



## **Influence of Poverty on Academic Performance of Public Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined influence of Poverty on Academic Performance of Public Senior Secondary School Students in Rivers State. Five research questions and five hypotheses guided the study. The design of the study was correlational design, the population of the study was 158,875 students and a sample size of 2000 was selected using purposive sampling technique. Two instruments were used to elicit response from the respondents, they are Sociological Implications of Poverty Questionnaire (SIPQ) and Academic Performance Test Scale (APTS). The instruments were submitted to the researcher's supervisor and two experts in research and statistics and their input and corrections were incorporated into the final version. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha statistics and a reliability indexes are 0.81 (0.78, 0.81, 0.77, 0.81 and 0.82) and 0.84 were obtained respectively. The researcher and two trained research assistants alongside four teachers administered 2000 questionnaires and were able to retrieve 1851 copies of the questionnaire within three (3) weeks. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the analysis, the following were the findings among others: Socio-economic status of parents has a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students, Educational background of parents has a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students. Based on the findings, the following recommendations among others were made; Government should take proactive steps in alleviating the masses from the looming socio-economic crises, by providing job so as to improve the quality of life of the citizens and as such enhance academic performance of students, and that the Ministry of Education should carry out need assessment in all schools to determine what is required in terms of facilities, by providing them with funds to carryout turnaround maintenance every two years as the need arises so as to elongate the lifespan of facilities and avoid a total breakdown.

**Keywords:** Poverty, Academic Performance, Public Senior Secondary School Students, Socioeconomic Status, Educational Background, Natural Environment, Social Inequality and Inability of Students to Socialize.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In contemporary society access to education is a fundamental right of every citizen irrespective of his/her status or social class. However, in Nigeria, the provision of education has been one of the most critical issues in government social policy especially since after independence. According to Efe, (2002) education is linked and related to national development. Ismail, (2006) noted that education is the key index of development; it is a process through which individuals acquire skills, competences, and attitudes. The scholar emphasized that education improves productivity, health and reduces negative life such as child labour as well as bringing about empowerment. However, as laudable as it is, this seems to be

hampered by one of the social vices such as poverty which has remained a stumbling block for most people to attain this basic right.

According to Gangasto, (2007) poverty has been identified as part and parcel of mankind and its existence is abhorred by individuals, families, nations and their economy. It is often described as the enemy of mankind and it is thought to be a gross violation of our civilization (Kazi and Bernard, 2012). Ogwu, (2005) sees poverty as a way of life characterized by low calorie intake, inaccessibility of adequate health facilities low quality education system, low life expectancy, unemployment and underdevelopment. Abdulahi et al (2014) states that poverty is a general phenomenon that affects physical, moral and psychological conditions of man. These conditions are characterized by low standard of living, underdevelopment, vulnerability to disease condition, low capital income and deprivation of right. Noko (2016) asserts that the history of mankind demonstrates that poverty is nothing but a curse not only for the individual who is poor, but for the members of the community, nation and global society at large. It compels people to think that famine, money and land deprivation are natural course of life, and that the poor people are not entitled for living better lives. Poverty alongside unemployment is identified as a global trend which affects people at various levels at different times and phases of existence.

Poverty is a condition of being unable to obtain or provide a standard level of food, water and shelter or decent housing. In a lot of cases, it is not the fault of these financially poor people. A family can fall into poverty for many reasons. It could be death in the family, sudden unemployment, crop failure due to natural disaster like flood and drought.

Some believe that all people can easily find a way out of poverty by mere hard work or ambition. However, people who were born into poverty are more likely to remain poor despite how hard they work and try. If the economic system is against them, the majority poor will not be able to find a way to get out of the cycle of poverty.

Furthermore, when it comes to developed countries like the U.S.A, these people are deprived of what is considered a normal life in the society. They are deprived of such services like the internet which leads to lack of access to job opportunities, public services and news, decent clothes in order to get a job, money for education, access to decent and safe housing causing serious health issues. (Retrieved from UN statement June1998).

Poverty is a universal social problem that cuts across nation and religions. It has been in existence from the time immemorial, and has become the world's current greatest threat to peace and stability more than terrorism and other social vices. The World Bank defined poverty as satisfied terms of income of one US dollar per person per day, measured as purchasing power of extreme poor around the world. The implication of poverty is that it leads to lack of educational resources in schools and sometimes could hinder learning. Without providing good teaching materials, textbooks and classrooms and other resources, it becomes difficult to facilitate good learning and quality teaching. The only way to reduce poverty may be to make considerable investments in education. These investments provide many benefits such as skills enhancement, productivity among poor households. Moreover, poverty as a constraint to developmental achievement both at macro and micro levels. Hence, poor countries generally have lower level of enrolment, while at micro level, children of poor households receive less education (XOE, 1997). It is assumed that young people from poor families are restricted from getting enrolled or are deprived access to education, and they are more likely to achieve poorer educational outcomes compared to their counterparts from rich families or those with rich relatives. Furthermore, the situation whereby young people are deprived of enrolment or being retained in education and those achieving low educational outcomes are the same and they are likely to experience poverty (Bryner& Joshi, 2002). Consequently, this has now become a global issue, in the United States and United Kingdom, children attending school and their academic performance rely on the socio economic position (status) of their parents (Carto et al, 2007). This issue also applies to less developed countries where there is a link between education and poverty, where enrolment and retention in education are strongly linked to levels of poverty (Filmer & Pritchett, 1999). Furthermore, poverty systematically excludes a portion of the population from full national and social participation through hunger, inadequate income, powerlessness, poor education, disease, etc. For example, if a parent is poor, the chances of the children escaping the poverty cycle are

limited. A parent, who is poor and has no landed property, lacks money to educate his/his children, and may usually have a large family, but very little income, that is inadequate in providing their basic needs (Ozturke, 2011).

Poverty makes it difficult to make investment in education and health that would increase a person's productivity. The implication of poverty cannot be overemphasized. It is observed that poverty is a very dangerous factor that can destabilize an entire country. It causes social tension and threatens to divide a nation because of the issue of inequalities in terms of income. This happens when wealth in a country is poorly distributed among its citizens. Consequently, the effect of poverty on the powerless victims especially the children are enormous. The UN in 1990, pointed out that the number of children affected by poverty are on the increase. Children generally have least choice and ability to change what happens to them, there is not much they can do to help their families until they can stand firmly on their own. Nearly all possible consequences of poverty have adverse impact on children's lives. Poor infrastructures, unemployment, lack of basic social services, and low income reflect on their lack of education, malnutrition, violence at home and outside, child labour, diseases of all kinds; transmitted by family or through the environment.

Furthermore, it is noted that the causes and effects of poverty are often interrelated in such a way that one problem hardly ever occurs alone. For instance; bad sanitation makes it easier to spread around old and new diseases, hunger and lack of water make people more vulnerable to diseases. Impoverished communities often suffer from discrimination and end up caught in cycle of poverty (Jeanne & Greg, 1997). According to Joon (2004), poverty has effects on the children's development. It leads them to form an antisocial behaviour that acts as a psychological protection against their host environment. Discrimination and social exclusion often push them to be more aggressive, less self-control and react to stressful events. Having often been taken advantage of in their early childhood, they rarely come to a constructive way to deal with conflicts. As they grow up, these behaviours are more and more entrenched in their personalities and after considered unconvertable. This highlights the importance of taking action as early as possible to improve children's living conditions. However, Evelyn and Stephanie (2011) asserted that the wealth of a nation depends on the measure taken into consideration for education and health of that nation. They added that universal and simple measure of poverty consists of looking at different population's health and life expectancy. It is no surprise that anywhere on earth poorer communities fare worse than richer ones. But people's health is affected not only by material poverty but also by both intellectual poverty and social exclusion. No matter how poverty affects someone's mental or physical health, the end result is the same. On the average, the poor live shorter lives than the rich. The poor not only suffers physical health but also very much psychological. They are affected in many ways; mental health and human behaviour. Every form of poverty, every form of social exclusion; be it material, intellectual or racial has its impact on people's health.

Furthermore, poverty reduces a child's readiness for school because it leads to poor physical health and motion skills, distinguishes a child's ability to concentrate and remember information, and reduces attentiveness, curiosity and motivation. Issues like hunger, illnesses and thirst are the causes and effects of poverty. Not having access to water means that you are poor and being poor also means that you may not be able to afford water or food either. In other words, poor health, lack of water, bad housing condition, child abuse or violence form cycle of poverty in which so many end up trapped for life. However, many researchers have given their views on the variables of influence of poverty on secondary school student but this study tend to x-ray the parents' socio-economic status, parents educational background, natural environment, social inequality and inability of students to socialize with others outside their culture. Socio-economic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measure as a combination of education, income and occupation (Retrieved from [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)) topic. Socio-economic factors include occupation, education, income, wealth and where someone lives, socio-economic status has been operationalized in a variety of ways, most commonly as education, social class or income. Hollingshead, (1975) defined Socio-economic status firstly as a construct that represents social and economic background of an individual or group unit e.g. household. Secondly, it addresses relative

positions in a particular social structure as it is based on the assumption that an unequal status structure exist in all society. It normally includes acquired e.g. wealth, status and prestige (Haug 1977)

It is an established fact that families where parents provided educationally, their children with tools inspired a higher level of academic achievement in their offspring while there are indications that children from low socio-economic status develop academic skills far more slowly compared to children from high socioeconomic background. (Retrieved from Journals, Scholar publishing.org>.) Socioeconomic status is an expression which is used to differentiate between people's relative position/status in a community; regarding family income, political power, educational background and occupational status or compared to children from high SES background (retrieved from journals scholarpublishing.org> Benedict, (2018).

Socio-economic status is typically a delineation into three categories, thus high socioeconomic status, middle socioeconomic status and low socioeconomic to describe the three areas family or an individual may fall into. According to Barbarin & Aikens (2015) families from the low economic status group are less likely to have economic resources or time available to provide due academic support to their children. In the same vein, Orr (2003) views that parents from the low socioeconomic status groups may be powerless to meet the expense of resources such as books, computers, or tutors to produce helpful literacy environment because children's initial reading capability is largely associated with the home literacy surroundings, the numbers of books owned and parents supports. Furthermore, the dropout rates are higher for students from low income groups as compared to the high income families in secondary education (Center for national education statistics, 2008). Curry (1996) lamented that parent who are poor may not provide shelter, clothing and special need of their children in school such as textbooks, school uniform and good medical bills. Consequently, parent education programmes is a course that can be followed to correct and improve a person's parenting skills. Parents who have gone to college or are graduate tend to place a high value on educational attainment (College Board National Journal, 2019). Students of no degree families who did not go to college had a difficult time finishing school. The low parental educational level can affect family interactions and lead to behavior problems that can affect children's academic and intellectual development (National Center for Children in Poverty; NCCP).

Parents education is such a motivating force for a child which paves the way for his/her future. It is an admitted fact that the children of educated parents are more confident, resourceful and experienced than the children whose parents lack education. Dave (1971) observed that high achieving students are those children whose parents are educated while those who score lower are those whose parents cannot afford serene learning environment for them. Williams (1982) opined that educated parents are likely to pay attention to the quality of their children's teacher and may attempt to ensure that their children are adequately served by participating in parent teacher conferences and volunteering at school, they may encourage staff to attend to their children's individual needs. Parents who are struggling economically simply do not have the time to check homework, drive children to summer camp or help their kids' plans for college or read to infants and toddlers (Coleman in Anna, 2016).

Furthermore, infrastructural facilities or school infrastructure are those materials or things that facilitate teaching and learning processes in schools. These include; school buildings, equipment which include teaching aids, books type writers, computers, laboratory equipment, etc. (Retrieved from Global electricity academic group. Com) Poor provision of infrastructural facilities in schools and colleges militate against learning (Akhiero, 2011). According to Barrett et al (2019) in poor quality buildings, teachers are less likely to show enthusiasm to make more efforts to support student learning. Also school planning and design have strong impacts on the health and learning processes. They asserted that access to quality facilities in school places safety, healthy and optimal spaces for learning contribute to student achievement, teacher relation and community satisfaction. According to Fagbohunka (2017), quality of features in the school environment have strong influence on the academic standard which is an index of quality assurance in the school. Earthman (2002) opined that comfortable classroom temperature and sizeable classes enhance students' effectiveness and provide opportunities for participation more fully in discussions, reduce discipline problems and thereby enhance better performance than students in school with substandard buildings.

Inequality is the state of not being equal, especially in status, rights and opportunities. Educational is the unequal distribution of academic resources including school funding, qualified and experienced teachers, books and technologies to socially excluded communities. These communities tend to be historically disadvantaged and oppressed, marginalized. Individual belonging to this marginalized groups are often derived access to schools with adequate resources. Inequality leads to major differences to the educational success or efficiency of these individuals and ultimately suppresses social and economic mobility. Shehu in Amaewhule & Nwobike (2018) pointed out that schools that have teaching facilities help learners substantiate their career choice before moving into their place of work and motivate learners toward self-reliance in the teaching and learning process. School environment and their features help to stimulate learner's interest wherever they are utilized. They generate greater student interest in the learning process and also enhance retention of ideas. Babalola (2003), asserted that learning will therefore be less meaningful without the use of teaching and learning facilities. Isara Ding (2005) opined that students would grope in the dark for long before they could get a grasp of what the teacher says, without conducive school environment.

The recognition of global educational inequality had led to the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal which promotes inclusive and equitably quality educational for all. Inequality education outcomes are attributed to several variables including family of origin, gender and social class. Achievement earning, health status and political participation. Consequently, children's education is free in New York from Kindergarten 12 grade, many children with migrant parents (disadvantage) do not have advantage of all the primary education benefits. Children who come from household that contains at least one immigrant parent, are less likely to attend childhood or pre-school program. Also parent/guardians who do not have most of the qualifications required for the application. For their children to be enrolled into the college are excluded from that opportunity. According to Dare (2014) well-designed and functional school buildings with a wide array of teaching aids would therefore provide effective delivery of the school's curriculum and positively enhances student academic performance.

The environment is the aggregate of social and cultural conditions that influence the life of an individual or community. It refers to both abiotic physical or non-living and biotic (living). It means surrounding in which organisms live. Environment regulates the life of the organisms including human beings. Human beings interact with the environment more vigorously than other living beings. Environment is the sum total of conditions that surrounds us at a given point of time and space. It is the sum total of conditions in which an organism has to survive or maintain its life process. It influences the growth and development of living forms. The environment refers to those things or agencies which though distinct from us, affect our life or activity. According to Adepoju (2003) the persistent poor performance of secondary school students in public school have been identified and held that poor location of the school, incessant changes in policies, closure of schools which is contingent upon teachers' industrial action, home school distance, high student teacher ratio, lack of supervision, monitoring and evaluation machinery, lack of good text books, poor content and context of instruction, poor and poor conducive, environment among others.

Consequently, there are indicators of poverty, poverty is looked through social indicators like illiteracy level, lack of general resistance due to malnutrition, lack of opportunities, lack of access to safe drinking water, low income, lack of access to safe sanitation facilities, poor education and lack of infrastructure (retrieved from <https://wwwloprr.com>> (December, 26, 2019). The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) published by the UNDP's Human Development Report Office tracks deprivation across three dimension and 10 indicators: health (child mortality, nutrition), education (years of school (enrollment) and living standard (water sanitation, electricity, cooking fuel, floor, assets), (retrieved from <https://brainly.in>>question (October 20, 2018).

In addition, some poverty indicators include: social exclusion portfolio which covers income poverty, unemployment and joblessness, low educational, qualification, the employment situation of migrants, material deprivation, housing and access to health care. In addition to income and market basket indicators, indicators based on the level of education, health status, geographical region, clothing, housing, food security and social exclusion provide a portrait of poverty closer to reality (Retrieved from <https://wwwmcmastero.plimalaging.org>>, (August 15, 2018).

Poverty is classified into absolute and relative. The absolute poverty measure poverty only in relation to the amount of money necessary to meet basic needs such as food, cloth, shelter, safe drinking water, education, health care, etc. In this type of poverty, people who are living below the absolute poverty threshold are not affected even if the country they live in, is economically thriving. In other words, regardless of how rich and successful the economy is, people living in absolute poverty have no benefit of the economic prosperity of their country. However, whether relative and absolute, Agha-Okoh cited Oscar Haralambos & Holborn (2004) has noted that the life styles of the poor differ in many aspects from the other members of the society. He opines that poverty life style in many societies is common in similar circumstances, hence the poor in the industrialized society might not differ much from the urban poor in developing countries even the way they think and handle their problems and respond to other dominant groups around them.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the last three decades, the level of poverty in Nigeria has been on the increase; rising from 28.1 percent in 1980 to about 64.4 in 2004 (FOS, 1999; and AOB 2010). The poverty situation in Nigeria has reached an alarming stage as more than 45% of the population live below the poverty line while 67% of the people are extremely poor. The Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) Reports for the period of 1980-1996 indicate that 67% of Nigerians are living below the poverty level. This increase has been observed by a number of studies that the factors responsible for poverty in Nigeria, amongst others, include; limited access to resource due to social inequality. Individuals belonging to the lower, lower class in the society are marginalized, excluded and lack of educational opportunities due to poverty which adversely affects their academic performance.

Furthermore, it has been observed by several studies that parent from low socioeconomic status live below poverty line therefore strive hard to provide meaningful and quality education for their wards while made them to wallow in the circle of poverty from generation to generation. The educational background of parents plays a vital role in the education of their wards. Researchers, observed that children (students) who parents are illiterate perform poorly in their academic than their counter parts who parents are literate.

Consequently, the environment that one lives in has influence on the life of the individual. It has been observed by some researchers that children living in remote villages do not have access to quality education. Their homes are not well furnished with learning materials, there are no social amenities, their schools lack standard infrastructure materials and qualified teachers, learning and teaching are imparted in their local languages which invariably affect their academic performance and made them to rigmarole in abject poverty.

Finally, students' inability to socialize with other students outside their culture is also another burning issue in academic pursuit. Many scholars carried out research on how students socialize with other and it was observed that students from poor homes find it difficult to interact with others outside their culture when it come to the use of other languages especially English language which is detrimental to their academic performance. Based on the foregoing menace, this study investigated the influence of poverty on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

### **Purposes of the Study**

The study investigated the influence of poverty on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The study specifically attempts to examine the extent of:

1. The influence of socioeconomic status of parents on the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. The influence of educational background of parents on the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. The influence of natural environment on the academic performance of public secondary school students in Rivers State.
4. The influence of social inequality on the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

5. The influence of inability of students to socialize with others outside their sub-culture on the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in River State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

1. To what extent does the socio economic status of parents influence academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State.
2. To what extent does the educational background of the parents influence academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State.
3. To what extent does the natural environment influence academic performance of public secondary school students in Rivers State.
4. To what extent does social inequality influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in River State.
5. To what extent does students inability to socialize with others outside their sub-culture influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in River State.

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses have been postulated for this study and will be tested at 0.5 level of significance

1. There is no significant influence of socio- economic status of parents on the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant influence of educational background of parent on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant influence of the natural environment on academic performance of public senior secondary student in Rivers State.
4. There is no significant influence of social inequality on academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
5. There is no significant influence of students' inability to socialize with others outside their sub-culture influence academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The study was carried out using correlational research design, with a population of 158,875 registered students from the 278 Public Senior Secondary Schools in Rivers State (Rivers State Senior Secondary School Board, 2019). Sample size for this study is 2000 students, 50 students from 40 public senior secondary schools (minimum 3 schools from each selected Local Government Area), 12 Local Government Areas (4 Local Government Areas from each senatorial district) in Rivers State. Stratified random sampling technique was used and simple random sampling to select the respondents representing the 3 senatorial districts. Data was collected using 2 self-structured questionnaires tagged Influence of Poverty Questionnaire (IOPQ) and Academic Performance Test Scale (APTS). The instruments were validated by three experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Educational Foundations. The reliability of the instruments were established using Cronbach Alpha Statistics, a reliability index of 0.81 (0.78, 0.81, 0.77, 0.81 and 0.82) was obtained for Influence of Poverty Questionnaire (IOPQ) and 0.84 for Academic Performance Test Scale (APTS). The instruments were distributed to the respondents with the help of two research assistants and four teachers from each school where the study was carried out. The data collected was analyzed using different statistical tools simple percentages (%) to analyze the social demographic data of the respondents, mean scores and standard deviation were used to analyze the answers to the research questions. The criterion means of 2.5 was accepted for the items while any score below 2.5 was rejected based on the likert scales of 4 points, also Very High Extent (VHE) was considered to be from 3.50 - 4.00, High Extent (HE) 2.50 – 3.49, Low Extent (LE) 2.00 – 2.49, while Very Low Extent was considered to be 1.00 – 1.99. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) statistics was used to test the hypotheses.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

**Research question 1:** *To what extent does the socio-economic status of parents influence academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State?*

**Table 1: Summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson’s coefficient on the influence of socio-economic status of parents on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State**

SN	socio-economic status of parents, N=1851	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	R
1	My parents are peasant farmers/traders therefore they struggle to see me through school	849	204	210	588	2.71	1.33	.526**
2	My parents income is very small to cater for my schooling	168	627	324	732	2.12	1.04	.508**
3	My parents fend for many dependents which affect their finances	531	371	383	566	2.47	1.20	.537**
4	Hawking after school contribute to my low academic performance	315	216	323	997	1.92	1.15	.534**
<b>Grand mean</b>						<b>2.31</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>.682**</b>

The result from Table 1 shows the summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson’s coefficient on the influence of socio-economic status of parents on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over the influence of socio-economic status of parents on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State was 2.31, SD=0.91. The Pearson’s r-value was .682 indicating that the socio-economic status of parents has a positive and strong relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent does the educational background of parents influence academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State?*

**Table 2: Summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson’s coefficient on the influence of educational background of parents on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State**

S/N	Educational qualification of parents, N=1851	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	R
5	My parents are illiterate therefore they find it difficult to assist me in my school assignment	312	266	261	1011	1.93	1.17	.483**
6	my parents obtained first school leaving certificate only	675	416	332	428	2.72	1.18	.317**
7	lack of good educational background of my parents contributes to my low academic performance	625	295	407	524	2.55	1.22	.543**
8	Lack of home lesson or private teacher enhances my performance	865	312	187	487	2.84	1.26	.514**
<b>Grand mean</b>						<b>2.51</b>	<b>0.76</b>	<b>.741**</b>

The result from Table 2 shows the summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson’s coefficient on the influence of educational background of parents on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over the influence of educational background of parents on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State was 2.51, SD=0.76. The Pearson’s r-value was .741 indicating that the educational



background of parents has a positive and strong relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area.

**Research question 3:** *To what extent does the nature of the environment influence academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State?*

**Table 3: Summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson’s coefficient on the influence of nature of the environment on the academic performance of public senior secondary school students in Rivers State**

SN	School infrastructural facilities, N=1851	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	r
9	My parents encourage me at home by being involved in my studies	613	345	293	600	2.52	1.25	.575**
10	My parents provide most of the recommended textbooks	859	411	161	420	2.92	1.21	.492**
11	I am provided with all basic needs at home	983	283	234	351	3.03	1.19	.547**
12	Students who feel secure in the school environment excel in their academics	683	409	318	441	2.72	1.19	.586**
<b>Grand mean</b>						<b>2.80</b>	<b>0.90</b>	<b>.740**</b>

The result from Table 3 shows the summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson’s coefficient on the influence of nature of the environment on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over the influence of nature of the environment on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State was 2.81, SD=0.90. The Pearson’s r-value was .740 indicating that the nature of the environment has a positive and strong relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area.

**Research question 4:** *To what extent does social inequality influence academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State?*

**Table 4: Summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson’s coefficient on the influence of social inequality influence on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State**

SN	Government policies, N=1851	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	r
13	My parents have many children to take care of, so I know that people like us don't have much hope for tertiary education	599	453	346	453	2.65	1.17	.764**
14	The negative impact on concentration and emotional well -being because of my family background limit my aspiration to tertiary education	679	455	339	378	2.78	1.15	.565**
15	I get uncomfortable participating in class discussion, study group, student organization, extra mural sports and other institution sponsored events because it exposes my language deficiencies and aspirations in life	711	407	292	441	2.75	1.20	.547**
16	Internalization of negative messages and threats from my teachers make me want to quit school, limits my academic aspiration	869	293	264	425	2.87	1.23	.551**
<b>Grand mean</b>						<b>2.76</b>	<b>0.87</b>	<b>.830**</b>

The result from Table 4 shows the summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson's coefficient on social inequality influence on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over the influence of social inequality on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State was 2.76, SD=0.87. The Pearson's r-value was .830 indicating that the social inequality has a positive and strong relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area.

**Research question 5:** *To what extent does students' inability to socialize influence academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State?*

**Table 5: Summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson's coefficient on the influence of Students' inability to socialize on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State**

SN	School infrastructural facilities, N=1851	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	Mean	SD	R
17	I don't have anyone at home to guide my study and aspirations because my parents are not really educated	859	411	161	420	2.92	1.21	.492**
18	I lack the courage to aim high in my education for fear of discontinuity like my other siblings.	531	371	383	566	2.47	1.20	.537**
19	Negative Stereotypes from my teachers discourage my dreams for higher school	312	266	261	1011	1.93	1.17	.483**
20	Language used in school does not pose a barrier to my future academic pursuit	983	283	234	351	3.03	1.19	.547**
<b>Grand mean</b>						<b>2.59</b>	<b>0.92</b>	<b>.705**</b>

The result from Table 4.5 shows the summary of descriptive statistics and Pearson's coefficient on the influence of students' inability to socialize with others in their sub-culture on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State. It shows that the grand mean rating of the respondents over the influence of students' inability to socialize with others in their sub-culture on the academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State was 2.59, SD=0.92. The Pearson's r-value was .705 indicating that the students' inability to socialize with others in their sub-culture has a positive and strong relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant influence of socio-economic status of parents on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State

**Table 6: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between socio-economic status of parents and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Pearson correlation (r)	P(<0.001)	Decision
Socio-economic Status	1851	.682	0.000	Rejected
Academic Performance of students	1851	.682	0.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result from Table 6 shows the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between socio-economic status of parents and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State. It shows that there is significant influence of socio-economic status of parents on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State (r=0.682, p<.05). The null hypothesis one was rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant influence of educational background of parents on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State

**Table 7: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between educational background of parents and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Pearson correlation (r)	P(<0.001)	Decision
Educational Qualification	1851	.741	0.000	Rejected
Academic Performance of students	1851	.741	0.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result from Table 7 shows the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between educational background of parents and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State. It shows that there is significant influence of educational background of parents on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State ( $r=0.741$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The null hypothesis two was rejected at .05 level of significance.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant influence of nature of the environment on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State

**Table 8: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between nature of the environment and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Pearson correlation (r)	P(<0.001)	Decision
nature of environment	1851	.740	0.000	Rejected
Academic Performance of students	1851	.740	0.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result from Table 8 shows the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between nature of the environment and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State. It shows that there is significant influence of nature of the environment on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State ( $r=0.740$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The null hypothesis three was rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant influence of Social Inequality on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State

**Table 9: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between social inequality and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Pearson correlation (r)	P(<0.001)	Decision
Social Inequality	1851	.830	0.000	Rejected
Academic Performance of students	1851	.830	0.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result from Table 4.9 shows the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between social inequality and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State.

It shows that there is significant influence of Social Inequality on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State ( $r=0.830$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The null hypothesis four was rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant influence of students' inability to socialize with others in their sub-culture on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State

**Table 10: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between students' inability to socialize with others in their sub-culture and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State**

Variables	N	Pearson correlation (r)	P(<0.001)	Decision
Educational Qualification	1851	.764	0.000	Rejected
Academic Performance of students	1851	.764	0.000	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result from Table 4.10 shows the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation on the relationship between students' inability to socialize with others in their sub-culture and academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State. It shows that there is significant influence of students' inability to socialize with others in their sub-culture on academic performance of public senior secondary students in Rivers State ( $r=0.764$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

**Summary of Major Findings**

1. Socio-economic Status of parent has strong relationship the academic performance of their children public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. Educational background of parents have a positive and strong relationship with the academic performance of their children in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. Nature of the environment has a strong and positive relation with the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
4. Social inequalities has a positive and strong relationship with academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State
5. Students' inability to socialize with others outside their sub-culture has a positive and strong relationship with academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This section of the study is dedicated to the discussion of the findings of the study and the implications they may have on the education system. For the purpose of clarity and brevity, each research question is presented with the corresponding appropriate hypotheses in order to avoid methodological repetitions. They are also presented in accordance with the major variables in the study.

**Parent's Socioeconomic Status and Students Academic Performance**

The first finding of the study is that socio-economic status of parents has a low extent of relationship with academic performance of students, because most parents are peasant farmers/traders therefore they struggle to see their children through school. Hence students to a high extent have difficulty have difficulty in academic skills because they were not enrolled in kindergarten programmes, coupled with the fact parents fend for many dependents which affect their finances. As a result, such students do hawking after school which contribute to their low academic performance. This is in consonance with the findings of Beaman *et al.*, (2013) and Morgan *et al.*, (2009) who opined that children from low socio-economic status families are less likely to have experiences that encourage the development of fundamental skills of reading acquisition, such as phonological awareness, vocabulary and oral language and that children from low socio-economic status household and communities develop academic skills more slowly than children from higher socio-economic status. Orhunger in Sadiq *et al.* (2017) further held that a low income

family with plenty of feeding problems may produce children whose physical and mental development posed real challenges to the school effort at optimum development of the child. The socio-economic status of parents has a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students.

#### **Parents' Educational Background and Students' Academic Performance**

Educational background of parents has significant influence on the academic performance of students to a high extent, because parents who are illiterate find it difficult to assist their children in their school assignments. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Nwafor (2016), a child whose attitude and behavior has been well modeled and formed and who has been properly cared for and disciplined will be favourably disposed to the values of the school as well as to its rules and regulations. Also, Ezewu (2003) is of the opinion that educational background of parents affects children especially in their academic performance. Similarly, Sarigiani (1990) asserted that parental education background has been found to be significantly related to the educational attainment of their children in both rural and urban areas. He held that children of more educated parents tend to have higher aspirations and higher education plans than the less advantage parents. Therefore, children in turn are disadvantaged when their parents have a lower education as well. This may form a cycle of uneducated family members. Educational background of parents has a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students.

#### **Nature of the Environment and Students' Academic Performance**

Nature of the Environment to a high extent has influence on the academic performance of students in the study area, this is in agreement with the findings of Anene (2005), who pointed out that the home environment affects the academic performance of the students in terms of things, objects, materials, parents, siblings, peers and social life that exists in the home in which the student finds himself/herself. It also agrees with Chukwudi (2013), who posited that certain factors can either influence or hinder, the academic performance of students at any level of education. Such factors emanating from the school environment, curriculum playing and implementation, siblings/peers group, home environment i.e. parents, socialization patterns in the home and location of the home, and modern gadgets at home. Greene and Tichenor (2003) asserted that parents or guardians of students are responsible for providing right home environment that will facilitate effective learning for their wards. A good home that can influence learning for the students should not abhor unhealthy atmosphere or quarrelling and fighting which will not give room for the children to settle in order to give way to creativity. Ekanew (2004) stated that harmonious home creates emotional stability in the child and subsequently throughout his school life. He also pointed out that the kind of social activities around the home environment affects the child academic performance. For instance, the child that lives near the market square will adopt the language of the people around him/her which is pidgin. This could affect the child in learning good English at schools. Also a child that lives in a communal compound where pidgin is the order of the day would be affected negatively in the learning of good English at school. Furthermore, students located in an environment where there is noisy traffic, noisy sound of machine from plywood industry or factories will be affected negatively in their performance because, of their environment will distract them and result to lack of concentration while reading their books. Home environment differs, these are urban and rural. Students in the rural environment are faced with challenges of little attention to their studies, lack of high quality pre-school programs, decreased numbers of courses, difficulty in hiring and retaining qualified teachers (Harman et al, 2017). The rural students also faced atmospheric condition; during rainy season they will be out of school due to dilapidated building, lack of social amenities, insufficient infrastructural materials. Libraries are hardly found in most of the rural schools, technological learning tools are scarcely seen in their schools. All these constituted to low academic performance in schools which adversely affects the student and in turn generate poverty. School infrastructural facilities have a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area.

### **Social Inequalities and Academic Performance of Students**

Social Inequalities has influence on the academic performance of students in the study area to a high extent. Parents with many children to take care of don't have much hope for tertiary education, the negative impact on concentration and emotional well-being because of family background limit students' aspiration to tertiary education, many students get uncomfortable participating in class discussion, study group, student organization, extra mural sports and other institution sponsored events because it exposes their language deficiencies and aspirations in life and internalization of negative messages and threats from teachers make students want to quit school, as such it limits students' academic aspiration. These findings are in agreement with UNESCO, education for All Global Monitoring Report (2010), the report pointed that "It represents a stark example of clearly remediable injustice, a deep and persistent inequalities, based on wealth, gender, ethnicity, language and location point to marked disparities in life chances especially education". King (2017) therefore posits that "marginalization can therefore have a negative impact on students' psychological, emotional, and physical health". According to him, some possible psychological and emotional responses to marginalization include: Anger, Anxiety, Paranoia, Fear, Depression, Self-blame, Sadness, Frustration, Hopelessness, Resentment, Powerlessness, Self-doubt, Isolation, Stress, Confusion and Feeling invisible or not heard. He added that students may experience social, economic and academic strain as a result of marginalization. Possible academic and social impacts include: reluctance to interact with others, difficulty affording books, food or sufficient housing options, limitation accessing academic spaces, community locations and / or course materials and assignments, discomfort participating in class discussion, study groups, student organizations, intramural sports and other institutional sponsored events, fear that one's action may confirm an existing stereotype threats, poor academic performance on exams and/or assignment due to negative impact on concentration and emotional wellbeing, internalization of negative messages, ineffective coping such as disengaging, avoidance and substance use. Hence government policies have a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area.

### **Students' Inability to Socialize with others outside their sub-culture and academic performance**

Students' inability to socialize with others outside their sub-culture to a high extent has influence on the academic performance of students in the study area, the findings of the study is in agreement with that of Ricardo (2015), who posits that "early childhood experiences can be very consequential for children's long-term social, emotional and cognitive development. And because these influence educational success and later earnings, early childhood experiences cast a lifelong shadow. The cycle continues: poor socio economic parents have less time and thinner resources to invest in their children, this have the capacity to leave children less prepared for school and work, which leads to lower aspirations for more academic work. Also Lareau (2011) stated that, High socio economic status parents see their children as projects that need of careful cultivation. They try to develop their skills through close control and organized activities, and teach children to question authority personality and navigate elite institutions but working—class parents, on the other hand, believe their children will always do well and offers them far greater autonomy and time for play. They tire taught to be acquiescent, submissive and courteous to adults, while higher socioeconomic status children are more like to demonstrate tediousness arid expect their parents to get to the bottom of their problems yet later on, the more-wealthy children end up in institution and enroute to the middle class while working class children from poor homes tend to struggle. Children from higher-income families are likely to have the skills to navigate bureaucracies and succeed in schools and work places. Long-Crowell (2018) opines that certain groups of people are more likely to be socially deprived. For example, social deprivation often occurs along with a broad network of connection of all contribute to social exclusion; these factors include mental illness, poverty, poor education, and low socioeconomic status. Hence Students' Inability to Socialize with others outside their sub-culture have a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area.

## CONCLUSION

Following the findings of the study, the discussion of the findings of the study and their educational implications, it was concluded that socio-economic status of parents has a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students, educational background of parents has a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students, nature of environment has a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area, social inequality has a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area and that students' inability to socialize with others outside their sub-culture has a positive, strong and significant relationship with the academic performance of students in the study area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Government should take proactive economic measures that could bridge the socio-economic gap between the rich and the poor in the study area.
2. Government and non-governmental agencies should intensify efforts in creating public awareness on the need for parents to acquire reasonable level of education as this affects students' performance.
3. Ministry of Education should carry out needs assessment in all senior secondary schools, with a view to determining the needed facilities and equipment and making the learning environment more friendly, and that government would make the necessary funds available.
4. Government should create an enabling environment for equal participation of the vast majority which would affect sustainable development of the state, and by extension Nigeria as a whole.
5. Parents should take the well-being and development of their children seriously by exposing them to activities carried out by other children to improve and set skills and learning abilities.

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