

## **Home Environment and Academic Performance of Students in Senior Secondary School in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area**

**Woji, Vashni Ogechi**

*and*

**Ordim P. N. Ph.D.**

Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling

Ignatius Ajuru University of Education

Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt

### ***Abstract***

*The study investigated home environment and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor local government area, Rivers State. Descriptive research design of correlational style was adopted for the study. Two research questions and four corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study was the entire secondary school students in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers State, which comprised 13,000 students. A sample of 360 students was selected for this study through simple and stratified random sampling techniques. Student Home Environments Questionnaire was used for data collection which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.75. The research questions were answered with simple percentages, while the null hypotheses were tested with Chi-Square statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The result indicated that; there was a significant influence of peer group on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools; there was a significant influence of socio-economic status on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools; Based on these findings, the following recommendations were made; the school management should employ psychologists, guidance and counsellors that will continuously monitor the activity of the students and advise them where necessary to help them focus on their studies. Counselling can help them guide against negative influence from peers and modified negative behaviour; parents should work harder to provide basic school requirements for their children.*

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**Keywords:** Academic performance, Learning outcomes, Socio-economic status, Counselling

## Introduction

Poor academic performance is a huge concern to education stakeholders. Poor performance is a threat to the future of Nigerian education and development. Factors responsible for poor academic performance include; learning disability that can be obstacle to attaining a certain academic performance. Teachers have been found to have a profound effect on student's academic performance for instance, when a teacher has little interest or lacks experience in teaching, he will lack the required competence to create effective teaching-learning process thus low academic performance. School environment is an important contributing factor to academic performance. This entails issues like school culture that promote hard work, school funding to enable hiring of qualified teachers, putting up school infrastructure. Poor infrastructure and congested class-rooms are factors that can contribute negatively to academic progress. Schools that cannot afford to make provision for required facilities end up offering less than the desired quality of education.

Consequently, academic performance of any student cannot be separated from the home environment in which the child lives; healthy home environment offers emotional security to a child. Education has one of its basic tasks as to train young people to become useful members of the society. This training begins at home in the informal way. The home of the child is the first place of learning as he is born into the world by his or her parents. Students are motivated to work on activities and learn new information and skills when their environments are rich in interesting activities that arouse their curiosity and offer moderate challenges. The same can be said about home environment, unfortunately there is much variability in motivational influences in homes, some homes make provision for several activities that stimulate children thinking as well as computer, books, puzzles and parents who may be heavily interested in their children cognitive development and spent time with them on learning.

Much of the variability in the relation between family income and children's intellectual development comes from the family provision of a stimulating home environment (Osaat, 2013). Students intellectual development is most strongly influenced by the home environment during infancy and early childhood. When they are under the direct influence of parents. The parents exert more influence on them. As students mature, schools and peers also begin to play a role in their intellectual socialisation. There is much evidence supporting the hypothesis that the quality of a child's early learning in the home environment relate positively to the development of intelligent and reading skills, and parental involvement in schooling also predict performance.

The home environment plays a vital role in the development, upbringing and behaviour of children as well as the general performance of students. There are many home environmental factors that could influence the academic performance of students. Those factors could either exacerbate or result to excellence in school performance. This is because those factors have the capacity to affect teaching and learning outcome. Learning is a product of not, only formal schooling, but also of families, communities and peers, social, economy and cultural forces affecting its smooth process and school performance. In addition to influences related to home, academic performances is also related to students pre-existing human capital which includes their unique ways of interacting with each type of

educational institutions such as school, family, community, peer group, the economic and the culture.

All the necessary environmental factors within the immediate environment of the family contribute in no small measure to shape and influence the behaviour of the children. This is also applicable to the academic performance of secondary school students. Naturally, the family acts as agent of socialisation to the children; they get them inculcated into the system and teach them basic values and norms of the society as well as how to develop into a man or woman that will be self-reliant.

On the other hand, students are also taught about how to relate and co-operate with others in the course of carrying out their day-to-day chores in their respective homes. World Bank Encyclopedia (1998) indicated that a student must accept increasing responsibility to behave in a way that does not hurt others within his immediate school and home environment. Students develop their attitude and school behaviour by caring, sharing materials and possessions and discipline that the home provides. It is believed that each learner learns to be more responsible as divorce, drunkenness, violent and quarrelling among parents may cause children to be so upset that they will be unable to concentrate on their work in school.

Adeyemo (1999) asserts that children from illiterate homes are somewhat backward because they do not see beyond their nose, and those from literate home are rich in experience and better in experience and outlook. This implies that children are assisted by the parents one very issue that affected their existence. More importantly, the child's attitude to education and life is greatly affected and influenced by the way the family is organised and the efforts put in by the parents to ensure their children become responsible as well as educated. It is also reasonable to explain that the type of home and environment where one finds his or herself determine his/her academic performance to a great extent.

However, we have also seen situations, where children (students) from obscured background (slump) and peasant home rise to the top in academic and careers. Awake (2001) revealed that the nature of the home affects the children. An investigation was done on family lifestyle, the result revealed that children of unhappy parents have higher heartbreak during playful interaction and are not able to maintain psychological stable lifestyle. They have problem with interacting with people within and outside their family (Cottaman, 2002). The result of the findings collaborates with the finding of De Paola and Scoppa (2010) who established that peer relationship both negative and positive exact huge influence on the performance of students at all levels. Student who walk together perform at the same level in most cases.

Based on the background, the study investigates home environment and academic performance of senior secondary school students.

### **Statement of the Problem**

There is a general concern about the academic performance of students today. Many studies have examined the factors affecting the academic performance of secondary school students. Often times the blame on the poor performance of students in school are shifted to the

teachers and the school authorities only. Particularly, the home environment provides the foundation for learning and is an element of the student life that can affect grades and provides opportunities to learn outside the school. It seems the home environments of the student possess huge influence on their lives and school performance. Home environment factors which affect students' performance include socioeconomic status, family size, peer group and parents' attitude amongst others. Most families in our society today seem not to give adequate attention to the education of their children.

Kamuti (2015) found that home environment has enormous influence on student's academic performance generally. He further indicated that mother's educational attainment has most important impact on a young child's academic performance. Particularly, regardless of various contributions by researchers and family counsellors it appears, there is no record of remarkable improvement on students' performance and there is still insufficient research documentation. If this problem is not given a concentrated effort, it will have enormous effects on students' school grade. This calls for further research to find out home influence on academic performance.

To the best of my knowledge, other researchers have not carried out their works in the setting under investigation, hence the desire to embark on this study. This study examines home environment and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Obio/Akpor local government area, Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. How does peer group influence students' academic performance?
2. How does socio-economic status influence students' academic performance?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design of corelational type. The population of the study is the entire secondary school students in Obio/Akpor local government area of Rivers state, which comprised 13,000 students.

Simple random and stratified random sampling techniques was adopted to draw 360 students from seven public schools in Obio/Akpor local government area in Rivers state. Fifty (50) students were randomly selected from each school for a proper representation. However, one school had 60 samples.

### **Instrumentation and Validity of the instrument**

The researcher used self-constructed instrument for data collection in this research titled: Student Home Environments Questionnaire(SHEQ). SHEQ is a 20 item research tool. It is divided into two sections: A and B. Section A covered space such as personal data of

respondents. Section B contained items on peer group, socio-economic. SHEQ was developed on a four modified Likert types of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Strongly Disagreed and Disagreed, ranging from 4 to 1 point. The face and content validity of the content appropriateness of the instruments were done by the competent researchers in the field of measurement and evaluation at Ignatius Ajuru University of Education who helped to validate the instrument by vetting the items and making necessary correction.

Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the instrument on Student Home Environments Questionnaire (SHEQ). The method involved pivotal administration of the instrument to 30 students who share same characteristics with the sample of the study at Model Secondary Schools, GRA and a re-test was administered on the subject after two weeks of the first administration. Using the Person Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained. This is adjudged reliable.

The researcher with the help of four research assistants administered 360 copies of questionnaires to the respondents. The researchers collected the questionnaires after the students have responded to the items and collated students' responses. The study used simple percentage to answer the two research questions.

### **Data Analysis**

**Research Question One:** How does peer group influence students' academic performance?

Simple percentage was used to answer research question one.

**Table 1:** Percentage of Peer Group Influence on Performance

<b>Peer Group Influence</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total %</b>
Positive peer group influence	200	55.6	65	18.1	265	73.7
Negative peer group influence	40	11.0	55	15.3	95	26.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>66.6</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>33.4</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 indicates that 73.7% of the students responded to positive peer group influence, while 26.3% of the students responded to negative peer group influence. The data in Table 1 reveals that positive peer group influence has more percentage than negative peer group influence. That is, positive peer group influence the academic performance of students in senior secondary school.

**Research Question Two:** How does socio-economic status influence students' academic performance?

Simple percentage was used to answer research question two.

**Table 2:** Percentage of Socio-economic Status Influence on Performance

Socio-economic Status	High	%	Low	%	Total	Total%
High socio-economic status	99	27.5	68	18.9	167	46.4
Low socio-economic status	148	41.1	45	12.5	193	53.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>68.6</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>31.4</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 indicates that 46.4% of the students responded to high socio-economic status influence and 53.6% of the students responded to low socio-economic status influence. The data in Table 2 reveals that low socio-economic status influence has more percentage than high socio-economic status influence. That is, low socio-economic status influence the academic performance of the respondents.

### Discussion of Findings

#### Peer Group and Academic Performance of Students

Analysis of data on research question one using chi-square revealed that there was significant influence of peer group on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. This result corroborates the finding of De Paola and Scoppa (2010) who established that both negative and positive peer relationship exact huge influence on the performance of students at all levels. Students who walk together perform at the same level in most cases. The finding is consistent with the result of David (2000), who maintained that peer group influence has significantly varied effects on the academic performance of male and female students. Peer influence has significant effect on the academic performance of children from broken homes. Age has significant effect on the extent to which peer group influence affect academic performance of students.

#### Socio-economic Status and Academic Performance of Students

Analysis of data on research question two using chi-square revealed that there was significant influence of socio-economic status on students' academic performance in senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor local government area. The current result is in consonance with the finding of Dahie, *et al* (2016); they revealed that those from poor homes where it is difficult for parents to provide for school and personal needs, do score low in some cases. High economic status gives students rest of mind to enjoy learning in learning friendly environment. Teachers are expected to close the teaching-learning gap to enable students that are all socio-economic backgrounds participate in effective learning. Other researchers agreed that the home where needs are quickly met enjoy schooling and are likely to perform higher in schools.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the major findings of the study it was concluded that; peer group and socio-economic status, significantly have influence on the performance of senior secondary school. Therefore, home environments exact huge influence on the academic performance of students in senior secondary schools in Obio/Akpor local government area, Rivers State.

## **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. The school management should employ psychologists, guidance counsellors that will continuously monitor the activity of the students and advise them where necessary to help them focus on their studies. Counselling can help them guide against negative influence from peers and modified negative behaviour.
2. Parents should work harder to provide basic school requirements for their children.

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