

***Influence of Parental Socioeconomic Status on Students' Academic Performance  
in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria***

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**Abstract**

*The main thrust of this study was to investigate the influence of parental socioeconomic status on students' academic performance in Calabar South Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. The study was guided by a lone hypothesis. A sample of four hundred (400) respondents was randomly selected for the study. Two instruments, a well validated structured questionnaire to measure parental socioeconomic status and an achievement test to measure students' academic performance, were used for data collection. Data collected were analyzed using one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison test at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that: there is a significant influence of parental socioeconomic status on students' academic performance. The study recommended that families should attach some degree of importance to the education of their children as future leaders, and parents should guide their children to facilities such as magazine, radios, television sets, books, computer, newspapers and other resources that will help educate their child to fit into the 21st century.*

**Keywords:** socio-economic, status, social, behaviour, students, academic, performance

**Introduction**

The antecedents of success and failure within our school have been subject of much concern in the process of educating students. The students' anti-social behaviours generate behavioural conflict; this means that the atmosphere at home helps or hinders the students' overall attitude towards school. If a student is valued, appreciated, cared for and looked after as an asset right from home rather than being seen as liability, such a child is likely to learn to appreciate and value schooling or regard school as a second home.

Donelson (2010) attests that the emotional state of the child reflects on his appearance and attitudes. He generally carries hang-ups through his life pattern, exhibiting lack of security, ability to cope with life problem, tenacity of purpose and manifesting anti-social behaviour and apathy. The emotional deprivation of object of love attachment thus takes its toll on the psychological, emotional and physical development of the child (Janov, 2013). Socio-cultural handicaps or deprivation as a result of parental ignorance, absence of mother or father, malnutrition, and family's attitude and economic circumstances increases negligence of children in schools. Such deprivation leaves relatively permanent damaging effect on the child. Freud's (1953) study of personality adjustment shows that unfavorable early childhood experience leads to maladjustment of personality. Children with adjustment problems in early life tend to have the same problems in later school life. Abiola (2011) observed that a lot of backwardness attributed to societies within the developing nations is not just due to lack of innate potential but due to environmental, cultural and educational factors which do not promote the type of cognitive incentive in the early years that enhance intellectual excellence.

The home, particularly, is the first unit with which children have continuous contact and in the same context, form their educational patterns. For successful education, either in the formal setting of the school or in the informal setting of the home, a correct approach to the education of the child is quite essential. Education is considered as a vital means of attaining freedom. Therefore, it is important that parents at home should play a vital role in the education of the child. The family provides the first education for a child. The training starts from infancy to a conscious level. The role of the family in the education of their offspring cannot be relegated to the background. It is from the home that the child learns to talk, walk and relate with others.

Learning and teaching at different stages of awareness go on all the time, in and outside the school. Parents and teachers are teaching at different levels of awareness and children learn from both the parents and teachers. A child is quick to note what parents turn their attention to and thus learn what their values are; that is, what their parents believe and practice. It is from the home that a child gets a sense of security and belonging. A home that is characterized by disorganization and rigidity on the part of the parents will obviously have severe repercussions on the child's performance at school. The family, as a socializing body, occupies an enviable position in the task since it is the first environment for the upbringing of the child.

Durojaiye (1976) noted that, "the home of a traditional African is in its own way an education centre." He remarked that the young follows his parents to the farm and is given the opportunity to practice well before he becomes an effective farmer. Girls, especially, he noted, follow their mothers to do domestic and economic chores well

before they are given out in marriage. The home setting, therefore, acts as an effective education centre for the orientation of the young towards acquiring rewarding skills for themselves and the society. Faced with the advent of schooling and challenges, the upbringing at home therefore needs to take a new orientation that goes a long way to meet the challenges of the times.

Further consequences of this educational innovation are the new socio-economic growth, which have made educational materials more sophisticated and costly as against the locally made materials that could be fabricated at home. Education, unlike in the traditional setup, now needs to be paid for, thus, restraining its acquisition. The basic needs of schooling now become tasking to acquire, thus, bringing some difficulties towards academic achievement. The academic performance of a child will, by implication, be affected by what happens at the home. It is against this background that a research is necessary to investigate the home background, needs satisfaction and academic performance of secondary school students in Calabar South in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Studies carried out have found student's socio-economic background to be related to their scholastic performance. Wolf (2009) stressed that the socio-economic level indicated by the father's occupation influences the child's educational progress and occupation at a very early stage. In a study to examine the influence of family size and socio-economic status on performance, Onyejiaku (2012) revealed that socio-economic status of the family influences students' achievements. He reported that education is valued by the middle class parents as a stepping stone for higher education. On the other hand, he discovered that lower class parents do not encourage their children to strive towards high academic achievement. Such behaviour, he noted, fosters poor academic performance in the children. This view is further confirmed by Hurlock (1972). Child (1997) noted that children from high socio-economic status families have unrealistic academic goals set by parents and failure to meet these goals may result in tension. Warmer (1994) found that families did not always attach the same degree of importance to the education of their children, and that not all home environments provided the same amount of motivation for scholastic activities. Tomori (2009) pointed out that many students lack reading culture due to the inability of some Nigerian homes to provide the textbooks needed by the children. To this effect, the children study without the necessary textbooks. According to Babiha (2009), family life can either make or break an individual. He posits that where deviance occurs, the home breaks. As a result, the children become poorly oriented thus resulting to poor academic attainment.

According to Echols and Williams (1995), the best single predictor of the child's future achievement level is the family. The family is the first place where the child is exposed

to magazines, radio and television sets, books, newspapers and many other resources that help to educate the child. Eaton (2012) pointed out some barriers to academic performance in higher education. She states that “absence of money and absence of motivation can all constitute to the act of poor academic performance in universities.” Coming (2007), in his findings, noted that children from high socio-economic status respond better if they are challenged with more difficult materials, taught at brisker pace. Austin (2016), in his findings, concluded that there exists a difference between children from home with high socio-economic status and those from a low socio-economic status. He also noted that children from low socio-economic status are economically depressed. This situation makes them develop adverse psychological feelings which affect their studies as well as their academic performance.

Saba (2008) studied socio-economic status, parental encouragement and needs satisfaction as variables in educational aspiration. The purpose of the study was to determine the relative effect of these variables. He used 10,318 high school seniors in South Wales. The result showed a significant relationship ( $\chi^2 = 25.6, P < .05$ ) between socio-economic status of parents and level of educational aspiration of their wards. 90% of the subjects from high socio-economic status hoped to further their education beyond college level. Lack of finance by parents to sponsor students' educational aspiration was chosen by 73% of the students from low socio-economic background as affecting their educational aspiration; he concluded that family's socio-economic background and students' level of needs satisfaction significantly affect their academic performance.

### **Hypothesis**

**Ho1:** There is no significant influence of parental socio-economic status on the academic performance of their children.

### **Methodology**

The research design used in conducting this study was survey research design. According to Isangedighi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri (2004), survey research design deals with conditions or relationships that exist; practices that prevail and attitudes of subjects. It also deals with effects that are being felt and the trends that are developing. Survey design focuses on people and their beliefs, opinions, attitude, motivation and behaviour (Kerlinger, 1973). Thus, survey design allows the study of a large sample from a population in order to discover the incidence, distribution and inter-relationship between variables. It involves the drawing of conclusions based on the analysis of available facts. In survey research, samples are studied and from the samples, inferences are made about the characteristics of the population.

A total of four hundred (400) JSS II students from eight (8) selected secondary schools were used for the study. Two instruments were used for the collection of data. The first instrument was a structured questionnaire entitled “Students’ Needs Satisfaction and Home Background Questionnaires (SNSHBQ)” while the second instrument was an “achievement test”. The SNSHBQ was structured into two major sections. Section A was structured to capture personal and socio-economic data of respondents, while section B was structured to capture the basic purpose of the study based on the objectives and hypotheses of the study. Section A had 7 items while section B had 14 items. The likert scale of 1 - 4 consisting of 4 for strongly agreed; 3 for agreed, 2 for disagreed and 1 for strongly disagreed was adopted and used for the scoring option. The test – retest option was used to validate and check for the reliability of the survey instrument. Data collected were analyzed using One way analysis of variance (ANOVA).

### **Presentation of results**

**Ho1:** There is no significant influence of level of parental socio-economic status on the academic performance of their children in secondary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area.

The independent variable in this hypothesis was level of parental socio-economic status while the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Calabar South LGA was the dependent variable. The respondents in the sample were categorized into three groups based on the level of their parental socio-economic status. These group were categorized based on the following ranges of scores.

Group 1(low)	14 – 16
Group 2 (Average)	17 – 19
Group 3 (High)	19 – 23

The dependent variable in the study is defined as the score obtained by a student on the comprehensive achievement test. The statistical analysis technique used to test this hypothesis was one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** One-way analysis of variance of the influence of parental socio-economic status on the academic performance of students in Calabar South

<b>Parental Socio-economic status</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
Low	194	34.17	4.33
Average	130	36.62	3.98
High	76	32.01	4.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>34.27</b>	<b>4.14</b>

  

<b>ANOVA</b>				
<b>Sources of variation</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>MS</b>	<b>F-value</b>
Between group	874.072	2	437.03	
Within group	48080.18	397	121.11	3.61*
Total	48954.25	399		

$P < 0.05$ ; DF = degree of freedom = 2; 397, F- Critical value = 3.00.

Result of the analysis reveals that the calculated F-ratio of 3.61 is higher than the critical F-ratio of 3.00 at .05 level of significance with 2 and 397 degrees of freedom. With the result of the analysis, the null hypothesis was rejected. This result therefore means that parental socio-economic status significantly influences the academic performance of their children in secondary schools in Calabar South. Since parental socio-economic status significantly influence the academic performance of children in secondary schools in Calabar South, a further pattern of the influence was explored using the Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD), Multiple comparison analysis of the influence of parental socio-economic status on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Calabar South

<b>Level</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>High</b>
N	194	130	76
194	34.17 <sup>a</sup>	-2.4 <sup>b</sup>	2.16
130	-1.96 <sup>c</sup>	36.62	4.61
76	1.45	2.90	32.01

MSW = 121.11

\* $P < 0.05$ ,  $df = 397$ ; F- calculated = 3.00; F- critical value = 1.96

- a- Group means are placed along the diagonal
- b - Difference between group means one placed above the diagonal.
- c - Fisher's t-values are placed below the diagonal
- \* - Significant at 0.05 level (Critical = 1.96).

The non-significant Fisher's t – values of -1.96 and 1.45 indicate that the academic performance of students in secondary schools when the parental socio-economic status is either average (Mean = 36.62) or high (mean=32.01) is not significantly different from the academic performance of students in secondary schools when the parental socio-economic status is low (mean = 34.17). However the significant fisher's t-value of 2.90 indicates that the academic performance of students in secondary schools when the parental socio-economic status is high (mean = 32.01) is significantly lower than when the parental socio-economic status is average (mean = 36.62).

### **Discussion of findings**

The result of this hypothesis revealed that there is a significant influence of level of parental socio-economic status on the academic performance of their children in secondary school in Calabar South. The respondent in this sample was categorized into three groups based on the level of parental socio-economic status.

Under this, it was found out that high socio-economic status of parents have tremendous opportunities to encourage their children in school, while education is valued by average class parent as a stepping stone to success in life. The low socio economic status parent do not encourage their children to go to school, therefore, their children have problem of poor academic performance. To support the findings of this hypothesis that socio-economic status of the family positively influences scholastic achievements, Wolf 2009 had reported that education is valued by the middle class parents as a stepping stone to success in life. On the other hand, he discovered that lower class parents do not encourage their children to strive towards high academic achievements. Such behaviour, he noted, foster poor academic performance in their children. Wolf (2009) further stressed that the socio-economic level indicated by the fathers' occupation influences the child's educational progress and occupation at a very early stage. He holds that children from high-income homes are surrounded with much educational aids and also value education hence encourage the children to aim success in the school.

To further support the findings of this study, Echols and Williams (1995), assert that the best single predictor of the child's future achievements level is the family; that the family is the first place where the child is exposed to magazines, radios, television

sets, books, newspapers and many other resources that help to educate the child. The parents use their money to provide these facilities and such provision goes a long way to tune the child's tastes as he/she grows up. Warner (1994) found that families did not always attach the same degree of importance to the education of their children and also that not all home environments provide that same amount of motivation to scholastic activities.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that there is significant influence of parental socio-economic status on academic performance of their children. This implies that socio economic status of family influences, positively, the academic performance of their children which makes them develop adverse psychological feelings that goes a long way to affect their studies.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study and their implication for the future of educational process, the following recommendations are made:

1. Families should attach some degree of importance to the education of their children as future leaders.
2. Parents should guide their children to facilities such as magazine, radios, television sets, books, computer, newspapers and other resources that will help educate their child to fit into the new trend in the society.

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