# Family Factors as Correlates of Academic Performance of High Achieving Secondary School Students in Oyo State, Nigeria

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**Abstract**
*This study examined family factors as correlates of academic performance of high achieving secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study adopted the "ex-post facto" research design. Systematic random sampling technique was used to select six schools from all the secondary schools in Oyo State. From the six schools, those with 70 percentile upward were selected as high achievers. From these high achieving students, twenty were randomly picked from each school using hat method. This led to the selection of one hundred and twenty (120) high achieving senior secondary school two (SS II) students altogether. Instruments utilised are: Home Environment Inventory (r=0.85), Parent Style Inventory (r=0.74) and Family Structure Questionnaire (r=0.73). Data collected were analysed using t-test, Standard Deviation and Intercorrelation Matrix to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variable. Results showed that significant difference exists between academic performance of students from intact and broken family (t=4.37, df=118, t-crit = 1.98). The result also revealed that positive and significant relationship exist between each of the predictor variables and the outcome variable (academic performance) that is, parental socio-economic status and academic performance (r=0.71), parenting styles and academic performance (r=0.49) as well as family structure and academic performance (r=0.42) in that order. Positive and significant relationship is also noted among the predicting variables, that is, parental socio-economic status and family structure (r=0.63), parental socio-economic status and parenting styles (r=0.56) and family structure and parenting styles (r=0.51) respectively. It is recommended that clergy men like Pastors and Imams must always preach against separation and divorce in their churches and mosques while parents must be encouraged to embrace permissive parenting style which has been found to be highly productive in this study.*

**Keywords:** Family factors, Correlate, Academic performance, High achieving students

## Introduction

High achieving students could be referred to as the students who show evidence of high achievement capability either singly or in combination in areas such as intellectual, creative, psychomotor, artistic, leadership ability or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities. They are cognitively prepared for advanced learning, rapid instruction and complex tasks.

High ability people demonstrate persistently and consistently high academic performance in school and out-of-school tasks. Their performance is usually above that of their counterparts in the classroom. They learn more easily and rapidly and are capable of coping with complex tasks. Moreover, they are usually committed to actualizing tasks. They demonstrate exceptional ability in schools subjects and score consistently above others. Like any other child, high achieving child acquires experiences within the family, school and during interaction with people in their environment. Evans (2016) noted that academic performance and total development of a child is influenced by a number of factors including the home and the school environments.

Academic performance is the overall school success that translates into the achievement of certain feat. Agulana (2019) pointed out that the family lays the psychological, moral and spiritual foundation in the overall development of the child. According to Frazier (2017), psychological home condition arise mainly from illegitimacy of children, broken home, divorce and parental deprivation. Such abnormal conditions of the home are likely to have a detrimental effect on school performance of the child. Another example is a life in a single parents family or broken home which can be stressful for both the child and the parents. Such families are faced with challenges of inadequate financial resources.

The home has a great influence on the students' academic, psychological, emotional, social and economic state. In the view of Ajila and Olutola (2010), the state of the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socialising agents in an individual life. This is because the family background and context of a child affect his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during school periods, yet parents and the individual's experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is. Thus, Ichado (2018) concluded that the home environment in which the student comes from can greatly influence his performance and achievement in school. The home environment or family has also been recognised as having a lot of influence on the academic performance of students (Nzewuawah, 2015; Ajila and Olutola, 2010).

In this study, parental socio-economic status family structure and parenting style represents the independent variables or what we refer to as family factors. Literature suggests that parental socio-economic status is often determined by parental income, parental occupation and their educational attainment. Onocha (1988) maintained that a child from a well educated family with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a child from an illiterate family. This is because the child from an educated family has a lot of support such as a decent and stimulating environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent feeding. He or she is likely to be sent to good schools where he will be taught by well-seasoned teachers. The parents' interest and encouragement have a great impact on students' performance in the school.

As pointed out above, the level of parental educational attainment which is part of the indicator of parents' socio-economic status is another family variable which is very likely to influence the academic performance of a child. Educated parents are likely to be more involved in the learning of their children than uneducated parents. According to Grissmer (2013),

parents' level of education is the most important factor affecting students' academic performance. Taiwo (2003) submitted that parents' educational background influence the academic performance of students. He went further to say that this is because the parents would be in a good position to play the role of the second teacher to the child; and even guide and counsel the child on the best way to perform well in school and even provide all the necessary school materials needed to excel. One additional advantage of having well educated parents is that their children would see them as role models worthy of emulation; children would be motivated to follow their footsteps by working hard to surpass their parents in academic performance.

Occupation of the parents which is also one of the indicators of parental socio-economic status is a factor that cannot be overemphasised. Occupation determines the attitudes and the kind of orientation the parents have towards the education of their wards. Besides, occupation determines the family's income which is a pointer to the quality of education the parents would be able to give to their children. Parents whose income are very attractive or whose salaries are very fat should definitely be able to afford to send their children to very good schools. Not only will they be able to afford the expensive school fees being paid, they will also be able to provide books and other school materials that their children need for high academic performance in their schools.

It must be noted again that how well a child achieves has much to do with the parenting style the parent is adopting at home. Parenting style refers to a general child-rearing pattern that characterises parents' behaviours toward their children. It is most often conceptualised along two dimensions, parental acceptance-involvement and strictness-supervision which can be combined to create a fourfold parenting typology namely: authoritative, authoritarian, permissive and indulgent (Steinberg, 2002). Parental involvement in schooling refers to the parents' role in the child's education. It can take several forms: coming to school from time to time to monitor the activities of their children, communicating with the teachers in the school and helping the children at home with their homework (Christenson, Rounds & Franklin, 2002).

Parenting style can also be referred to as the child's upbringing and relationship between the child and his or her father and mother. The correlation between parenting style and academic achievement of high achieving children could be revealed in the fact that parents who give their children freedom to make certain decisions, freedom to choose and relate with friends and who respect their children's opinion are likely to promote home environment that reduces pressure and enhances learning. Children from such home are likely to be intrinsically motivated towards school achievement. A child who is free from excessive conflict, fights, and continual emotional disruption among family members, particularly between the mother and the father, stand a better chance of reaching his or her full potential (Khatena, 2000). Parental attitude of overprotection, over-indulgence, anti-intellectualism, lack of respect for scholarship and diligence can have negative impact on the total development of a high ability child (Hattie, 2014).

Structurally, family or home is either broken or intact. An intact family is the type where the father and the mother are happily married and they are living together in harmony while a broken home in this context, is the one that is not structurally intact as a result of divorce, separation and death of one of the couple. Researches have shown that things do not usually go on well academically for children who are products of broken home when compared with those from intact homes. Schultz (2016) noted that if adolescent from unstable homes are to be compared with those from stable homes, it will be noticed that the former have more academic, social and emotional problems than the latter. Marital instability can bring about stress, tension, lack of motivation and frustration. Obviously, these manifestations bring negative effect on a child's academic performance. Johnson (2015) asserted that children from parents that have separated often fail in their examinations and they are always emotionally unstable. However, this may not be completely applicable to all the children from broken homes because we have seen children from broken homes who are hardworking and focused becoming high achievers academically.

Family structure can also be used to explain whether the father has more than one wife or not and the number of children a particular couple produced. For example, Joel (2001) indicated that the smaller a family structure is, the more success recorded by the children of such a family academically. The reason for this is that more concentrations are given by parents who have fewer children than the families where the children are many. Bumpass (2004) posited that this relationship has generated considerable concern among policy makers and scholars. While still discussing about family structure, Garfinkel and Melanahan (2006) asserted that one reason why children from single-parent families are less likely to finish high school is the precarious economic position of their families. To support this fact, Bane and David (2003) stressed that mother-only families are more likely than other families to be poor, and their poverty is more extreme than that of other groups. It has also been observed that parental divorce generally has negative effects on the adjustment of children compared to their peers growing up in continuously intact families. For example, Amato and Keith (2011) noted that adolescents from broken homes are more likely to experience emotional problems, less likely to attend or complete college more likely to display problematic behaviour and more likely to engage in early sex and experience relational problems.

Buncan and Hoffman (2005) posited that even among single parent families living above the poverty line, income insecurity is a common place. Sociologists are concerned with how family position and single parenthood affect child rearing practices and parent-child relationship as well as how thee affect the long time well-being of children. Children growing up in a non-intact family are more likely to drop out of school. This disengagement from school is associated with low educational aspiration, since high aspiration is a critical factor predicting academic performance (Sewell & Shah, 2008).

In conclusion, mention must be made of the fact that so many researches have been conducted to find out the factors that can predict academic performance of high

achieving students. For instance, Adelodun and Ibeabuchi (2016) worked on Peer Influence and Family Factors as correlates of Academic Achievement of High Ability Girls in Secondary School Students in Oyo Metropolis. Furthermore, Oseni (2017) found out the influence of counselling services on academic performance of high ability students in Minna metropolis. However, nobody known to these researchers has ever considered working on how family factors alone determine students' academic performance. This is exactly what prompted these researchers to carry out a research on what is being titled "Family Factors as Correlates of Academic Performance of High Achieving Secondary School Students in Oyo State."

**Statement of the Problem**

Human society is bound to experience conflicts. The family background of high achieving students is not excluded from these conflicts. Home variables are likely to have negative impact on the academic performance of students if adequate attention is not given to the variables. High achieving students may underachieve, become delinquent and drop out of school if the home environment is not stimulating. The incidence of poor school performance and low academic achievement among high achieving secondary school students is quite worrisome. This is evident in the results of different external examinations; particularly the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) conducted in Nigeria in the last one decade. This phenomenon is not only a source of worry to government and educators but also to parents. Since the home is the cradle of child's development, there is need to understand the role of family in enhancing the academic performance of students. This is the motivation behind this study which investigated family factors as correlates of academic performance of high achieving secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

*The following research questions were stated to guide the study:*

1. What is the difference in the academic performance of high achieving secondary school students from broken homes and those from intact homes?
2. What pattern of relationship exists among the independent variables (parental socio-economic status, family structure and parenting style) and dependent variable (academic performance of high achieving secondary school students)?

**Methodology**

The study is descriptive in nature and it adopted the "ex-post facto" research design. Systematic random sampling technique was used to select six schools from all the secondary schools in Oyo State. The researcher listed all the public secondary schools in Oyo State and used systematic sampling technique to pick every 21st school on the list to participate in the study. Six senior secondary school two (SS II) were eventually picked using this sampling technique. High achieving students were identified in each of these schools by looking into the Cumulative Continuous Assessment records of all the students involved from their senior secondary school one to two records (SS I – SS II). Those with 70 percentile upward were selected as high achievers. From these high achieving students, twenty were randomly picked from each school using hat method. This led to the selection of one hundred and twenty (120) high achieving senior secondary school two (SS II) students altogether.

*Three main instruments were used in collecting data for this study. They are as follows:*

(i) Home Environment Inventory (HEI)
(ii) Parenting Style Inventory (PSI)
(iii) Family Structure Questionnaire

The first instrument namely: Home Environment Inventory is a 27-item inventory designed by Mishra (1983) and standardised with internal consistency co-efficient of 0.85. The second instrument called Parenting Style Inventory was designed by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen and Hart (1995) but standardised with internal consistency coefficient of 0.74. The third one named Family Structure Questionnaire was self-developed to assess the structure of the family of each respondent. The instrument was pilot-tested on 10 secondary school students to establish its reliability. The students and the schools used were not part of those used for the main study. A split-half reliability coefficient of 0.73 was recorded.

Data collected was analysed using t-test, Standard Deviation and Intercorrelation Matrix to determine the relationship between the dependent and independent variable.

**Results**

The result of the study was considered based on the two research questions stated to guide the study.

**Research Question 1**

What is the difference in the academic performance of high achieving secondary school students from broken homes and those from intact homes?

**Table 1: T-test analysis of difference in academic performance of high achieving secondary school student based on family structure**

| Sub-variables | N | X | SD | t-cal | t-crit | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intact Home | 56 | 58.8 | 5.26 | 4.37 | 1.98 | .000 |
| Broken Home | 63 | 63.5 | 6.51 | | | |

***** Sig. at 0.05

Table 1 above shows the impact of family structure on academic performance of high achieving secondary school students. It shows that students from intact homes performed better than those from broken homes as

revealed by the mean value. It reveals further that significant difference exists between academic performance of students from intact and broken family (t=4.37,df=118, t-crit = 1.98).

**Research Question 2**

What pattern of relationship exists among the independent variables (parental socio-economic status, family structure and parenting style) and dependent variable (academic performance of high achieving secondary school students)?

**Table 2: Showing the pattern of relationship that exist between parental socio-economic status, family structure and parenting style and academic performance of high achieving students**

| Variables | N | SD | Academic Performance | Socio-economic Status | Family Structure | Parenting Style |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Academic Performance | 120 | 4.305 | 1 | 0.71* | 0.42* | 0.49* |
| Socio-economic Status | 120 | 6.301 | 0.71* | 1 | 0.63* | *0.56 |
| Family Structure | 120 | 3.44 | 0.42* | 0.56* | 1 | *0.51 |
| Parenting Style | 120 | 7.23 | *0.49 | *0.56 | *0.51 | 1 |

Table 2 above shows the interrelationship among the predictor and outcome variables. It revealed that positive and significant relationship exist between each of the predictor variables and the outcome variable (academic performance) i.e. parental socio-economic status and academic performance (r=0.71), parenting styles and academic performance (r=0.49) as well as family structure and academic performance (r=0.42) in that order. Positive and significant relationship is also noted among the predicting variables i.e. parental socio-economic status and family structure (r=0.63), parental socio-economic status and parenting styles (r=0.56) and family structure and parenting style (r=0.51) respectively. In short, there is a positive and significant relationship between parental socio-economic status, family structure, parenting style and academic performance of students.

**Discussion of Findings**

*The findings of the two research questions raised were discussed as follows:*

**The difference in the academic performance of high achieving secondary school students from broken homes and those from intact homes**

The findings to the first research question show that students from intact homes performed better than those from broken homes. This reveals that significant difference exists between academic performance of students from intact homes and those from broken homes. The findings of this study is in agreement with that of Tenibiaje (2012) who investigated the effect of single parenthood on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ekiti State. The findings revealed that significant difference was found between the academic performance of the students from single parent homes and those from intact homes.

This finding was further supported by Uwaifo (2018) who investigated the effect of family structure and parenthood on the academic performance of Nigerian university students. The findings revealed that students from intact homes performed better academically than students from broken homes. This problem may continue to persist in our secondary schools because of scarcity of Guidance Counsellors there. The situation is likely to change for good if enough numbers of Guidance Counsellors are employed and posted to our secondary schools to provide necessary assistance and psychological supports to students especially those from broken homes.

**Relationship between parental socio-economic status, family structure, parenting style and academic performance of high achieving secondary school students**

The findings of this study revealed that positive and significant relationship exist between parental socio-economic status, family structure, parenting style and academic performance of high achieving secondary school students. Positive and significant relationship was also found among parental socio-economic status and family structure, parental socio-economic status and parenting styles as well as family structure and parenting styles of high achieving students.

The above findings is in line with that of Ewunmi (2017) who found that parental socio-economic characteristics in terms of intellectual stimulation, physical and psychological safety, an appropriate degree of structure and supportive relationships provided at home have significant influence on academic performance and school success of individuals. The findings of Sarigiani (2010) also corroborates the present findings. In his study, it was discovered that parenting styles greatly influence academic performance. He found out that permissive parenting style is the greatest predictor of academic performance o f high achieving secondary school students among the three parenting styles studied. This is followed by authoritative parenting style while authoritarian parenting style has no significant positive contribution to academic performance of high achieving secondary school students.

**Conclusion**

This study has been able to provide empirical evidences to show that family structure can significantly influence academic performance of high achieving secondary school students. The study has revealed that students whose parents live together to provide parenting support and affection stand better chance of succeeding academically. On the other hand, students whose parents

live separately or have lost their parents or from broken homes are not likely to achieve great success in schools. Evidently, the study has also revealed that parental socio-economic status has a great influence on academic performance of high achieving students. From the study we could see that parents whose income are fat and could meet the needs of their children including those whose school fees are high and the parents who live in a decent and very stimulating environment that are conducive to learning always raise children who excel academically in schools. Moreover, it is evident from this study that students whose parents are educated and do provide necessary supports in homework, school materials and encouragement do record good academic performance than those from low socio-economic status and illiterate parents. Parenting style has also been found to be a very strong factor in this study. Findings have shown that students whose parents adopt permissive parenting style do perform better academically than students whose parents adopt authoritarian and authoritative parenting style.

**Recommendations**

*In view of the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made:*

Since it has been established in this study that broken home has a tremendous negative effect on the academic performance of high achieving students, it stands to reason that all necessary preventive measure to guide against it in our nation must be taken. It is therefore recommended that principals, school counsellors and teachers must always emphasise the importance of harmonious living together of couples during the parent and teacher's meeting. Pastors and Imams must always stress the adverse effect of divorce and separation among parents during services in churches and mosques pointing out the negative effect of this act on the academic performance and the total well-being of the children from such homes. Government can also help by organising marriage seminars and by educating the public to guide against broken homes and divorce through radio, television and other social medias.

The findings of this study revealed that parenting styles like authoritarian and authoritative do not promote academic performance in any way. It is therefore recommended that parents should embrace permissive parenting style which has been found to be highly productive in this study.

Low parental socio-economic status has been discovered to contribute to poor academic performance among high achieving secondary school students. To arrest this situation, it is recommended that government and philanthropists in the society should provide financial supports and scholarship to the high achieving students in the country. Through this, all the students' basic needs in the school like school fees, textbooks, writing materials, uniforms and others would be met and their academic performance would be enhanced. It is also recommended that both states and federal government should eradicate the problem of unemployment in the country. If this is done, it will boost the socio-economic status of every parent and they will be able to meet the academic needs of their wards and children.

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