

## ***Family Variables as Determinants of Students' Geometry Performance in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria***

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### **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this study was to assess family variables as determinants of SS II students' geometry performance in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted the ex-post facto research design. The population of the study consisted of all SS II students in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. A sample of 150 SS II students was selected for the study, using simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was Geometry Performance Test (GPT) with reliability coefficient of 0.71, established using the Kuder Richardson KR – 21 reliability method. Data obtained was analyzed using one way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Findings of the study indicated that parental socio-economic status, single parenting, and parental occupation, have no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry. It was recommended, among others, that non-governmental organizations should reach out more to children from low/poor socio-economic backgrounds by providing scholarships opportunities for them as well as through offering of direct financial assistance to homes in order to empower them and sustain them economically as these homes are the immediate environment of the children.*

**Keywords:** Family, variables, students, geometry, performance

### **Introduction**

Education is a process by which the mind of human being develops through learning at homes, streets, religious institutions like churches and mosques, schools, colleges or universities. It is also a process whereby a person develops attitudes and abilities that are considered to have value and relevance in the society. It is the best legacy a nation can give to her citizens, especially the youth. Every nation hoping to have bright future needs

to emphasize on education because it is the only way to development (Abiri & Jekayinfa, 2010).

Education is seen as a sine qua non for the government's development and reform agenda. Thus, in order to achieve the goals of education in Nigeria, the role of the family background on students remain cardinal and indispensable. Success in an educational institution is measured by academic performance. Over the years, the importance of students doing well in school has become the common concern of parent, legislators, teachers, counsellors and psychologists. According to Bell and Linn (2002), parents devote a lot of resources to their children's education because they believe that good academic performance will provide a stable future for them. Uwaifo (2008) attributed the cause of poor academic performance of children to a combination of personal and institutional factors. The personal factors include the level of individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability, while institutional factors are family or parental influence. Olayanju (2014) pointed out that the family is the bedrock of any society. Obanya (2004) reported that a stable and well developed childhood can be guaranteed by a stable family. The current poor economic status of the country has exposed children to undesirable challenges that have negatively affected their academic performance in school.

Focusing specifically on geometry, the word "*Geometry*" has its origin in two Latin words "ge" (earth) and "metria" (measuring), meaning "earth measurement". Consequently, it is the visual study of shapes, sizes and patterns and how they fit together in space. It is also the part of Mathematics which treats the properties of points, lines, surfaces and solids as well as the solid shapes, polygons, geometrical transformation, latitude and longitudes. It can also be referred to as the process of measuring quantities of length, breadth and width, area and volume (Musa & Bolaji cited in Okri & Aglazor, 2020). There are different dimensions that can be considered in geometry; when the object has just one length, it is considered one dimensional; when the object has a length and width, it is two dimensional and this is applicable to perimeters and areas. When it has length, width and depth or height, it is considered to have three dimensions as in the case of curved and total surface areas, as well as volume.

Geometry has been an important source of mathematical thinking. It helps to sharpen man's intuition and ability to think logically as well as kindle his interest in observations; it is a wonderful area of Mathematics, full of surprising theorems and interesting problems. It is an integral part of cultural experience being a vital component of numerous aspects of life. Geometry appeals to visual, aesthetic and intuitive senses, which is intimately connected with development of Mathematics. Thus, the teaching of geometry properly as an aspect of Mathematics can mean enabling students to find success in Mathematics as a whole; hence it is not an overstatement to say that geometry occupies the highest practical aspect of Mathematics. Presenting geometry in a way that stimulates curiosity and encourages exploration can support learners' instructional understanding and can lead to enhancing communication and students' learning interest towards Mathematics. This would further encourage students to discuss problems in geometry,

articulate their ideas and develop clearly structured arguments, skills and recognition of the importance of proofs in Mathematics.

The socio-economic status of a family is capable of affecting the behaviour of the children and determining their aspiration. Families with high socio-economic status often have more success in preparing their children for school because they typically have access to funds thus enabling them to provide for their children's healthcare, books and encourage children in various learning activities at home. They also have easy access to information regarding their children's health, as well as social, emotional and cognitive development (Ojo & Yilma, 2010). In Nigeria, most children whose parents cannot afford to pay for high cost of formal education enroll them into apprenticeship programmes such as carpentry, bricklaying, petty trading and others. In the study area, there is a seeming general poor performance among secondary school students. Evidences of the poor performances are seen in both students' internal and external examinations.

Many children from single parents drop out of school because of inability of their parents to give them sound education while many are under bondage of cohabitation because their parents failed to send them to school. Among children in single parent families, those from mother absent homes and mother absent household earn lower grades than children from father absent households. Children from father absent households generally find it difficult to connect with school activities both academically and morally. George (2016) defines single parent as a couple who separate either by death or inability of the couple to satisfy each other. He further states that many partners have been separated because of inability of one to perform his/her responsibility in the family. Jallingo (2000) emphasizes that single parenting is a phenomenon which is rampant among couples who are not prepared for children's rearing and could not provide for their children's welfare. He further states that single parenting is common in the society because of misunderstanding among couples.

Socio-economic background or status refers to a person's position in a given group, society or culture as determined by wealth, occupation, education and social class. Olabiyi (2018) carried out a study to examine the effects of parental socio-economic status on the academic performance of mathematics students in some selected secondary schools in Ibarapa East Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The descriptive research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study covered the entire secondary schools mathematics students (both males and females) in the area of study. Out of this population, sixty (60) students used as sample was selected from the senior secondary schools (SSS) mathematics students, using simple random sampling technique. The instrument used to collect data for the study was a twenty-two item self-structured questionnaire. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested during the study using chi-square statistical tool. Each of the results obtained from the tests was compared with its critical value at 5% level of significance. On the basis of the findings made in the study, it was concluded that parental socio-economic status influences the secondary school students' academic performance in Mathematics.

Gemechu (2018) conducted a study to investigate the effect of family socio-economic status on students' academic achievement. Descriptive survey research design was employed. The target population was students from the College of Education and Behavioural Sciences. 172 students were taken from the target population through stratified random sampling. The results showed that first, family income did not bring anything new to students' academic achievement; second, there was statistically significant negative relationship between sex and students' academic achievement; finally, family education level contributed 40.96% to students' academic achievement whereas 59.04% were unexplained variables that contributed to students' academic achievement.

Abdu-Raheem (2015) carried out a study to investigate parents' socio-economic status on secondary school students' academic performance in Ekiti State. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted. It was confirmed in the study that there was relationship between parents' socio-economic status and academic performance of secondary school students.

Ogunshola and Adewale (2012) carried out a study on the relationship between home-based environment factors and the academic performance of students in selected secondary schools within a local government area in Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that parental educational background did not have significant effect on the academic performance of the students. However, the parental educational qualification and health status of the students were identified to have statistically significant effect on the students' academic performance. The two variables that indicated significant influence do reflect nature of the parents' location (home environment) and played notable roles on the educational support of the students. Ogbugo-Ololube (2016) conducted a study to determine the impact of parents' background on their children's educational achievement. His result showed a positive relationship between the two variables. In other words, there was a positive relationship between parents' educational background and the performance of their children at school.

Single parenting can be defined as when one out of two people who are responsible for the nurturing and rearing of a child is not available, and the work meant for two people is now being carried out by only one person. According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, a single parent is defined as a mother or father who looks after children on their own, without the other partner. Single parenting can be viewed as a situation whereby the duties that require two parents to carry out on their children are being carried out by a single parent, either the wife or the husband. Fotoh (2021) conducted a study to investigate the effect of single parenting on students' academic performance in Kumba III Municipality, Meme Division of Cameroon. The findings of this study reveal that single parenting influences the academic performance of the children as most single parents do not have a reliable source of income, do not always pay their children's fees on time, do not provide most of their school needs (textbooks, school bag

and shoes) and do not regularly provide food for their children before and after school. Also, it was revealed that the educational attainment of single parents influences the academic performance of students as more than half of single parents in Kumba III Municipality were uneducated; do not always check their children's books at home; do not always create time to do assignments with their children at home; do not always attend Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings in school and do not always create time to discuss with them about school. Findings also show that single parenting is caused by unfaithfulness, marital violence, premarital pregnancy, poverty, divorce and death of spouse.

Akinade and Aramide (2016) carried out a study to investigate the influence of single parenthood factors on the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The results showed a significant relationship between academic performance of undergraduate medical students and guardian's type ( $r=.067$ ), sex of students ( $r=.052$ ), guardian's occupation ( $r=.179$ ), guardian's educational level ( $r=.084$ ) and guardian's income ( $r=.063$ ). There was also a negative relationship between academic performance of undergraduate medical students and the ages of students ( $r=-.185$ ). The study concluded that the absence of one of the parents would definitely have an effect on the income level of the household, which might make it impossible to provide all the necessary resources that would support better academic performance by students from single parenthood background.

Joyce (2016) carried out a study to assess the effects of single parenting on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Arusha city council. It was found that single parenting is caused by divorce, death, separation and not married. Also, the study revealed that challenges faced by single parents on supporting students' academic performance in secondary schools were inability to buy school requirements, lack of enough time to check students' exercise books, inability to supply money for lunch to their children, poor communication and lack of time to give homework to children. It was also realized that single parenting leads to economic hardships among students, lack of support from parents, lack of school resources, life stress and instability, and anxiety and depression. The study reported that single parenting is caused by divorce, death, separation and not married. The research confirmed that single parenting hinders students' academic performance in secondary schools.

Fawole (2019) carried out a study to examine the impacts of single parenting on Senior Secondary School students' academic performance in Mathematics in Ondo West Local Government Area of Ondo State. The study revealed the age of students, their gender, their family's size, and their parents' occupation. It also revealed the causes of single parenting among the people of Ondo West Local Government. The study further revealed the effects of single parenting on teenagers and the single parents. Also, it revealed the influence of single parenting on children's academic performance. Likewise, the study revealed the effects of single parenting on the society. The study also revealed the

importance of parent-child relationship, and parent/family involvement in students' academic work.

Concerning parental occupation and students' academic performance, Akinsanya et al (2014) conducted a study on the relative effects of parents' occupation, qualification and academic motivation of wards on students' achievements in senior secondary school mathematics in Ogun State, Nigeria. The results revealed that parents' education has the highest significant influence on the academic achievement of students in Mathematics, while the effect of academic motivation had the least effect among the variables which exerted significant effects on students' academic achievement in Mathematics. Particularly, the result of the study revealed that parents' occupation, which is next to parents' education, predicts academic achievement of students. The result provides evidence that students whose parents belong to the high ranking occupational status have a better grade in Mathematics than their counterparts whose parents belong to the low ranking occupational status. This is because parents with high ranking occupational status might have enough income which can allow them to provide the needed materials and support for their children in order to arouse their interest in Mathematics than their counterparts in low ranking occupation whose major obligation is to provide shelter and food for the family. This is related to the present study.

Udida et al (2012) carried out a study on parental background as determinants of students' academic performance in selected public secondary schools in Calabar Municipal Local Government area of Cross Rivers State. The study identified parental occupation as the main predictive variable influencing student's academic performance. Odikpo and Ejide (2021) carried out a study to examine the influence of parental occupation and educational level on the academic achievement of Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in English language and Mathematics in Ogidi and Otuocha Education Zones of Anambra State, Nigeria. Parental occupation and educational level were collected from students' records. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, t-test and Two-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used. The result revealed that parental occupation and education influenced academic achievement of SS2 students in English language and mathematics.

Mohd and Aliyu (2018) conducted a study to investigate the influence of parental background of secondary school students on their academic performance in Islamic Studies in Nigeria. The cross-sectional research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study consists of all senior secondary school students in north-central Nigeria. The finding indicates that the level of parents' education, prestigious occupation of parents, income level of parents and involvement of parents in their children's education are capable of enhancing academic performance of students especially in Islamic Studies.

Ebong (2015) conducted a study to investigate parental background on student's academic performance in secondary schools in Abak Local Government Area of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. The study revealed that the performance of students in Physics examination does

not depend on examination body or examiners, gender or parents. The result also revealed that family structure, parent occupation and educational level of parent did not have significant influence on student's performances in physics examination.

Oladele et al. (2014) carried out a study to investigate the influence of parental background on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The study was statistically analyzed and the result showed that parents' attitudes towards their children's education had significant effect(s) on students' self-reporting of academic achievement. However, such factors as parental education and socioeconomic background had no significant relationship with the students' self-reporting of academic achievement.

### **Statement of the problem**

Parents are the operators of the child's development. They are the first educators of their children and are responsible for providing children with the right platform for learning. However, illiteracy of parents and poor occupational background may have negative effect on the educational support of their children. Children whose parents are illiterates may be seen to lack home encouragement and such children may receive low or no educational support from their parents and this may discourage them from learning. Where such resources and facilities are lacking, it is inevitable that the learning abilities of a child is seriously affected in terms of their educational progress.

The relationship between family background of students in form of parental educational background and students' academic performance in secondary school has been of immense interest to educators because one cannot successfully divorce the influence of family background from the performance of students in the school. It then follows that students spend more time at home than they do at school. Thus, what transpires at home to a reasonable extent may make or mar students' performance. Therefore, this study seeks to assess family variables as determinants of SS II students' geometry performance in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.

### **Research questions**

1. What is the influence of parental socio-economic status on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State?
2. How does single parenting influence students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State?
3. What influence has parental occupation on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State?

### **Research hypotheses**

**Ho1:** Parental socio-economic status has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.

**Ho2:** Single parenting has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.

**Ho3:** Parental occupation has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.

### Methodology

The study adopted the ex-post facto research design. In this design, the independent variable has already taken place and the researcher must study in retrospect for the possible effect on an observed dependent variable. The variables of family were investigated as they influenced students' academic achievement in geometry. The population of the study consisted of all SS II students in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. There are 80 public secondary schools in Ogoja Education zone. The zone has 3,036 SS II students comprising of 1,488 males and 1,548 females (Cross River State Secondary Education Board; CRSSEB, 2021). SS II students were found suitable for the study since they had covered a number of topics and are familiar with the resources in the school. Table 1 shows the population distribution for the study.

**Table 1:** Population of the study (Ogoja Education Zone)

Name of LGA	No of Schools	No. of SS II Maths Teachers		No of registered SS II students	
		M	F	M	F
Obudu	22	13	9	454	444
Ogoja	16	11	5	285	348
Yala	21	14	7	405	401
Obanliku	14	10	4	166	187
Bekwarra	7	5	2	178	168
Total	80	53	27	1,488	1,548
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>		<b>3,036</b>	

**Source:** Statistics Department, Cross River State Secondary School Education Board, 2021.

The researcher adopts a simple random sampling technique to select four schools for the study. A sample of 150 sS II students from four schools were chosen for the study. The instrument for data collection in this study was Geometry Performance Test (GPT). The GPT is a quantitative measure of students' learning performance in geometry. The GPT consisted of 50 multiple choice questions/items with four options lettered A to D to be marked over 100 (i.e. each correct option carries 2 marks). Three options are distractors

and only one option is the correct answer. It is based on content areas in geometry for SS II students (cylinder, cone, cuboid, prism and pyramid).

To determine the face and content validity of the instrument, copies of the GPT were given to two experts in Measurement and Evaluation unit, Department of Educational Foundations, University of Calabar. The experts proofread the instrument to confirm that it measured what it is intended to measure. Thereafter, the instrument was modified based on the suggestions and comments of the experts to measure students' learning performance in geometry. The reliability of the Geometry Performance Test (GPT) was established using the Kuder Richardson KR – 21 reliability method. The copies of the instruments were administered once and they were required to attempt all the items of GPT. The scores obtained from the administration of the instruments were analyzed using KR – 21 to obtain an index of reliability of the instrument as 0.71.

Data obtained was analyzed using the one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses. The analysis was done hypothesis-by-hypothesis and the results presented in tables.

### **Presentation of results**

**Ho1:** Parental socio-economic status has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja education zone of Cross River State.

The hypothesis was examined using a variance analysis. This is presented on table 2.

**Table 2:** ANOVA of influence of parental socio-economic status on academic performance level of the students

	<b>Sum of square</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Mean square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Between Groups	0.018	2	0.012		
Within Groups	67.654	148	0.584	3.09	0.965
Total	67.672	150			

The table draws on a one-way ANOVA test performed at 5% level of significance to assess whether parental socio-economic status has any significant influence on students' academic performance. An analysis of the presented results in table 2 shows that the parental socio-economic status has no significant influence on students' academic performance, since  $p = 0.965$ , which is greater than alpha. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted at 5% level of confidence.

**Ho2:** Single parenting has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.

The hypothesis was examined using a variance analysis. This is presented in table 3.

**Table 3:** ANOVA on influence of single parenting on academic performance level of the students

	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.016	2	0.014		
Within Groups	63.732	148	0.621	3.09	0.953
Total	65.236	150			

The table draws on a one-way ANOVA test performed at 5% level of significance to assess whether single parenting has no significant influence on students' academic performance. An analysis of the presentation of results in the table 3 shows that the single parenting has no significant effect on students' academic performance, since  $p = 0.953$  greater than alpha. Thus, the null hypothesis accepted.

**Ho3:** Parental occupation has no significant effect on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State.

The hypothesis was examined using a variance analysis. This is presented in table 4.

**Table 4:** ANOVA on influence of parental occupation on academic performance level of the students

	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.015	2	0.014		
Within Groups	66.732	148	0.567	3.09	0.938
Total	68.206	150			

The table draws on a one-way ANOVA test performed at 5% level of significance to assess whether parental occupation has no significant influence on students' academic performance. An analysis of the presentation of variance analysis results in the table 4 shows that the parental occupation has no significant influence on students' academic performance, since  $p = 0.938$  is greater than alpha. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted.

### Discussion of the findings

The first hypothesis states that parental socio-economic status has no significant effect on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. The hypothesis was examined using a variance analysis. This null hypothesis was accepted because the p-value was found to be greater than the alpha. The implication of this result is that parental socio-economic status has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in the study area. The finding of this hypothesis disagrees with the earlier finding of Abdu-Raheem (2015) who carried out a study to investigate parents' socio-economic status on secondary school students' academic

performance in Ekiti State. It was confirmed in the study that there was relationship between parents' socio-economic status and academic performance of secondary school students.

The second hypothesis states that single parenting has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. The hypothesis was examined using a variance analysis. This null hypothesis was accepted because the p-value was found to be greater than the alpha. The implication of this result is that single parenting has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in the study area. The finding of this hypothesis disagrees with the earlier finding of Akinade and Aramide (2016) who carried out a study to investigate the influence of single parenthood factors on the academic performance of undergraduate medical students of the College of Medicine, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The results from the study concluded among others that the absence of one of the parents would have negative effect on the academic outcome of the students.

The third hypothesis states that parental occupation has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State. The hypothesis was examined using a variance analysis. This null hypothesis was accepted because the p-value was found to be greater than the alpha. The implication of this result is that parental occupation has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in the study area. The finding of this hypothesis disagrees with the earlier finding of Odikpo and Ejide (2021) who conducted a study to examine the influence of parental occupation and educational level on the academic achievement of Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in English language and Mathematics in Ogidi and Otuocha Education Zones of Anambra State, Nigeria. The result revealed that parental occupation and education influenced academic achievement of SS2 students in English language and mathematics.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that parental socio-economic status has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in the study area; single parenting has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in the study area and, parental occupation has no significant influence on students' academic performance in geometry in the study area.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings made in the study, it was recommended that:

1. Non-governmental organizations should reach out more to children from low/poor socio-economic backgrounds by providing scholarships opportunities for them as well as through offering of direct financial assistance to homes in order to empower them and sustain them economically as these homes are the immediate environment of the children.
2. Families should access education to encourage their children in schools.

3. Socioeconomic policies should be formulated to enable children from low economic status to have equal opportunity as children from high economic parents to maintain the harmony among children in the nation.

4. Parents without or with low education should endeavour to send their children to home lessons after school hours, by weekends, and during holidays to improve their academic performance.

Single parents should buy all school requirements for their children and spend time on academic issues related to their children.

5. Head teachers should pay more attention to single parenting students and provide counselling to them to encourage them. Also, the government should identify the needs of single parenting students and act accordingly.

6. Government and private companies should provide employment opportunities to give the parents better-paid jobs. Governments and non-governmental organizations should improve on giving people loan with little or no interest to help them become self-employed.

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