

# Effect of family background on academic performance essay sample

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



Success, in an educational institution is measured by academic performance. Over the years, the importance of students doing well in school has become the common concern of parent, legislators, teachers, counselors and psychologist. According to Bell (2002), parents devote a lot of resources to their children's education because they believe that good academic performance will provide a stable future for them. Also, Wilkins (2001) opined that many educational authorities have sought to find out reasons for the downward trend in the academic performance of secondary school students.

Uwaifo (2008) attributed the cause of poor academic performance of children to a combination of personal and institutional factors. The Personal factors include the level of individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability, while institutional factors are family or parental influence. Olayinka (2004) pointed out that the family is the bed rock of any society. Obayan (2003) reported that a stable and well developed childhood can be guaranteed by a stable family. The current bad economic status of the country has exposed children to undesirable challenges that have negatively affected their academic performance in school. This observation agrees with the report of Adeyinka (2009) that maladaptive behavior arise when parents lack responsibility of their parenthood and that children that were raised from economically disadvantaged background are more likely to have poor academic performance because they lack some basic amenities such as food, clothing and shelter.

Abiri and Jekayinfa (2010) agreed that Nigeria is yet to have a philosophy of education when the economic status of the country is unstable. Petit et al (2003) pointed out that psychological needs are potential source of individual's personality and academic achievement. In the same vein, Omolewa (2002) affirmed that academic performance of a child could be traced to the kind of friends he keeps and the home he comes from. Kilgore; Snyder, and Lentz (2000) claimed that the family environment is the most powerful influence in determining a child's academic achievement. It is obvious that families have substantial influence on a child's academic performance.

#### Statement of problem

According to Abiribi and Jekayinka (2010), education is seen as an instrument per excellence for development and as such, it is the engine that promotes development. Aside from the intellectual capability of a child, the academic performance of a child is also largely determined by the family background. Obayan (2003) stated that the family is the bed rock of any society; it is also the foundation for the academic achievement of the child. Uwifo (2008) further affirmed that the recent wave of moral decadence and all sorts of anti-social behavior could be traced to poor home background. The Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFN) believes that a good family life is essential for health and happiness of individual's citizenship, community life and national prosperity. Pal and Sloane (2002) stated that different forms of maladaptive behavior arise because parents have problem

establishing and maintaining limits, privilege and responsibility with their children.

The first interaction of the child with people takes place within his home among members of his family, parents, siblings and relatives. The academic performance of a child depends on a number of factors such as, the marital relationship of the parents, the socio- economic status of the family, the atmosphere of the home (whether parents are warm or hostile), the environmental condition, occupational status of the parents and the number of siblings in the family. Previous studies on the influence of family background on academic performance of student includes, Adeyinka (2009) who worked on the influence of single parenting on student behavior and academic achievement. He reported that single parenting have negative effect on the behavior and academic performance of students and such students are prone to being plagued with a lot of problems.

Igvesi (2010) conducted a research on the academic achievement of students from monogamous and polygamous families in Offa Kwara state. His findings revealed that students from monogamous family often have better academic performance than student from polygamous family. Adekunle (2011) investigated the influence of family background on the child's cognitive (intellectual) development. He pointed out that the family background is important in the intellectual development of a child. It is obvious from the above reports that the family background of a child could have pronounced effect on their academic performance.

The objective of this study was to investigate the influence of family background on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria. The study also aims at investigating the influence gender, age and family type on the academic performance of secondary school students.

The issue of poor academic performance of students has been of much concern to stakeholders. This study is expected to enlighten parents on the provision of an enabling family that can positively affect the academic performance of a child.

The teacher would also derive invaluable benefits from this study because the finding will assist them to serve effectively in “ loco parentis” The school counselor also stands to benefit from this study because good knowledge of these findings would assist them in counseling students with academic problems. Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was the descriptive survey method. This is so, because the researcher is interested in finding out the influence of family background on the academic performance of secondary school students in Nigeria.

Kwara State was chosen because it is a gateway between the North and the South of Nigeria. It also has a fair mix of the various ethnic groups and cultures in Nigeria. The study consisted of 300 sampled representatives. Two government- owned secondary schools were purposively selected among the three senatorial districts of Kwara State. The researcher employed simple

random sampling technique to select 50 students from each of these schools.

The measuring instrument used for the study was a questionnaire tagged “Influence Of Family Background on Academic Performance Questionnaire (IFBAPQ)”. It consisted of section A and B. Section A sought for demographic information such as age, religion, gender and family type. Section ? consisted of twenty (20) items on the influence of family background on academic performance.

The instrument was physically administered to the respondent by the researcher with assistance from some ad hoc personnel who were specifically trained for this purpose.

The four point Likert type response format was adopted in Section ? thus:

SA - Strongly Agree = 4 points

A - Agree = 3 points

D - Disagree = 2 points

SD - Strongly Disagree = 1 point

The instrument contained 24 items, the highest possible score any respondent could attain was 80 (i. e. 4 ? 20) while the lowest possible score was 20 (i. e. 1 ? 20). Therefore, the range was 60 (i. e. 80 - 20). The midpoint was 30 (i. e. 60 / 2). The cutoff point was therefore 80 - 30 (i. e. maximum score minus the midpoint of the range) or 20 + 30 (i. e. the minimum score

plus the midpoint of the range) either of which was 50. Thus, the respondents who obtained scores from 50 to 80 showed a positive family background influence on the academic performance of the student, while those who scored below 50 showed a negative family influence on their academic performance. The reliability of the instrument used for the research study was established using the test-retest method within an interval of four weeks. Pearson Product Moment was used in computing the correlation co-efficient of the instrument. A reliability co-efficient of 0. 64 was obtained which was statistically significant at the 0. 05 level of significance. As such the instrument was adjudged to be reliable and considered suitable for research use. The t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical tools were employed to test research null hypothesis at 0. 05 alpha level.

## Result

Table 1 revealed that items 1, 15, 5, 16 and 8 ranked 1st 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th. This implied that the family background has profound effect on the academic performance of a child. On the other hand item 20, was ranked as the least.

The result of the t-test on table 2 revealed that the calculated t-value of 1. 77 was less than the critical t-value of 1. 96 therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the influence of family background on the academic performance of secondary school students on the basis gender is accepted.

The analysis from table 3 showed that the f-ratio of 0.344 is less than the critical f-ratio of 3.00 at 0.05 alpha level of significance. It revealed that the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in respect of age is also accepted.

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value is -2.368 while the critical t-value is 1.96. Since the calculated f-ratio is greater than the critical f-ratio, the hypothesis was rejected. This implies that a significant difference was found. As such the null hypothesis was rejected.

## Discussion

This study revealed that students from monogamous families perform better in school than those from polygamous families. This observation agrees with the views of Wikins (2001) that in a monogamous family both parents have and demonstrate active interest in the child's progress and especially, in their academic pursuit. The study also showed that the birth position of a child in the family influences their academic performance. In a typical African family setting the first born is expected to shoulder more responsibilities than the younger ones. This point was buttressed by Oloruntele (2002) that the birth position of a child in the family will determine the kind of responsibility that will be placed on the child which in turn could influence the academic performance and career aspirations of the child. Item 20 was ranked as the least.

The analysis of the hypothesis on the influence of family background on the academic performance of secondary school students on the basis of gender



confirmed that there is no significant difference. Tennebaum and Leaper (2002) reported that the cognitive development and academic achievement of a child does not rely on gender but rather on the environment that shapes their inherited potentials. This observation is also in agreement with the views of Obayan (2003) that constant disagreement among parent can affect children emotionally and could lead to poor academic performance.

The second null hypothesis revealed that there is no significant different in the influence of family background on the academic performance of secondary school students on the basis of age. Icado (1998) affirmed that irrespective of a child's age, the environment in which a child is raised can influence the academic performance of such child at school. However, there is need to develop good interpersonal relationship at home because the home is the principal agent of socialization even before the school. Sharon (2004) opined that age has no effect on individual intelligence quotient (IQ) and academic achievement.

The third hypothesis was rejected because a significant difference was found. This may be true because the family structure has a way of affecting a child's academic performance. Birch and Miller (2006) confirmed that the family has a high influence on the totality achievement of children. Wilkins (2001) opined that in monogamous family, both parents show active interest in what their child is doing at school, while in polygamous family little or no concentration is placed on the child. Polygamous family tends to breed a climate of domestic tension, jealousy and suspicions, leading in the worst case of accusations of witchcraft or poisoning. The tension and conflict within

the polygamous homes can create a negative attitude towards the child educational attainment. Mellanby (2000) noted that conflicts are relatively easier to solve in the monogamous family than in the polygamous family. This can indirectly affect the students' academic performance. According to Chauhan (2006) problems unresolved in a family can affect the child psychologically and emotionally. When a child is in a poor mental state as a result of psychological disturbances in the home, there is a high probability of an indirect and negative effect on a child's academic performance

### Counselling Implications

The findings of this study have some implications for counselling. It is important for counsellors to give proper orientation to parents especially during the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) meetings on how the home background can influence the academic performance of their wards.

The counsellor should be available and approachable. This will encourage students to open up and discuss some intimate problems bordering them.

Counsellors should organize seminars and workshop to remind teachers of their responsibilities to these students. The counsellor should also liaise with the parents and the school authority to intimate parents with the happenings in the school as it affects their wards.

Career guidance activities should be organized to encouraged students to appreciate the importance of good academic performance.

## Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the follow recommendations were made:

1. Government should establish Guidance and Counselling programmes in every secondary school in Nigeria and professional counsellors should be employed.
2. Parent should endeavour to create an enabling environment for the proper upbringing of their children so as to encourage good academic performance.
3. The government should provide free education especially at the primary and secondary school level. This will help students from poor socio-economic background to acquire the necessary education for their future aspirations.

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