication, supervision and educational support are associated with better academic outcomes. The Nigerian evidence reviewed also demonstrates the importance of parental involvement in children's educational development, although findings vary across locations and research designs.

The article therefore concludes that military service should not be regarded as inherently harmful to children's education. Rather, its potential influence depends on how occupational demands are managed within the family and how effectively military institutions and schools provide support.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following suggestions were made:

1. Transfers of military officers should not be as regular as was to prevent instability on the children's schools vis-a-vis their academic performance. This will also strengthen parent-school Communication. Schools should establish effective communication systems that allow military parents to remain informed about their children's educational progress.
2. The Military Educational Authorities and the schools should develop efficient procedures for transferring military children between schools following parental postings.
3. Military family-support units should provide mechanisms through which deployed parents can maintain constructive educational communication with their children and the new school.
4. Military parents should combine discipline with emotional support, encouragement, communication and recognition of individual differences among their children.
5. The Nigerian Armed Forces should continue to strengthen family welfare programmes that support the educational and psychosocial needs of military families.

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