

## **Effect of Family Structure on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Somolu Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the effects of family structure on the academic performance of Senior Secondary schools in Somolu Local Government Area in Lagos State, Nigeria. The main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between family structure and academic performance. Four hypotheses were postulated to guide the study. The study made use of the survey research design. A total number of two hundred and fifty (250) samples used for the study were selected from the population of the study through the simple random sample technique. A self-designed questionnaire titled 'Family Related Issues and Academic Performance Inventory (FRIAPI)' was used to obtain the data that were used for the study. The data obtained were analysed using descriptive statistics while the hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistics, tested at 0.5 level of significance. The result revealed that there was a significant difference between the academic performance of students who lived with their parents and those who did not live with their parents. The result also revealed that there was a significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents were employed and those whose parents were not employed. In addition, the result revealed that there was a significant difference between the academic performance of students who received regular parental counselling and those who did not. Finally, the results revealed a significant difference in the students' academic performance based on the family structure. A Scheffe post hoc test also revealed that there was a significant difference in the academic performance of students from nuclear families and step families with a mean difference of  $\pm 4.851^*$  and also that a significant difference existed between nuclear and polygamous families with a mean difference of  $\pm 3.874^*$ . Based on the results this study, it was recommended that the government should create counselling units in schools with adequate funds, while students from broken homes should be given proper guidance and counselling on their psychological needs and social problems in their studies for appropriate discipline.*

**Keyword:** Academic Performance, Family Structure, Nuclear Family, Polygamous Family, Single Parents.

## **Introduction**

The family is the smallest unit of every society and the first school of a child. This means that the family is where a child learns his language, values and behaviours. Education begins at home and parents are the first teachers that interact with the child. A child always watches and learns from his parents. That is the reason Latu (2018) stated that a child grew up and often imitated his parents, and would continue to do so throughout his schooling.

Academic performance is an important parameter in measuring success in students. Vedel and Poropat (2017) defined academic performance as the extent to which an individual, typically a student had achieved an educational goal. Kim (2017) referred to academic performance as metrics that measured and tracked academic progress and achievement. It is also a very important tool with which the success, ability and capability of a student to contribute to the development of a society is measured. Of recent, there have been major complaints of a decline in academic performance of students in Nigeria. The decline was affirmed by Soyinka (2013) who stated that academic standard had fallen drastically and the quality of graduates being produced by the nation's schools was questionable and subject to re-examination. This may be as result of many factors, especially family structures, since the family or the parents are the first socializing agents the child gets to know at the beginning of his life.

The issue of family has been a major focus of research in recent time. Past and public debates of the role of the family in modern societies have been prevalent in different countries. Families have changed in structure globally since the 1960s till date. Most prominently, the overall size of families has declined, following a general decrease in total fertility levels across virtually every nation. Kapella and Christiane (2010), in their studies, observed that the idea of one standard nuclear family model was being replaced by a variety of different alternative family structures and lifestyles.

Amato and Anthony (2014) defined a family as a group of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing. According to Sharma (2013), family comprises people ordinarily living in the same house, unless work, study, imprisonment, confinement, foreign sojourn, or any other exigencies compelled. Pasley and Petren (2015) defined family structure as the members of a household who were linked by marriage or bloodline. Examples of a family structure are the nuclear or traditional families which consist of a child or children and both parents (genetic parents).

Barasa (2016) described the nuclear family structure as two parent families which were able to give more time, affection and supervision to their children than a single parent (as the two parents could relieve one another when

they find that parenting is becoming difficult). Other types of family structures include single-parent households, adopting individuals and extended family systems living together. They are all a natural part of society.

The single parent family is a type of family structure which consists of a single mother or father, who lives alone with his/her child or children. Salami and Alawode (2002) observed that at the moment, single parents were fast growing family patterns both within and outside Nigeria. According to them, the existence of such parents was formerly unknown in Nigeria and where it existed, they were ignored as seen as exceptional case. According to Benokraitis (2017), the percentage of single-parent households has doubled in the last three decades, but that percentage tripled between 2010 and 2015.

Another example of a family structure is the step-family which consists of a child or children, a natural parent and a step-parent or common law partner who assumes parental obligations. Both the natural parent and the step-parent often have their own children from previous relationships, so the children get step-siblings. Polygamous family is another family structure. It is a marriage that includes more than two partners. It is a situation where a man marries more than one wife, giving rise to children from different mothers within a family. It is still common in Nigeria.

Also, there is a relationship between family structure and academic performance. Research shows that children from a stable family background do better in school than those from an unstable family background (Egalite, 2016). Also, Barasa (2016) concurred with this when he said that the family was the bedrock of a child's ability to succeed in his academic work. The changing structure from the traditional family structure comprising parents and their children to other forms of family structures that provide an alternative dependence system may have an influence on the academic performance in secondary schools' as students depend on the family for academic, emotional and material support. Mulkey (2014) reported that growing up in a single-parent or reconstituted family, or living with a divorced parent has been shown to be a significant risk leading to school maladjustment and achievement problem. This effect may vary with the age of the child, needs and availability of economic resources. Oba-Adenuga (2019) stated that children required greater economic resources as they grew older. Peter (2016) found out that two-parent families were able to give more time, affection, and supervision to their children than single parents. Ella, Odok and Ella (2015) explained that the nuclear family, which consists of two parents (male and female) and children were held in esteem by society as being the ideal in which to raise children. In their opinion, such children receive strength and stability from the two parents structure, and

generally, have more opportunities due to the financial ease of two parents. They also tend to fare better on a number of cognitive, emotional and behavioural needs.

More so, academic performance is very important in any educational setting, as it indicates the level of a student's competence in respect of the academic content. Academic performance is represented by the actual mark obtained by the participants in an examination. Success is typically defined in terms of performance and this is why grades represent the most obvious and universally accepted index of academic performance in the educational context (Hampden-Thompson & Pong, 2010). Hence, academic performance of a student determines whether he is successful or not. Therefore, it is crucial to know and understand which factors are responsible for determining, predicting or causing variance in academic performance.

Porumbu and Necsoi (2013) and Oba-Adenuga (2019), in their studies, discovered some factors that determine students' performance. They identified personal and socio-economic background, internal state (intelligence, state of health, motivation, anxiety, etc.) and their environment (availability of a suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like textbooks and well-equipped laboratories) as the possible variables that could determine academic performance. Donkor (2010) argued that home environment factors were more important factors which determined students' academic performance. Hence, it attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counsellors, psychologists, researchers and school administrators in Nigeria (Single-Rushton & McLanahan, 2014).

Again, family lays the psychosocial, moral and spiritual foundations upon which the overall development of the child can take off. A mother's role in laying the right foundation cannot be over-emphasized. Likewise, studies on father-child relationship suggest that the presence of a father in the home influences significantly the development of a child (Ushie, Emeka, Ononga & Owolabi, 2012). Thus, parenthood is a responsibility that requires the full cooperation of both parents who must ensure the total development of their children. Porumbu and Necsoi (2013) study confirmed that, many children who lived with single parent families had low test scores and school grades, poor school attendance and low educational aspiration. Many studies have been conducted on the academic performance of students in secondary schools but there are few studies on family structure and academic performance. It is against this background that the study examined the effect of family structure on the academic performance of secondary school students in Somolu Local Government Area (LGA), Lagos, Nigeria.

The main purpose of the study was to examine the effect of family structure on the academic performance of selected secondary students in Somolu Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria, while other purposes were to examine the significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents were employed and those whose parents were not employed as well as to examine the significant difference in the students' academic performance based on their family structure.

Four hypotheses were postulated to guide the study.

- H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students who lived with their parents and those who did not live with their parents.
- H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents were employed and those whose parents were not employed.
- H0<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students who received regular parental counselling and those who did not.
- H0<sub>4</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the students' academic performance based on the family structure.

### **Methodology**

The research design for this study was that descriptive survey research design. The target population for the study comprised all the public Senior Secondary School I (SSS 1) students in Somolu Local Government Area (LGA) of Lagos State, Nigeria.

The sample size for this study comprised 250 (Two hundred and fifty) respondents selected from public SSS1 students in Somolu LGA, Lagos state, Nigeria. According to the Lagos State Education District V, (2019), there were 26 Senior Secondary Schools in Somolu LGA of Lagos State. The research used the purposeful sampling technique to select 5 (five) Senior Secondary Schools from public schools. Then, the simple random sampling technique was used to gather 50 students from each selected schools thereby making the total selected school students used for the study to be 250.

The research instrument used for the study was a self-designed questionnaire titled "Family Related Issues and Academic Performance Inventory (FRIAPI)". The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A comprised the demography data of respondents such as age, gender, class, etc, while section B was made up of items from the hypotheses structured in a 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly

disagree (SD). The scoring of the items was as follows: SA = Strongly Agree (4), A = Agree (3), D = Disagree (2), SD = Strongly Disagree (1).

Section C comprised adapted 1<sup>st</sup> term Biology questions set in 20 objective form for the SS1 classes. The face and content validity was ascertained and the test re-test was used to check the reliability, and the result was 0.69 coefficient. The instrument was administered by the researcher and two assistants. The data collected were analysed and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test statistics were used to test the hypotheses, tested at 0.5 level of significance. Also, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21.0 model was used to compute the data.

## **RESULTS**

### **Hypothesis One**

There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students who lived with their parents and those who did not live with their parents.

**Table 1: showing the academic performance of students who lived with their parents and those who did not live with their parents`**

<b>Do you live with both parents</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Yes	191	31.87	4.144	.300	3.666	243	.000
No	54	29.39	5.210	.709			

Table 1 revealed a t-value of 3.666 at 243 df and 0.000 significance value. Since the significance value 0.000 was less than 0.5, it indicated that there was a significant difference. Therefore, we rejected the null hypothesis.

### **Hypothesis Two**

There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents were employed and those whose parents were not employed.

**Table 2: showing the academic performance of students whose parents were employed and those whose parents were not employed**

<b>Are your parents Employed</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Yes	176	32.13	3.696	.279	4.183	248	.000
No	74	29.61	5.622	.654			

Table 2 revealed a t-value of 4.183 at 248 df and 0.000 significance value. Since the significance value 0.000 was less than 0.5, it indicated that there was a significant difference. We therefore, rejected the null hypothesis and accepted the alternative.

### **Hypothesis Three**

There is no significant difference between the academic performance of students who received regular parental counselling and those who did not.

**Table 3: showing the students' academic performance based on parental counselling.**

<b>My parents counselled me on my academic performance</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Yes	213	31.81	4.230	.290	3.663	248	.000
No	37	28.95	5.212	.857			

Table 3 revealed a t-value of 3.663 at 248 df and 0.000 significant value. Since the significance value 0.000 was less than 0.5, it indicated that there was a significant difference. The null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was accepted.

### **Hypothesis Four**

There is no significant difference in the students' academic performance based on the family structure.

### ANOVA

**Table 4: showing the ANOVA of students` academic performance based on family structure.**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	648.291	4	162.073	8.960	.000
Within Groups	4341.162	240	18.088		
Total	4989.453	244			

**4.2: Multiple Comparisons of students` academic performance based on family structure.**

(I) What type of family structure do you come from?	(J) What type of family structure do you come from?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Single parent	Nuclear family	-1.846	.807	.268	-4.35	.66
	Extended family	.404	1.032	.997	-2.80	3.61
	Step family	3.005	1.257	.225	-.90	6.91
	Polygamous family	2.029	1.114	.508	-1.43	5.49
Nuclear family	Single parent	1.846	.807	.268	-.66	4.35
	Extended family	2.250	.826	.119	-.31	4.81
	Step family	4.851*	1.095	.001	1.45	8.25
	Polygamous family	3.874*	.926	.002	1.00	6.75



Extended family	Single parent	-.404	1.032	.997	-3.61	2.80
	Nuclear family	-2.250	.826	.119	-4.81	.31
	Step family	2.601	1.270	.383	-1.34	6.54
	Polygamous family	1.624	1.128	.722	-1.88	5.12
Step family	Single parent	-3.005	1.257	.225	-6.91	.90
	Nuclear family	-4.851*	1.095	.001	-8.25	-1.45
	Extended family	-2.601	1.270	.383	-6.54	1.34
	Polygamous family	-.976	1.337	.970	-5.13	3.17
Polygamou s family	Single parent	-2.029	1.114	.508	-5.49	1.43
	Nuclear family	-3.874*	.926	.002	-6.75	-1.00
	Extended family	-1.624	1.128	.722	-5.12	1.88
	Step family	.976	1.337	.970	-3.17	5.13

\*. The mean difference was significant at the 0.5 level.

There was a statistical difference between groups as determined by one - way ANOVA ( $F_{(4, 240)} = 8.960$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) in Table 4.1. A Scheffe post hoc test in Table 4.2 revealed a significant difference in the academic performance of students from nuclear and step families with a mean difference of  $\pm 4.851^*$ , and also that a significant difference existed between nuclear and polygamous families with a mean difference of  $\pm 3.874^*$ . There was no statistical difference between single parent and nuclear family with a mean difference of  $\pm 1.846$ , single parent and extended family with a mean difference of  $\pm .404$ , single parent and step family with a mean of  $\pm 3.005$ , single parent and polygamous family with a mean difference of  $\pm 2.029$ , nuclear family and extended family with a mean difference of  $\pm 2.250$ , and extended family and step family with a mean difference of  $\pm 2.601$ .

## **Discussion of Findings**

Hypothesis one states that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of students who lived with their parents and those who did not live with their parents. The result of the study rejected the null hypothesis and therefore, upheld the alternate hypothesis which stated that there was significant difference between the academic performance of students who lived with their parents and those who did not live with their parents. The result agreed with the study by Amato and James, (2014) and (Bernardi, Härkönen and Boertien, (2013) who found that students from nuclear and stable families performed better due to family involvement at home than their counterparts from split homes. Also, the result corroborated the findings of Akinleke (2017) who found a significant difference in the academic performance of students from single parent families and those from two parent families, that is, the academic performance of children from two parent families was better than those from single parent families. In addition, the result agreed with Wat (2019) findings which found that most students from single parents performed far better than others who had two parents because those single parents gave their total efforts and guidance to their children. Those findings may be explained by the fact that children from two parent families experience sufficient care, attention, warmth, father-and mother-figure attachment and emotional stability that are characteristics of two parent families. On the other hand, children from single parent families may suffer distraction, emotional problems, disciplinary problems and insufficiency as the single parent may find it difficult to cater for the socio-economic needs of the child/children alone.

Hypothesis two states that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents were employed and those whose parents were not employed. The result of the study rejected the null hypothesis and upheld the alternative hypothesis which stated there was significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents were employed and those whose parents were not employed. The result agreed with the study by Olayinka (2014) which found that working class parents tended to support their children in all their academic needs and it helped to boost their performance in school. However, the result disagreed with Wat's (2019) result which revealed that there was a relationship between socio-economic status and the level of students' learning exhibited. Also, Tenibaje (2010) and Akinleke (2012) stated that teacher/students relationship factor affected the students' academic performance more than their parents' socio-economic influence. This study disagreed with their results.

Hypothesis three states that there is no significant difference between the academic performance of students who received regular parental counselling and those who did not. This study's result rejected the null hypothesis and upheld the alternative which stated that there was significant difference between the academic performance of students who received regular parental counselling and those who did not. This result agreed with the findings of Qaiser, Ishtiaq, and Zaitoon (2012) who found that lack of parents' participation affected students' educational attainment negatively. Also, the result corroborated the findings of Azumah, Samuel, and Onzaberigu (2018), Oba-Adenuga (2019) and Wat (2019) which indicated that, there was a significant difference in parental involvement in children's academic performance. Also, the study by Latu (2018) stated that children grew up to imitate their parents and listened to them and they would continue to do so throughout their schooling which was an indication of a significant relationship between the academic performance of students who received regular parental counselling and those who did not.

Hypothesis four states that there is no significant difference in the students' academic performance based on the family structure. The result of the findings accepted the null hypothesis. Thus the result agreed with the work by Azumah, Samuel and Onzaberigu (2018) who found that family structure indicated no significant effects on the academic performance of children. The United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2011) posited that the influence of type of family structure on academic success continued through high school, and it significantly influenced outcomes such as high school dropout rates, graduation rates and age of first pregnancy.

## **Conclusion**

The important points we should take into consideration in the description of the results of this study are that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students who received regular parental counselling and those who did not. Also, that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students whose parents were employed and those whose parents were not employed. The results have a great influence on parents' attitude towards their children's education, therefore, parents should properly monitor their children's education in order to avoid their education maladjustment and achievement problem.

## **Recommendation**

The study therefore, recommended that:

1. Government should create counselling units in schools with adequate funds, while students from broken homes should be given proper guidance and counselling concerning the psychological needs and social problems on their studies for appropriate adjustment.
2. School counsellors should cultivate the need to emphasize the danger in parental separation during Parents Teacher Association (PTA) meetings. This would go a long way in couples in resolving their problems and learning to tolerate each other's individual differences.
3. Parents, religious leaders, teachers, counsellors and government must engage in enlightening parents and would be couples on the importance of family structure on the life of children.
4. Social policies should also be directed towards preserving the traditional nuclear family in the belief that the nuclear family is the best family structure for children's well-being.

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