



# **The Influence of Family Social Status on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary Students: A Review**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper reviews the influence of family social status on academic performance of senior secondary school students in Nigeria. The work revealed that motivated parents gave encouragement to their children's /students' reading habits. It recommended that parents and teachers should be motivated as this may help bridge the deficiencies from negative family social status.

**Keywords:** social groups, family, students, Maslow's motivational theory

## **INTRODUCTION**

This study anchors firmly on the theory of Family Deficit Model which sees nuclear or two-parent family as the ideal family structure and single parent family as a deviant from the ideal family. According to this model, single-parent families have a negative impact on the child in that it is bad for the child's upbringing and cognitive development. Indeed, children from single-parent families are at greater risk than children in two parent families; even when they have the same academic abilities, Thiessen (1997) posited that children from single-parent families are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two-parent families. Likewise, Amato and Keith (1991) and Lauer and Lauer (1991) found that children in single-parent families may be at greater risk than children of two-parent families. Because they are the primary and frequently sole source of financial support for the family, single parents have less time to help children with homework, are less likely to use consistent discipline, and have less parental control; and all of these conditions may lead to lower academic achievement (Astone & McLanahan, 1991; Mulkey et al., 1992). The implication of this theory to the present study lies on the fact that students' performance in school is mediated by their upbringing which perhaps is influenced by their family background. According to Fadeiye (1990) in two parent homes, both parents have roles to play in child education. The father is to provide the necessary tools for the educational advancement, while the mother is supposed to supplement the father's efforts in this regard. When the father is absent and the mother is not privileged enough to cater for all the basic needs as well as supervised the academic performance of the child, the child will be backward or withdrawn. In similar view, Ortese (1998) noted that when the mother is absent and the father is not privileged enough. A single parent faces doubled responsibilities requiring time, attention and money of the parent. A child from homes where the father and the mother are present will be well taken care of and socialized in the best way possible. This is due to the fact that the process of socialization depends on both parents playing complimentary roles in bringing up the child. Such a child is likely to achieve self-actualization later in life; but children from

single-parent homes are likely to suffer deprivation and denial of some rights and opportunities which may have tremendous influence on their performance in real life situations.

## **Conceptual background**

### **Concept of family**

Family has been described at the smallest, most personal and not intimate of social groups. It is the most important primary group and the smallest social unit in the society. Odo (1990:10) defined family as “a social group sharing a common residence and cooperating economically”. The author went further to assert that the institutions of the family is usually based on the marriage of one or more sexually co-habiting couples and usually there is the expectation of having children for whom the adults of the family accept responsibility. Alio (1995) observed that the family is also the most personal social organization, for nothing is more personal than the interaction and relationship between members of a family. He further said that married couples without children, though bound by the strongest personal ties do not constitute a family for such ties can conceivably exist among couples who are not married. For him, what gives a family its character are children, for only in such a family can that intimate, personal relationship be established by which the family can perform its functions of rearing, protecting and educating the children, transmitting to them the social values it has inherited and a special bond between all the members. This kind of family setting is similar to the Nigerian traditional idea of family.

Traditionally, it is believed that it is the children that cement the union of a man and a woman together and makes it a lasting and an intimate one. The primary aim of this union is procreation. Family can be classified into nuclear and extended form. Nuclear family is basic form of family organization. It is made up of the father (husband), mother (wife) and children. The children may be the biological offspring; of the couple or/and the adopted members of the family. According to Okafor (1992), the adoption of a child into the family is a common culture in the British society, but less so in Nigerian society. He added that nuclear family is found common among the urban city elites in Nigerian society or as a component in both extended, nuclear and compound family in Nigerian rural areas. The author maintained that one of the characteristics of the nuclear family is that it tends to break up when the children marry, when the parents die or at any point in human cycle. According to him, the male raised in a nuclear family usually begins his life in house hold headed by his parents and concluded his life in a family that he himself heads. Extended family is the type of family that comprises of the father (husband) his wife (mother), their children, the husbands and the wife's relations etc. Alio (1995) pointed out that the extended system is a dispersal version of the joint family and the members of the constituent groups do not all live together in one dwelling. To him, the extended kin-group includes a span of three or four generations within the total household or closely adjacent households. The extended family system is commonly a characteristic of most African society. Many Nigerian societies do not believe in nuclear family but in modern times, urbanization and economic pressures are discouraging extended family ties. However, extended family system is the popular and most common type of family arrangement in the Nigerian society. Anybody who fails to practice or show interest in the extended relations is regarded as a wicked and hopeless human being by members of the society.

### **Concept of Academic Performance**

Academic achievement has to do with what a learner is able to accomplish by execution of class work in the school. Stiggings (2001) sees academic achievement as something a learner do or achieve at school, college or university, in class, in a laboratory or field work. Wentling (2000) said that academic achievement refers to achievement of individuals' objective to various types of knowledge and skills. According to the author the objective are established based on the age, prior learning and capacity of individuals with regards to education, socialization and qualification. Some of the purposes of academic achievement measurement are enumerated in Ukwuije (2000: 22) as follows: to determine the relative effectiveness of a programme in terms of students' behavioural outputs; to identify students growth or lack of growth in acquiring desirable knowledge skills, attitudes and social values; to help teachers determine the effectiveness of their teaching technique and learning material; to help motivate students to learn as they discover their progress or lack of progress in given task; to encourage students to develop a sense of discipline and systematic study habits; to acquaint parents or guardians with their children

performance ; to predict the general trend in the development of teaching learning process; to make reliable decision about education planning and to provide educational administrators with adequate information about teachers effectiveness and school need.

In summary, academic achievement measurement is very important, in schools colleges and universities. It is relevant instructional, administrative, guidance and counseling and research purposes.

### **Theoretical framework**

For the research work to be intellectually sound, it must include a scientifically based theoretical framework with which a systematic analysis will be carried out.

Therefore, the following theories are adopted for the study: parental attachment theory, self determination theory and Maslow's motivational theory.

### **Family attachment theory**

Parental attachment theory was proposed by Bowlby (1980). The theory states that the child forms a strong emotional bond with another person (caregiver) during childhood with lifelong consequences. According to the theorist, sensitive and emotionally available parenting helps the child to form a secure attachment style which fosters a child's socio-emotional development and well being. Less sensitive and emotionally available parenting or neglect of the child's needs may result in insecure forms of attachment style, which is a risk factor for many mental health problems. The theory is relevant to this study in view of the fact that the proponent provides clues in emotional development of children. He also made reasonable suggestions for parents and guardians. Parents and guardians can now see the necessity of forming secure attachment bond with their children. Such bonds will enable the children to end up with secure attachment and secure state of mind later in life. Parents will learn to understand the biological and psychological needs of the children, and to avoid unrealistic expectations of the child behaviour. In this way, parents may seek to avoid frustration that occurs when they expect things beyond the child's capability.

Achieving the set goals, the students are motivated to learn by their satisfaction of needs like physiological: Shelter, food, water, rest etc. Safety: materials love and belonging. The satisfaction of these needs leads to the quest to satisfy higher ones which are self esteem and self-actualization needs present study because it discussed some of the home related variables that influence students' academic achievement. Agu (2010) carried out a study titled "relationship between motivational patterns and students academic achievement schools in Enugu education zone were used. The design for the study was correlation survey design.

### **Summary**

Having reviewed the bulk of literature related to this study, it has been observed that much has not been said about the social status of families and how it influences the academic performance of students. To this effect, the research is poised to fill the gap through this study by taking a delve to carry out an in-depth study on the social status of families and students academic performance. The purpose is to find out what influence the former has on the latter. However, the researcher appreciates the various efforts of the various authors whose works were cited, for the scholarly write ups which were in attempt to address the social status of families and its influences on the academic performance of students.

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