
FAMILY STRUCTURE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND MATHEMATICS OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

There is high incidence of examination failure in English Language and Mathematics as reported by the West African Examination Council. The link between this problem and family structures necessitated this study. The purpose of the study is to investigate whether "family structure predicts academic achievement among secondary school students. The study adopted regression survey research design. In pursuance of the objective of the study, one hypothesis was tested. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to select 1200 respondents from SS2 students in Enugu State. The Students' Academic Achievement Scores (SAAS) instrument was used for the study. The objective was analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The major findings of the study showed that polygamy, monogamy and intact family structures positively and significantly predict academic achievement of secondary school students. Implications were drawn from the findings. The researcher recommended that monogamous and intact family wherein both parents are living together structures should be encouraged

Keywords: Family structure, academic achievement, English Language, Mathematics, students

There has continued to be huge concerns by school administrators, teachers, policy makers and the general public about student's academic achievement in Nigeria. This may be connected with the fact that success in education is highly instrumental in the development of nations. It has been observed that children's growing competences and development are largely influenced by many sociological factors namely: family, school, church, peer group and mass media (Aroma, 2000). The family and school play more vital roles in the upbringing of a child because they are involved in the early

formative years of every child. A good home is an aid to success in school as one of the agents of socialization. The school has a great influence in the character formation of a child. Thus, the overarching aim is to bring up a well-adjusted individual, able to live a normal life with members of the society. In the school environment, the individual needs to adequately adjust and blend with the expectations and demands of the school environment. It is only in this way that academic achievement of students can be ensured.

Academic achievement is defined as the ability of a student to successfully accomplish a course of study in college within a specific period. Students' academic achievement is very important when measuring the success of school programme. Cary (2008) believes, that academic achievement is performance on task with measures including comprehension, quality and accuracy of answers of tests, quality and accuracy of problem-solving, frequency, quality of desired outcome, time or rate to solution, time on task, level of reasoning and critical thinking, creativity, recall and retention, and transfer of tasks. Academic achievement encompasses actual, ability to successfully accomplish a course of study, and it involves a great amount of reading and study rather than technical or practical work.

According to Hawis and Hawes (2009), it refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teachers in a fixed time or academic year. It is a process that involves a greater amount of reading and study rather than technical or practical work. Academic achievement in the context of this study is the comprehensive standardized test or examination scores and overall academic ability and performance of a student, after specified months or years of being taught or of studying.

Academic achievement, in Nigerian secondary schools in recent times, has experienced serious decline. Poor academic performance among children has been noted to be on the increase in Nigerian environment despite efforts at improving the school curriculum and quality of teaching. This has been a source of concern to stakeholders over the years. Reports of the West African Examination Council and National Examination Council (2014) show very poor performance of Nigerian students in almost all subjects. The report indicated mass failure, especially in the core subjects: English Language and Mathematics. The report shows that out of a total of 1,705,976 (one Million, seven hundred and five thousand, nine hundred and seventy-six) candidates that registered for the examination, only 529,425 (representing 31.28 percent) obtained credits in five subjects and above, including English Language and Mathematics. The result shows that the students who sat for this examination, like any other year, did not perform well. In addition, the report further indicates that the May/June, 2014 results show a marginal decline in the performance of candidates as 38.81% was recorded in 2012 and 36.57% in 2013. Also, the 2011 West African Examination Council result shows that only 31 % out of the total number who sat for the May/June examination in 2011, obtained credit scores in five subjects and above including Mathematics and English Language. Such record of abysmal performance can be attributed to numerous factors, but it is easily understandable to imagine that adjustment is a contributory

factor. The situation in Enugu State though slightly better compared to several other States in Nigeria, still presents a worrisome situation. The report of the 2014 May/June West African Senior School Certificate indicates that 51.0% of the students who sat for the examination in Enugu State obtained credit scores in English Language and Mathematics. This is an improvement in the 2013 performance of 36.57%. This situation is worrisome as academic failure is not only frustrating to the students and parents, its effects are equally grave on the economy (Aremu, 2000).

Over the years, the investigations of the factors that influence academic performance of students have attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counselors, psychologists, researchers and school administrators in Nigeria. This is because of the public outcries concerning the low standard of education in the country (Imoge, 2002). The declining quality of education in the country as well as the breeding of graduates with little technical know-how have resulted in serious setbacks to the industrial development of the nation as stated by Imoge (2002). Different factors are capable of influencing the academic performance of students. Such factors may be individual student's internal state (intelligence, state of health, motivation and anxiety) and their environment (availability of suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like textbooks and well-equipped laboratories).

Investigation of students' internal state and environment has produced several findings by researchers. For example, Eamon (2005) attributed the cause of students' poor performance to socio-economic status. Eamon (2005) believed that students who have low socio-economic status show poor result and are more likely to leave school. Also, Eamon (2005) found that maternal characteristics make up other key factors that influences the academic achievement of students. The children of Mothers who are more educated and have higher self-esteem, obtain higher scores. Eamon (2005) further stressed that mothers who delay childbearing have been shown to provide more "cognitively stimulating" and supportive environments at home which have positive effects on school performance. In the same token, Suleiman, Aslam, and Shaker (2012) attributed the cause of poor academic performance to family setting and background. However, Ajila and Olutola (2007), while reviewing the Causes and Cures of Poor Performance at West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE)" in 2006 identified and categorized problems responsible for students' poor performance. According to them, some of the problems are: problems of teachers and problems of inadequate facilities in the schools, problems traceable to students, problems caused by parents and society at large and problems of government policies and poor funding of the education sector. Thus, in addition to factors that influence academic achievement, there is now greater awareness of the importance of the home environment or family structure on pupils'/students' academic performance.

There seems to be difference in achievement among students or children from different parent structure. According to Uwaifo (2008), the structure of family a child comes from plays tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what the child becomes. The structure of families students grow up affects their

academic achievement. There seems to be difference in performance among students or children from different parenthood. This was the situation as noticed by Uwaifo (2008).

Statement of the Problem

There are evident indices of poor academic achievement in secondary schools in Enugu State as demonstrated by mass failure rates in both internal and external examinations. The data released from the statistics division of West African Examination Council, Enugu Office for the period 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, show that secondary school students have performed poorly over the years. Apart from 2011 and 2014, where 55.3% and 51% of the students respectively obtained credit scores in Mathematics and English, an assessment of their performances in other years revealed a very dismal performance wherein less than 40% of the students obtained credit scores in both Mathematics and English. For instance, in 2012, 20% of the students had credit scores in English and Mathematics; 36.57% in Nov/Dec 2013; and 38.7% in 2015.

Some hold the generalized idea that poor academic performance of students such as revealed in external examination of West African Examination Council (W AEC) and National Examination Council (NECO), could be as a result of the family structure of the students.

The researcher is concerned that the veracity of the assertion and opinion noted above seem to be lacking due to paucity of empirical studies on issue as it concerns Enugu State. It is against this background that the researcher is poised to investigate if family structure predict secondary school students' academic achievement in Enugu State. The key question that this study will answer is whether family structure predict secondary school students' academic achievement in Enugu State.

Literature Review

This section looked at the conceptual issue, theoretical and empirical literature.

Conceptual Issue

Concept of Family and Family Structure

Family is the basic unit of the society and therefore the cradle of societal development. Family is a social institution established to codify habits and coordinate the achievements of known sets of goals. Lemana and Riefmann (1990) sees family as any parent child relationship in which people usually related by ancestry, marriage, or adoption, live together with commitment to form an economic unit, care for the young and find their identity as importantly attached to the group. In essence, there is great bond among the members of a family.

Bowen, as cited in Corey (2009), described the family as a system that connects all the individuals within it, together. Similarly, Amaechi (2010) sees family as a group of people that are related by blood or marriage, especially a group of two grown-up people and their children living in a home. The family is therefore every child's first social world and the agent of behaviour modification. It inculcates the appropriate

behavioural patterns, values, norms and attitudes of the society. A child's behaviour is therefore a reflection of the family in which he was nurtured and socialized (Rani and Latha, 2005).

However, family in the context of this study can be defined as a group of people/persons united by ties of marriage, blood, and or adoption. The ties or relationships are characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and most importantly shared culture. Usually, there are two major types of family: nuclear family and extended family. Nuclear family consists of only the husband and his wife together with their children, while Extended family consists of the husband, the wife, the children, and other relations living together in a large family compound (Nwobi in Onomodeke and Echebe, 2010).

Nuclear family structure is mostly practiced in modern/contemporary Europe, America and some other parts of the world where a young man and his wife alone start to live separately from their parents and start giving birth to children (Shim, Felner, & Shim, 2000). The extended family structure is still common in Africa where groups of blood-related people live together. Amato (2003) posited that family structures vary in societies and across

Family Structure

Basically, family is made up of nuclear and extended family which is further broken down to intact or separated, monogamous or polygamous, or single parenthood. There are different family structures. In the light of the present study, the following family structures have been identified: Single parent families in which either the father or mother is engaged in the training of the children. This situation could arise as a result of death of either of the parents, divorce or separation. Children from single parent families have poorer academic performance, are more susceptible to peer pressure to engage in deviant behaviour, have higher dropout rates from school (Shim, Felner, & Shim 2000). Both-parent families (Intact families) which is where the fathers and the mothers are involved in the training of the children. However, the type of relationships that exist between the fathers and the mothers go a long way in determining the performance of the children in school (Shim, Felner, & Shim 2000).

Step-parent family: -This situation could arise from instances where either of the parents dies and the remaining partner remarries- so that the children are being taken care of by the new partner. This is common where the mother dies and the father remarries. The new wife now acts as the mother to the children of the first wife. It is the same when a father dies and the wife re-marries. The new husband now acts as the father to the children of the first husband (Shim et al, 2010).

There is a differential effect of intact and separated families. Separated families, in contrast with intact families, have devastating psychological effect on mothers, fathers as well as on the children of separated families. The differences in academic performance of children from single and two parent families is also related to changes in

the economic circumstances of families of parent - child interaction in the different family structure (Rani and Latha, 2005).

Family structure, in the context of this study, means the conformation or alignment of people who are united by ties of marriage, blood, and or adoption. The family structure and the relationship between its members changes with the dynamics of childbirth as well as incidence of divorce.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinning of this study is the family deficit model. This theory can be traced to Wallenstein and Kelly (1974). The main thesis of the theory is that nuclear or two-parent family as the ideal family structure and single parent family is a deviant from the ideal family. According to this model, single-parent families have negative impacts on the child in that it is bad for the child's upbringing and cognitive development. Research using the Family Deficit Model begins with the assumption that single parenting is bad for children and the results of these studies typically support this assumption. Indeed, some studies using the Family Deficit Model minimize or overlook the influence economics and other background factors have on academic achievement rather than alter this research model (Mireya & Navarro, 2008). Indeed, children from single-parent families are at greater risk than children in two-parent families even when they have the same academic abilities. Thiessen (1997) posited that children from single-parents are three times more likely to drop out of high school than children from two-parent families. The relevance of this theory to the present study stems from the fact that students' performance in school as well as adjustment are mediated by their upbringing which perhaps, is influenced by family background, typically by the family structure and climate.

Empirical Studies

The relationship between family structure and academic achievement has attracted a lot of attention from researchers. McLanahan and Bumpass (2003) found that the effect of intact versus single-parent families on high school graduation rates dropped 30 to 50% once family income was added into the model. They offered as the explanation that, owing to lack of economic resources, children from single-parent families had fewer access to books and to cultural activities that would have helped developed their cognitive ability and intelligence, which resulted in higher drop-out rate than peers from intact families. Many researchers have found that a crucial reason for the disadvantage of single-parent or non-nuclear family students was the poor economic condition that usually accompanies this type of family. For instance, McLanahan and Sandefur (2004) found that economic conditions explained 50% of the variations of achievement scores.

Furthermore, Zill (2006) in reviewing research results from large longitudinal data in the United State of America found that students from nuclear intact families had the best academic achievement, while students from alternative family structure such as step-parent families and single-parent families performed not so well. Although the

effects of family structure weakened a little after background variables such as parental education and ethnicity were added into the model, family structure effects did not vanish. On the other hand, although students from step-parent families appeared to perform better than those from single-parent families, once other background characteristics were taken into consideration, however, performance of students from step-parent families became indistinguishable from that of single-parent families. Han and Huang (2000) also found that in Taiwan, children in single-parent families had a lower rate of attending college than those from intact families.

In another study, Oshim, Felner, and Ohim (2000) examined the effects of family structure on students' academic achievement in terms of self-reported grades. The study made use of data from intact two-parent, step-parent and single-parent families from a statewide survey of students in grades 6 through 12 in Rhodes Island. The study shows that the beliefs and attitudes of parents foster the academic success of their children.

Omosewo (2000) investigated the effect of family structure on secondary school students' performance found that students from monogamous families significantly performed better than those (students) from polygamous and single parent families. In the same vein, Akanle (2007) discovered that family structure is a significant factor influencing students' academic performance.

Engin-Demir (2009), in a research, found out that students' academic achievement is influenced by background of family characteristics. While carrying out an investigation on the third international Mathematics and science students' tests, it was discovered that parental level of education and income have been the most significant sources of disparities in female students' performance. Students from economically disadvantaged families and families where parents have less level of education have systematically performed worse than other students.

A similar study conducted by Tomul and Celik (2009) in Turkey, investigated the effects of education of parents and family income on academic achievement. Using 15-year-old students in Turkey, the study was carried out based on data obtained from the PISA (2006). The result of the findings indicated that the education of parents and family income affect the students' academic achievement in Mathematics most and reading skills least.

Akomolafe and Olorunfemi-Olabisi (2011) investigated the impact of family structure on secondary school students' academic performance in Ondo State, Nigeria. The research was a descriptive research design of ex-post facto type. A total of three hundred (300) secondary school students (males and females) drawn from ten selected secondary schools in Ondo State were used for the study. T-test and ANOVA statistics were employed in the analysis. The findings of the study revealed that family structure significantly influenced academic performance of secondary school students. This study intuitively will help to affirm or contradict the situation in Enugu State thereby giving room for generalization.

Uwaifo (2012) studied the effects of family structures on the academic performance of Nigerian University Students. The study was a survey research study that used a sample

of 240 students drawn from six randomly selected faculties in Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma, Edo State. The study used the Adapted form of "Guidance and Counselling Achievement Grade Form", The responses from the respondents were analysed using the t-test statistics method. The findings revealed that significant differences exist in the academic performance of students from singleparent family and those from two-parent family structure. The result also indicated significant difference between the performance of male and female students compared on two types of family structures.

Ali (2012) undertook a study on family background and academic achievement of junior secondary school students in Abua/Odua local government area of Rivers State. The study, which was a survey research design, investigated the impact of polygamous marriage on the academic achievement of secondary school students. The study made use of 400 students. The study used mean, standard deviation as well as T-test and chi-square in data analysis. The result of the study shows that students from small family sizes perform better than those from large family sizes.

Family size, parental attitudes and socioeconomic background of parents influenced the academic achievement of students.

Also, Osuafor and Okonkwo (2013) carried out a study on the influence of family background on Academic Achievement of Secondary School Biology Students in Anambra State". The study used descriptive survey and a sample of five hundred and forty-six students. Means, t- test and ANOVA statistics were used in analyzing the data collected. The result shows that family background, including family structure, parental occupation and parental education level had no significant influence on students' achievement in Biology.

In a related study, Adenike (2013) carried out a study on The Effects of family structure (monogamy or polygamy) on students' academic achievement in Nigeria". The study, which was a correlational survey design with a total of three hundred respondents used a stratified and purposeful sampling technique. t-test statistics was used in the analysis. The result revealed that home background or family structure is significantly related to the academic achievement of the students. From the studies reviewed, emphasis tend to be placed more on Nigeria in general with no research effort channeled towards ascertaining the true situation in individual State, like Enugu.

Methodology

Area of Study

The study was carried out in Enugu. Enugu State is located between latitudes 5° 56'N and 7° 06'N and longitudes 6° 53'E and 7° 55'E. The State has a total of 17 local government areas: namely, Enugu South, Igbo Eze South, Enugu North, Nkanu, Udi, Agwu, Oji-River, Ezeagu, Igboeze North, Isiuza, Nsukka, Igbo-Etiti, Uzouwani, Enugu East, Aninri, Nkanu East and Udeniu.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 1,200 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students were used for the study. The sample size was obtained through multi-stage sampling techniques. Firstly,

Family Structure and...

from the list of six educational zones, four zones were randomly selected to cover Awgu, Agbani, Enugu, and Nsukka. Next, six schools namely: Community School, Obukpa; Premier Secondary School, Ukehe; Community Secondary School, Nsude; Urban girls, Awgu; Girls high School, Uwani; College of Immaculate Conception, Enugu were randomly selected from Nsukka, Udi, Awgu, and Enugu educational zones. Thirdly, 1,200 SS2 students were disproportionately selected from the six schools selected from the 4 educational zones. The SS2 students were purposively chosen because apart from SS3 students (who the researcher didn't want to use because they in their external examination class) the SS 2 students were the next most informed, and can understand the instrument.

Instrument for Data Collection

Two different types of instruments were used for the data collection. These are the Family Students' School Adjustment Questionnaire (FSSAQ) and Students Academic Achievement Scores (SAAS). The FSSAQ was developed by the researcher, while SAAS was derived from the students' final academic achievement scores in Mathematics and English language subjects which have been chosen because they are compulsory to all students. The FSSAQ contains two sections, A and B. Section A was used to elicit demographic information from the respondents with regard to family structure, gender and family size. Section B contains 35 items put in two clusters. Cluster one was used to elicit information on family climate based on the type of parenting styles-autocratic, democratic and laissez faire parenting styles. Cluster two was used to elicit information on students' academic adjustment. The items in the two clusters were placed on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), and weighted 4, 3, 2 and 1 accordingly. For the academic records of the students, the school guidance counsellors were in custody of students' academic records which are written into the cumulative record folder. The scores of students on English Language and Mathematics from 2012/2013 were lifted; the subjects are.

Reliability and Method of Data Collection

For the reliability test, a trial test was carried out to determine the reliability of the instrument. The reliability coefficient of above 65% was obtained. The data were collected through questionnaire and secondary data from students' record. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, Mean and regression analysis.

Result and Discussion**Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Students by Family Structure in Enugu State**

Family structure	Frequency	Percentage
Monogamous	995	85.4
Polygamous	167	14.6
Total	1171	100

Family structure	Percentage
Intact	82.8
Single parent (Mother raising the children)	13.1
Single parent (father raising the children)	4.1
Total	100

Source: Author's calculation for field survey 2017.

The results in Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of students by family structures. The results show that majority of the students used for the study come from monogamous families. For instance, 85.4% of the students come from monogamous family. On the other hand, 14.7% of the students come from polygamous families. This shows that monogamous families are more predominant in Enugu State. Regarding the question on family structure, the results show the report on whether both or single parents of the secondary school students are living together to raise the children.

The results revealed that majority (82.8%) of the students reported they are from intact parentage (that both parents are living together); 4.1 % of the students are being taken care of by single parents (only their fathers), 13.1 % of the students reported that they are of single parentage, with only their mother taking care of them.

Table 2: Regression Analysis of Family Structure and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in English Language

Model	Coefficient	Std Error	t	Sig
Constant	0.23	0.09	2.48	0.013
Monogamy	0.93	0.029	32.35	0.040
Polygamy	-1.12	0.07	-17.04	0.18
Intact	0.78	0.06	13.87	0.00
Separated/divorced	-0.01	0.06	11.84	0.00

$R^2=0.6209$

Table 2 shows the results of the extent to which family structure predicts academic achievement of secondary school students in English Language in Enugu State. This question was answered using regression analysis. The results show that monogamous and intact (father and mother living together) family structure positively predict secondary school students' academic achievement in English Language. The coefficients of the monogamous and intact family structure indicate that the two family structures positively and significantly predict students' academic achievement in English Language at 0.05 level of significance. On the other hand, the negative coefficients of polygamous and single-parent show that these family structures have negative predictive values on students' academic achievement. It can be seen from the results that polygamous family structure negatively predicts academic achievement much more than single parentage. The R^2 (coefficient of determination) measures the overall predictive value of family structure on academic achievement. The R^2 value of 0.6209 therefore implies that about 62% of the variation in academic achievement of students in English Language is predicted by family structure.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Family Structure and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Mathematics

Model	Coefficient	Std Error	t	Sig
Constant	3.99	0.07	60.34	0.00
Monogamy	0.47	0.04	12.04	0.23
Polygamy	-0.54	0.04	12.84	0.23
Intact	0.58	0.05	12.31	0.00

Academic Excellence

Separated! divorced	-0.01	0.01	-2.01	0.08
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R²=0.6521

Like in the case of English Language, the results in Table 3 which have negative coefficient revealed that polygamy and single-parent family structure have negative predictive value on secondary school students' academic achievement in Mathematics in Enugu State. This means that polygamy and single-parent family structures negatively influence academic achievement. The results also show that the predictive value of these family structures on students' academic achievement in Mathematics is not significant at 0.05 level of significance. On the other hand, monogamy and intact family structures have high predictive values on students' academic achievement in Mathematics and are also significant at 0.05 level of significance. Over all, the R² Value of 0.6521 shows that approximately 65% of the variation in the level of academic achievement of secondary school students' in Mathematics is being predicted by the different family structures.

The findings of the study agree with some earlier studies on the relationship between family structure and academic achievement. For instance, McLanahan and Bumpass (2003) found that the effect of intact versus single-parent families on high school graduation rates dropped 30 to 50% once family income was added in the model. Many researchers have found that a crucial reason for the disadvantage of single-parent family students was the poor economic condition that usually accompanies this type of family. In the same vein, the findings of the study are in line with the work of Omosewo (2000) who investigated the relationship between family structure and secondary school students' performance and found that students from monogamous families significantly performed better than students from polygamous and single parent families. Also, Akanle (2007) found that family structure is a significant factor influencing students' academic performance. Akomolafe and Olorunfemi-Olabisi (2011r) had reported that family structure significantly influenced academic performance of secondary school students. Adenike (2013) found that family structure (monogamy or polygamy) is significantly related to the academic achievement of students. This result has implications because the more polygamous a family is, the more the number of people that will be competing for the resources of the family. And fewer resources means that students will not be adequately funded in terms of school instructional resources such as books, school uniform, school fees, among others. These inadequacies, sometimes occasioned by polygamy, do have lasting negative effects on students' academic achievement.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

The high incidence of examination failure in English Language and Mathematics as reported in journal articles, print and electronic media in Nigeria as well as the uncomfortable incidence of poor academic performance in Enugu State necessitated this study. The study focused on the extent to which family structure predicts academic achievement. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between family structure (monogamy, polygamy, intact and single-parent)

and students' academic achievement. The result from the analyses revealed that family structure predicts academic achievement; Monogamy, intact and single-parentage have significant relationship with academic achievement, while Polygamy did not have statistical significant relationship with academic achievement. While monogamy and intact family have positive significant relationship with academic achievement, single parentage had negative significant relationship with academic achievement. Polygamy did not have statistically significant relationship with academic achievement.

In essence, couples should, as much as possible, avoid variables that could lead to polygamous marriage. In the same vein, intact family wherein the both parents are alive and living together should be encouraged so as to promote conducive environment for improved academic achievement by students.

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