

# Socio-Economic Background and Academic Performance of Secondary School Government Students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State

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**Abstract-** The study was designed to investigate the relationship between parent socio-economic background and the academic performance of secondary school government students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State. To achieve the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were formulated. Ex-post facto research design was adopted and a sample of two hundred (200) students was selected for the study. The selection was done through stratified random sampling technique. A twenty (20) item closed ended likert scale instrument “Parents’ Socioeconomic Background Questionnaire (PSBQ)” was used for data collection. All hypotheses were subjected to testing at .05 level of significance, with relative degree of freedom, using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result of the analysis revealed that, parents’ income and educational status influence academic performance of secondary school government students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the government should empower parents by providing enabling environment and also promote informal education program to help educate parents.

**Index terms-** Academic performance, Government, Parents, Socio-economic background

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Academic performance of students especially at the secondary school level is not only a pointer to the effectiveness or otherwise of schools but a major determinant of the future of the youths in particular and the nation in general (Aremu and Osonwa, as cited in Ewumi, 2012). Adeyemo (2001) also opined that the major goal of the school is to work towards attainment of academic excellence by students. According to him, the school may have other peripheral objectives but excellent academic

performance of the children is often the expectation of all parents. Unfortunately, the quality of secondary education in Nigeria is threatened because students are witnessing unprecedented mass failure in both internal and external examinations respectively.

According to Ajila and Olutola (2002), in the May/June 2006 WAEC results, only 25% of the total number of students that sat for the examination had five credits and above indicating that 75% of the total number of the candidates failed. A general review of the situation reveals that there is a growing gap and the question is, who is to be blamed for this poor academic performance? Academic adjustment is relevant for the students’ success in school as learning and positive behaviour is enhanced when students are adjusted academically. These adjusted students usually value what they are learning, are positively involved in classroom activities and receive good grades. Unfortunately, many students in secondary school experience problem in adjusting academically which manifest itself in the form of poor performance and behaviour problems such as truancy, aggressiveness, cheating in examination and even dropping out of the school.

Families in general and parents in particular, have often been the most important support system available to the child. The strongest factor in modelling a child’s personality or behaviour is his relationship with his parents. Coleman, (1997) proposed that family influence can be separated into components such as economic, human and social capital. Hence, a family’s socio-economic status correlates with academic achievements of their children at secondary level. Ibalaoro (2012) indicated that socio-economic status of students is based on family income, parental educational level and parental occupation.

Furthermore, Ramsey and Ramsey (1994) describing the relationship of family socio-economic status to children's readiness for school opined that across all socio-economic groups, parents face major challenges when it comes to providing optimal care and education for their children. Campbell and Wu (as cited in Kainuwa and Yusuf, 2013) stated that the home environment and family processes provides a network of physical, social and intellectual forces and factors which affects the students' learning. According to them, the family's level of encouragement, expectations and education activities in the home are related to socio-economic status.

It is against this background that this study is undertaken to investigate the relationships among parents' educational level, income, family size and academic performance among senior secondary school government students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River state.

## 2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study aimed at investigating the influence of socioeconomic status of the family on the academic performance of government students in secondary school. The study constitutes source of serious concern as well as discomfort to parents, school managers, policy makers, government bodies and the society at large responsible for the education of government students in secondary school.

It is observed that a family's socioeconomic status is based on the family income, family size, parents' education level, parent attitude and parent occupation etc, but this study focuses on family income and educational status. Families with high socioeconomic status often have more success in preparing their young children for school because the practically have access to a wide range of resources to promote and support young children's development. They are able to provide their children with high quality child care, books and toys to encourage children in various activities at home. Also, they have easy access to information regarding their children's health as well as social, emotional and cognitive development. In addition, families with high socioeconomic status often seek out information to help them better prepare the young children for school. According to Udida, Ukwayi and Ogodo (2012), the home has influence on the child psychological, emotional,

social and economic state. In addition, the family background and context of a child can affect his/ her reaction to life situation and level of academic performance. Hence, whatever affects the developmental environment of a child would possibly affect his/her education or disposition to it. Parental socio-economic status is one of such variables.

Beck (2011) examined students and their families' income in china. He studied 407 students in the early years. The study measured students' reading skills and observed families in their home. Moreover, it was a well-organized study with chosen children and the process of measuring them and their families. The results with numbers were very clear and show how the families' income affected their children learning (Zlang, 2012).

The issue was examined by Brown (2010) in a study of activities of literate parents and influences on the educational achievement of students. He observed that many literate parents who are poor decide to teach their children at home after school to get syllabuses from where they plan lessons for their children's schools at home after schools. Some go to the extent of going into their children's schools to get the syllabus from where they plan lesson for their children. These parents spend time to teach and not only that, also tell their children of their experience in school how they went through trying periods, problems to reach the height they have reached. Children from such homes learn a lot about the values of education which encourages them to learn better in order to contribute their quota to the nation's economy in the way of education. Black (2004) sees children from rich-literate parents as performing better than those from rich but illiterate homes. He maintains that because the families are knowledgeable based on the value of education they give, all incentives, text fees, uniform, extra lessons, encourage homework, provide conducive learning atmosphere at home and spare time to supervise their children's education and learning efforts.

Educational qualification of parents is influential in a number of ways, most obviously in material terms, but also terms of what is understood to be 'natural' form of participation (Corard and Rees, 2002).

It is against this backdrop that this study is engendered to examine the relationship between parents' income as well as educational status and academic performance of secondary school

government students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State.

### 3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between parent socio-economic background and the academic performance of secondary school government students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Specifically, this research is aimed at:

1. Ascertaining how Parents' income level relates to the academic performance of secondary school government students.
2. Investigating the relationship between parents' educational level and academic performance of government students in secondary school.

### 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised:

1. To what extent does parents' income affect the academic performance of senior secondary school government students?
2. To what extent does educational level of parents affect the academic performance of senior secondary school government students?

### 5. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between parents' income level and academic performance of government students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area.
2. There is no significant relationship between educational level of parents and the academic performance of senior secondary school government students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area.

### 6. METHOD

This research is based on an ex-post facto design in which there was no experimental manipulation of variables involved. The population for the study comprised of two thousand one hundred and eighteen (2118) senior secondary school students. The sampling technique adopted was the stratified

random sampling technique. The sample used for this study was two hundred (200) students drawn from ten selected secondary schools in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area.

The instrument used for data collection was the Parents Socio-economic Background Questionnaire (PSEBQ), which was designed to focus on the parental income and educational level of senior secondary school government students in the area.

The reliability of the instrument was established through test-retest reliability estimate which yielded co-efficient value of 0.71 making the instrument suitable for the use in this study.

Data obtained was statistically analysed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis at .05 level of significance.

#### Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between parents' income level and academic performance of government students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area.

The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1:

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis to ascertain the relationship between parents' income level and students' academic performance N=200

Variables		$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$
$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	r.cal
Parents' income level		6512	84156
332997	0.99		
Academic performance		25521	1300514

Significant at .05; df= 198, critical r=0.139

Data on Table 1 revealed a calculated r- value of 0.99, which was greater than the tabulated r- value of 0.139 at .05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom. Since the calculated- value was greater than the table value, the null hypotheses of no significant relationship between parents' income level and students' academic performance was rejected. The implication of this result is that the level of income of parents affects the academic performance of their children.

Hypotheses 2

There is no significant relationship between parents' educational status and students' academic performance.

To test the hypotheses, Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistical analysis was employed and the result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis to compare the relationship between parents' educational status and students' academic performance N=200

Variables	$\Sigma X$	$\Sigma X^2$
$\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$
		r. cal
Parents' educational status	6212	72355
297286	0.77	
Academic performance	25521	1300514

Significant at .05,df = 198, critical r=0.139

Data on Table 2 revealed a calculated r- value of 0.77, which is greater than the tabulated r- value of 0.139 at .05 level of significance and 198 degree of freedom. Since the calculated r- value was greater than the table value, the null hypotheses of no significant relationship between the parents' educational status and the students' academic performance was rejected. The implication of this result is that the level of education attained by parents of a student, have significant effects on the academic performance of the students.

7. DISCUSSION

Parents' income and students' academic performance  
From the result of the study, it was observed that parents' income level significantly influence the academic performance of their children. It was observed that parents with high financial status provide better opportunities and condition for their children than parents with low financial status. While rich parents are able to support their children's educational pursuit with textbooks, computers and other essential materials for study and learning, poor parents can hardly afford such materials and this

situation has negative effects on their children's academic performance.

The result of this study was in line with Okon (2006), Beck (2011) who in their various studies observed the effects of parents' income on the academic performance of their children. They observed lack of textbooks, computers, lateness to school, late payment of school fees etc. are some of the setback associated with children from poor family. The setbacks impede the performance of these students. Jensen (2013) also observed the same thing in his study in USA and asserted that students from rich homes have better academic performance and so have greater chances of getting into any college or university than their colleagues from poor homes. Parents' educational status and students' academic performance

After analysing the data collected for the sub-variables, it was observed that parents' education level have significant impact on the academic performance of their children. It was observed that most children from educated family perform better than their colleagues whose parents have low level of education. This is as a result of educated parents putting their children through their academic work. This result agrees with the result of Brown (2011) who observed that many literate parents who are poor decide to teach their children at home after school. These parents spend time to teach and tell their children of their experience in school. Therefore, such children well and even outshine their colleagues from illiterate parents. Beck (2011), also support the result of this study when in his study he noticed that children from educated parents perform better.

8. CONCLUSION

This research sets out with the aim of investigating the influence of socioeconomic background on academic performance of secondary school government students in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State. From the results obtained from the analysis of data collected, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Parents' income level has a significant effect on the academic performance of their children. Rich parents tend to produce children with better academic performance than poor parents. This is

because the rich parents provide an enabling environment for their children than poor parents.

2. Educational level of parents has a significant impact on the academic performance of their children. Most children from parents with high educational status perform better than children whose parents have low level of education.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The government at all level, corporate organizations and individuals should provide enabling environment aimed at improving the socioeconomic status of parents and the entire society.
2. The ministry of education at federal and state government levels should design an education curriculum to cater for the need of uneducated people at all levels.

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