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**THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS  
ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF THE NIGERIAN  
STUDENT (A STUDY OF EGBU GIRLS SECONDARY  
SCHOOL IN OWERRI NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
AREA OF IMO STATE)**

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## **Abstract**

*The study x-rays the impact of parental socio-economic status on the academic performance of the Nigerian students. The study noted that it is a fact that parental academic background influences student's academic achievement either positively or negatively, Challenged by the worrisome decay in the Nigerian education sector and its effects on manpower development in Nigeria, the study tried to examine some of the causes of low academic achievements among Nigerian students. Theoretically the paper derives its instrumentality from the theory of poverty, Bradshaw (2005), guided by three (3) research questions and two hypothesis. The survey study used for data collection which was administered to three hundred and sixty seven students and staff of Egbu Girls Secondary School. Mean and percentage were adopted to answer the research questions. The result indicated among others that students from literate homes/parents perform better than their peers from illiterate homes/parents in school. The study concluded that to enhance manpower development in the country, the Nigerian governments need to fund the educational sector, provide employment opportunities for its citizens in order to reduce the barrier being created by income inequality among the parents of these students.*

**keywords:** Parental socioeconomic status academic performance of students

The responsibility of training a child always lies in the hands of the parents. This is congruent with the common assertion sociologist has that education is an instrument of cultural change which is being taught from home.( Ogunshola and Adewale 2012).

Akanle (2007) noted that education is the best legacy a nation can give to her citizens especially the youth. This is so because the development of any nation or community depends largely on the quality of education of such a nation. Hence formal education remains the vehicle for social-economic development and social mobilization in any society. farooq, Joubish, Khurram, menon (2010) stated that education not only provides knowledge and skills, but also inculcates values, training of instincts, fostering right attitudes and habits.

Education principally reflects a social process and implies social framework for development. It is generally believed that the basis for any true development must commence with the development of human resources. Much is said that formal education remains the vehicle for social-economic development and social mobilization of any society (Checchi 2006 & World Bank group 2009). Unfortunately, for years this opportunity has not been distributed fairly due to lack of enough resources to allow all children to benefit from that advantage.

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Socioeconomic status (SES) is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual or family economic and social position in relation to others based on income, education and occupation (Wikipedia).

American Psychological Association stated that socioeconomic status is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. When viewed through a social class lens, privilege, power and control are emphasized. Furthermore, an examination of socioeconomic status as a gradient or continuous variable reveals inequalities in access to and distribution of resources.

Socio economic status is relevant to all realms of behavioural and social sciences. A family's socioeconomic status is based on family income, parental educational level, social contacts within the groups association and the community perception of the family). Education does not only provide knowledge and skills needed for life but also inculcates values, training of instincts, fostering the right attitude and habits. Cultural heritage and values are transmitted from one generation to the next through education.

Education principally reflects a social process and implies social framework for development, whether societal or individually. Since the learning process works on a lot of possibilities, the educational goals should be suggestive and flexible to incorporate revision in order to meet the requirement of society and of the child who lives and grows in it, farooq, Joubish, Khurram, menon (2010) (2010).

According to Jencks in. farooq, Joubish, Khurram, menon (2010) ; the family is the oldest human group and the basic one, while the particular form of family structure may and does vary from society to society. The central focus of family activities are child bearing and the unitary induction of the child into culture of a given society in terms of socialization. The family lays the psychosocial moral and spiritual foundation in the overall development of the child. The family plays a crucial role in the dissemination of formal and informal education of the child, Odoemana (2012). The family characteristics represent a number of variables like education, occupation, income, gender status, beliefs, etc. A family's socioeconomic status correlates with academics achievements of their siblings. Hill (2004) argued that socio economic status of parents do not only affect the academic performance of the students but also makes it possible for children from low financial background not to compete very well with their counterparts from high socioeconomic background under the same academic environment.

Ramey and Ramey (1994) described the relationship of family socioeconomic status of children's readiness to school. They opined that across all socioeconomic groups, parents face major challenges when it comes to providing optimal care and education for their children. For poor families, these challenges can be formidable, as parents are required to place top priority on housing, food, clothing and health care. Educational toys, games and books may appear to be luxuries and parents may not have the time resources energy or knowledge to find innovative and less expensive ways to foster young children's development.

Family of lower socioeconomic status often lacks the financial, social and educational support that characterizes families with high socioeconomic status, Lower income families have inadequate or limited access to community resources that promotes and supports children's development and school readiness.

### **Conceptual Issues**

Academic performance has been largely associated with many factors. In Nigeria agitations abound these days over the fallen standard of education. Although it is yet to be realized that education is every person's business apart from the parents whom educationist describe as one of the three legs of educational tripod, while the teachers and the students constitute the other two legs. Inyanga (2010) in his analysis noted that every society stands on a tripod. The three legs of the tripod are education, the police and the judiciary. According to him, education is the formation of the mind and the character of the human person.

Among the legs that make up the education tripod, parents undoubtedly play the largest and most enduring role in influencing the child's attitude, opinions and values. It is from the parents that the child acquired a mental set that shapes his or her perception towards the society. The parents define the attitude and beliefs of young children from pre-school to adulthood. The ability of the parents to do this differs. This is because parents also differ vastly in terms of their significance in the social order. They also differ in terms of social status in areas of prestige, economic strength, and power.

Academic performance is undoubtedly a research after the heart of educators, teachers, psychologists, policy makers, parents and guardians, and social workers. In their attempts to investigate what determines academic outcomes of learners, they have come up with more questions than answers. According to them, academic achievement and academic performance have been determined by such variables as family, schools, society, and motivation factors, Osonwa, Adejobi, and Iyamma (2013).

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Owing to this varying socioeconomic status, some parents are better placed to help members of their family move high in their academic pursuit while other parents cannot due to the present economic situation in the country. Many poor parents are forced by circumstances to saddle the young ones with chores like hawking and doing other menial jobs around the house before going to school and after school hours.

Domestic chores like these no doubt help to train the children and make them realize that they can and should contribute their own quota to the general well being of the family and that of the society, (Osonwa, Adejobi, Iyamma and Osonwa 2013). However when parents and guardians over-burden their children and house- help leaving little or no study time for the children, their school work is bound to suffer, Akanle (2007).

Danesty and Otediran (2002) stated that street hawking among school students have psychologically imposed other problems such as sex networking behavior, juvenile delinquent behavior, which takes much of the student school time that necessitated the poor academic performance and drop out syndrome noticed among students. Nevertheless, they also lamented that the maternal and paternal deprivation of the essential needs of the young students have prompted their poor performance in public examinations such as West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB).

Ipaye (1996) equally stated the effect of economic status of parents on the Nigerian child. According to him poverty syndrome imposed by economic crunch, mal-administration, corruption and emergency closure of firms has imposed hardship among parents/workers. They in turn have not been able to provide adequately for the basic fundamental, social and academic needs of the students.

Many students have abandoned school to engage in commercial sex or child labour to make ends meet to support self and others. By this they spend much time on these acts than schooling; these have terrible effect on their academic performance in their school, work and public examination.

The class size are two important structural components of schools which the economic status of parents would determine the one they could afford. Private schools tend to have both better funding and smaller class sizes than public schools. The additional funding of private schools leads to better academic performance and more access to resources such as computer which have been shown to enhance academic achievement (Crosuoe, Foluson elder 2004 & Egmon 2005).

Smaller class sizes create more inmate setting and therefore can increase teacher student bonding which has also been shown to have a positive effect on students success. Students from low economic background who do attend poorly funded schools do not perform well as a result of lack of access to educational materials like computers. Poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child usually yield poor academic performance of the child.

### **Literature Review**

Research has shown a clear link between parent's involvement and children's success in school. Further studies have also demonstrated a correlation between parents' involvement and children's educational development and subsequent intrinsic academic motivation (Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried 1994).

Poor academic performance according to Aremu and Sokau (2003) is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee and some other significant as falling below an expected standard. Poor academic performance has been observed in School subjects especially Mathematics and English Language, among secondary school students (Adesemowo 2005).

Over the years investigation over the factors that influence academic performance of students has produced several findings by researchers. Clemens and Oelka (1967) and Emeka (1984) have attributed the cause of poor academic performance to a combination of personal and institutional factors.

Personal factors relate to the individual intelligence, knowledge and ability. While institutional factors are family or parental influences, societal influences, institutional influences and school related factors, student/lecturer rapport, teacher related factors. Aremu (2000) stressed that academic failure is not only frustrating to the students and the parents, its effect are equally grave on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics.

Education at secondary school level is supposed to be the bedrock and foundation for higher education. It is an investment as well as instrument that can be used to achieve a more rapid economic social political technological scientific and cultural development in the country, (Osonwa Adejobi Iyam and Osonwa 2013). The National Policy on Education (2004) stipulated that secondary education is an instrument for national development that fosters the worth and development of the individual for further education and development, general development of the society and equally of educational opportunities to all Nigerian children irrespective of any real or marginal disabilities. In most African Countries and Western world, it is believed that economic status of a family is usually linked with the family's income, parents'

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education level, occupation and social status among the kits and kin and even at the global level.

Szewczyk-Sokolowski, Bost and Wainwright (2005) noted that children with lower economic status parents are often left at home to fend for themselves and their younger siblings, while their caregiver work long hours; compared with their well-off peers (U.S. Census Bureau 2000).

Previous studies established that other factors in spite of socio-economic status (SES) can boost academic success among students. Examined African American parents recorded that parents who maintained positive views about the value of education and who hold high academic expectations have children who often experience higher levels of academic achievement, Ford and Harris (1997).

Children and families living in poverty are at greater risk of hunger, homelessness, sickness, physical and mental disabilities, violence, teen parenthood, family stress and educational failure. These environmental factors are contributors to children that live in poverty being more likely to have learning disabilities than non-poverty students, (Casanova, Garcialinares, Torre & Carpio 2005). It is a combination of these environmental factors as well as family influence that contributes to students' academic success. If a student has not eaten for days he/she may not maintain focus in classroom. Children coming from low financial background are not usually well motivated to function effectively in the classroom.

A considerable number of researches have shown that low socioeconomic status is linked to a range of indicators and adolescent well-being including students' academic achievement (Beauvais & Jense 2003). Birch and Gussow (1979) claimed that poverty contributes towards educational failure, not because poor children are culturally disadvantaged but because their health and nutritional status is inadequate to allow for maximum mental development and realization of their educational potential. The likelihood that the poor children would end up being at risk in terms of deficiency in development is a reality that could begin even before birth. Equally culturally disadvantaged children affect their educational development as such children turn to street beggars.

Dantesy (2004) stated that complementing environmental and socio-economic factors to produce high academic achievement and performance include good teaching, counseling, good administration and good building block. Dilapidated building blocks lack mental stimulating facilities and these characterize low socio-economic societies. Thus teaching and learning should be done under organized, planned and fortified environment with learning instructional aids to stimulate students' sense of conception,

perception and concentration, in order to facilitate systematic understanding and acquisition of knowledge in them.

Theoretically, Bradshaw (2005) classified theories of poverty into five, thus;

- i. Poverty caused by individual deficiencies
- ii. Poverty caused by cultural belief system that support sub-cultures of poverty
- iii. Poverty caused by economic, political and social distortions or discrimination
- iv. Poverty caused by geographical disparities
- v. Poverty caused by cumulative and cyclical interdependences

Based on the third classification of poverty caused by economic, political and social distortions or discrimination which in turn affect the socioeconomic status in terms academic performance of secondary school students in Owerri North L. G. A. of Imo State this can be mirrored. The theory of Bradshaw (2005) stated that poverty is a state of lack of basic necessities, such as food, shelter, medical care and safety, as generally though necessary based on shared values of human dignity. Poverty is equally the state or condition of having little or no money, goods or means of support. According to the progressive theory, individual is not looked at as a source of poverty but to the economic, political and social system which causes people to have limited opportunities and resources with which to achieve income and well-being.

John Dewey's theories of education (1960) noted that children are not usually included among the oppressed yet they necessarily compose one of the weakest, most dependent and defenseless sections of the population. According to him, each generation of children is not only helped but hindered and hurt by those who exercise direct control over them. Just as the society may deny satisfaction to the physical, educational and cultural needs of the young, so their parents and guardian may slight or ignore their rights. Growing children are normally unaware of the remote social causes of their misfortunes and miseries.

Bradshaw (2005) therefore observed that much of the literature on poverty now suggests that the economic system is structured in such a way that the poor people fall behind regardless of how competent they may be. This is concord by Jencks (1996) who noted that the minimum wages do not allow single parents or their families to be economically self sufficient. The problem of the working poor is increasingly seen as a wage problem linked to structural barriers preventing poor families from getting better jobs, complicated by limited numbers of jobs and lack of growth in sectors supporting lower skilled jobs (Tobin, 2004). Wage workers expectations from jobs have continue to fall, fringe benefits including health care and promotions have also become scarce for low skilled workers. Chubb and Moe (1990) have observed that elimination of structural barriers to better jobs through education and training have been the focus of extensive manpower training and other programs, generating substantial numbers of

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successes. The political system does not afford the interest of the poor to be protected, and participation is very low for this class. Poor people are less involved in political discussions, their interests are more vulnerable in the political process and they are excluded at many levels

### **Methodology**

The study employed descriptive research design. The population of study consist of all the students, tutorial and non-tutorial staff of Egbu Girls Secondary School in Owerri North Local Government Area of Imo State. Data obtained from the school revealed that there are 320 students, 36 tutorial and 11 non-tutorial staff equals to 47 in Egbu Girls Secondary School.

The sample for the study composed 211 students, 36 tutorial staff and 11 non-tutorial staff. Total respondent is 258. All the tutorial and non-tutorial staff of Egbu Girls Secondary School were included in the study.

### **Instrument for Data Collection**

A structured questionnaire titled the Impact of Parental Socioeconomic Status on the Academic Performance of the Nigerian Student was used for data collection. The questionnaire consists of two parts. Part A sought information on the respondent's biodata such as local government of origin, size of family, type of family, parents' occupation, education level etc. Part B consists of fifteen (15) items grouped into three sections. Each group is made up of five statements designed to answer one research. The responses to the questionnaire items were designed on a modified five point Likert Scale of Measurement, thus:

- |                      |      |   |
|----------------------|------|---|
| a. Strongly Agree    | (SA) | 5 |
| b. Agree             | (A)  | 4 |
| c. Undecided         | (UD) | 3 |
| d. Disagree          | (D)  | 2 |
| e. Strongly Disagree | (SD) | 1 |

The average of these points is 3 ( $5+4+3+2+1 = 15/5 = 3$ ). Therefore in analyzing the responses, items with mean 3 should be taken to indicate agreement with the statement while an item with mean below 3 is taken to indicate disagreement with the statement.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

The test-retest reliability was used to establish the level of consistency of the instrument by using a sample size of 30 respondents on which the instrument was administered and after two weeks the instrument was re-administered. Scores of the first and second administration were collated using Pearson Product

Moment Correlation Coefficient Formula. The result yielded a high correlation coefficient of 0.68. This coefficient indicates that the instrument is reliable.

### Validation of Instrument

**Method of Data Collection** The researcher distributed and retrieved all the copies of the questionnaire and in some cases, with the help of research assistant.

**Method of Data Analysis:** Mean ratings were used in answering the research questions. The null hypotheses were tested using regression statistical techniques at  $P < 0.05$ , significance level.

**Presentation and Analysis of Data Question 1:** Is there any positive relationship between parental socio-economic status and child's school accessibility/enrolment.

**Table 1: Mean Rating Depicting the Relationship between Parental Socio-economic Status and the Child's School Accessibility/Enrolment**

S/N	Attitude Statement	$\bar{X}$ SDS	$\bar{X}$ NTS	$\bar{X}$ TS
a	Parents with higher socio-economic status enroll their children early in school	3.32	3.52	3.74
b	Parents with higher socio-economic status employ extra-lesson teacher to their children	3.57	3.89	3.86
c	Parents with higher socio-economic status check their children's books after school hours.	3.69	2.46	3.44
d	Children of parents occupying higher socio-economic status stand better chance to attend prestigious schools	4.00	3.97	3.98
e	Parents with higher social economic status ensure that their children go to school early	3.00	3.47	3.55

**Source:** Authors field Survey 2013

**Key:** SDS = Students, NTS = Non-tutorial Staff, and TS = Tutorial staff.

Data in table1 shows that children of parents occupying higher socioeconomic status stand better chance of both gaining access to school and achieving in education. It is only in the issue of checking their children's books after school hours that non-tutorial staff (NTS) disagreed with the statement. Other respondents rated above 3.00 except of ensuring that children go to school early where students accorded 3.00 mean rating.

**Research Question 2**

Is there any positive relationship between parental encouragement and the child's educational aspirations?

**Table 2: Mean Rating for the Assertion that Children from Higher Socioeconomic Class are More Likely to be Encouraged and Motivated**

S/N	Attitude Statement	$\bar{X}$ SDS	$\bar{X}$ NTS	$\bar{X}$ TS
A	Well-to-do parents commend child's hardworking performance in school	3.48	3.02	3.51
B	Children from higher socio-economic class enjoy adequate teaching and learning facilities	3.94	3.71	3.92
C	children from higher socio-economic class enjoy good teaching and learning environment	3.95	3.69	3.71
D	Children from higher socio-economic class achieve high educational performance leading to opportunity for university or higher education	3.21	3.43	3.68
E	Parents with higher socio-economic status ensure that educational need of the children is taken care of by qualified teaching staff	3.64	3.94	4.00

**Source:** Authors field Survey. 2013.

**Key:** SIDS = Students, NTS = Non-tutorial Staff, and TS = Tutorial staff.

Data in table 2 indicates that all the items obtained mean rating above 3.00 in all the columns. This implies that all the listed items are generally accepted by all categories of respondents that children from higher socio-economic class are more likely to be encouraged and motivated.

**Research Question 3**

Is there any association, between parents' negative attitude to schooling and children poor socio-economic conditions?

**Table 3: Mean Rating as Regards to Parents Negative Attitude to Schooling as a Result of Poor Condition Socio-Economic Conditions?**

S/N	Attitude Statement	$\bar{X}$ SDS	$\bar{X}$ NTS	$\bar{X}$ TS
a	Inability of parents to ensure that their children go to school early is as a result of low socio-economic status	3.4	3.2	3.00
b	Parent's or inability to employ extra-lesson teachers for the children is as a result of low socio-economic status	4.00	3.95	3.45
c	Inability of parents to ensure that their children enjoy adequate teaching and learning facilities is as a result of low socio-economic status	3.28	3.66	3.55
d	Children low sense of commitment to academic work is as a result of parent's poor socio-economic condition	3.00	2.59	2.57
e	Parent's poor socio-economic condition deter them from praising children's academic hardworking performance	2.51	2.97	2.78

**Source:** 2011 Field Survey.

**Key:** SDS = Students, NTS = Non-tutorial Staff, and TS = Tutorial staff.

In table 3, the notion that parents' poor socio-economic condition deter them from praising their children academic hardworking performance was vehemently disagreed by all the respondents as none of the mean rating scored the average of 3.00 such mixed feeling was observed in the assertion `children low sense of commitment to academic work is as a result of parents poor socioeconomic status:

### **Test of Hypothesis I**

Two operational hypotheses early formulated would be tested using Regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistical techniques.

**Hypothesis 1  $H_0$ :** There is no significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and child's school accessibility/enrolment.

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**H<sub>A</sub>:** There is significant relationship between parental socioeconomic status and child's school accessibility/enrolment Table 1: Test of significance between parental socio-economic status and child's school accessibility/enrolment.

<b>N</b>	<b>Dt</b>	<b>r-cal</b>	<b>r-cit</b>	<b>Zr</b>	<b>Decision</b>
10	8	2.306	1.94	2.305	S

P>0.05

To establish the significance of the relationship, Pearson r(2.306) was transformed to Zr(2.308) using a table of Z transformation by Edwards (1965). Table 1 show that the value of Zr is more than the critical r and so the relationship between parental socio-economic status and child's school accessibility/enrolment is significant.

**Test of Hypothesis II**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** There is no significant difference between academic performance of students from high socio-economic household and than that of their counterpart from low socioeconomic household group.

**H<sub>A</sub>:** There is significant difference between academic performance of students from high socio-economic household and that of their counterpart from low socioeconomic household groups.

**Table 2: Test of Significance Difference between Academic Performance of Students from High Socio-Economic Household and That of His Counterpart from Low Socioeconomic Household Groups**

<b>Source of Variance</b>	<b>SS</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>Ms</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>P</b>
Between groups	153.08	2	76.54	9.19	3.32
Within groups	249.89	30	8.33		
<b>Total</b>	<b>402.79</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12.59</b>		

Guided by the decision rule to reject null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>), if F-calculated is greater than the F-critical value or otherwise do not reject.

**Conclusion**

Considering the fact that F-calculated is greater than the F-critical value, the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) is rejected. It can therefore be concluded that there is significant difference between academic performance of students from high socio-economic household and that of his counterpart from low socioeconomic household groups.

### **Discussion of Findings**

According to answers to research question one majority of the respondents concurred that there is relationship between parental socio-economic status and child's school accessibility/enrolment. This is in line with the outcome of statistical data in hypothesis one. The finding upholds Okunamiri, Iwot and Okunamiri (2010) finding, that students from literate parental educational background, upper socio-economic status, monogamous homes and democratic disciplinary style perform better in mathematics than their counterparts from illiterate parental educational background, middle/lower socio-economic status, polygamous family type and autocratic disciplinary style.

In research question two, majority of the respondents agreed that there is a relationship between parental encouragement and the child's educational aspirations. This assertion is in line with NTI (2005) which opined "children from higher socio-economic class are more likely to be encouraged and motivated". Such children are also more likely to attend the most prestigious schools because their parents have the wherewithal to bear the costs of qualitative private education. This result offers credence to the outcome of data from hypothesis two. Thus, there is significant difference between academic performance of students from high socio-economic household and that of his counterpart from low socio-economic households (SHE) groups. In responses to research question three, the respondents were of the opinion that there is association between parents' negative attitude to schooling and poor socio-economic condition. This supports Nwachukwu (2010) view that negative attitude of some parents to their children's schooling is majorly as a result of poor living condition.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that the socioeconomic inclination of the parents is a significant variable that affects the educational achievement of their child. This implies that the higher the socio-economic status of the parents the higher his educational life chances.

### **Recommendation**

The findings of this study inform the following recommendations

1. Parents are advised to put into consideration their financial background when deciding.
2. the size of their family since evidence showed that additional children lower a family's socioeconomic status thereby affecting the intellectual and mental development of the child
3. The teachers should arm themselves with the knowledge of their students' socio-economic background with a view to offering remedial help as much as

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they can to those from low socio-economic background so as to boost their academic performance.

4. Government and its agencies at sundry level should encourage mass literacy campaign as well enhance functional literacy programmes enlightenment packages that would improve the perception of and attitude to formal education of illiterate parents.
5. The government should introduce free education to encourage every child to go to school irrespective of his/her parents' socio-economic background.
6. Parents should be sensitized on the need to make education of their children and wards a priority in the face of the present economic predicament by adequately providing for their school materials
7. It is recommended that government should increase allocation of funds to provide for more amenities to facilitate learning in the schools and economic empowerment programmes should be embarked on to enhance parents income
8. Students academic performance is predicted by a chain of socio-economic factors resident in parents, family network, and government inconsistent nature of implementation of its policies and funding of schools

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