# PREDICTORS OF FAMILY BACKGROUND AND HOME ENVIRONMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KWARA CENTRAL, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

This study was carried out to investigate the family background and home environment on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central Nigeria. The objectives of the study were to assess the influence of parental educational background and home environment on academic performance of secondary school students. Descriptive survey research design was employed in the study. Three hundred participants were randomly selected and participated in this study. Two research instruments were used in this study: parental educational background (0.75) home environment (0.72) scales. Participants' academic performance was measured using a teacher made test in English language and Mathematics, t-test was used to ascertain the significant differences between the dependent and independent variables at the significant level of 0.05 with the use of SPSS. The findings revealed that parental education background does not significantly influence students' academic performance with the p-value of .085>0.05. Also, home environment has a significant positive influence on academic performance of secondary school students with the p-value of .00<0.05. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that schools should actively promote parental participation by organizing parent-teacher conferences, encouraging volunteering within the school community, and facilitating support at home. Also, home environment should be improved to enhance improvement in the academic performance of students.

**Keywords:** Family background, home environment, academic performance

## Introduction

The family and home background serves as the primary and most influential socializing force, playing a pivotal role in a child's upbringing (James, 2018). It's worth noting that several accomplished, high-achieving, and well-adjusted students emerge from families characterized by strong, enduring relationships. Frank (2017) and Ibrahim, et al (2021) explains that the family plays a defining role in shaping a child's outlook in the society, fostering intellectual growth, and supporting their aspirations and accomplishments. Therefore, a child's family background significantly influences their academic performance (Egwuche, 2019). When students attend schools with the aim to attain academic excellence, their parents become deeply invested in their academic success, which is viewed in a positive light. However, academic performance is intrinsically linked to family background, which can be dissected into factors like parental marital status, education level, income level, parents' socioeconomic status, and the student's birth order. The last two elements define a student's home environment, which, in turn, shapes their academic performance. These factors are relative, causing variations in academic achievements between social classes (Hewison & Pizard, 2018).

Undeniably, the family wields a considerable influence over young people's mobility. Schools, however, have limited impact on reducing parental influence when necessary. It is generally accepted that a child's academic performance is partially contingent on their parents' educational background. A close association exists between the home environment and students' academic performance. Some factors,

such as personal and intellectual skills, specifically correlate with parental educational backgrounds and their children's academic performance (Gonback, 2015).

Encouraging students to reach their educational objectives is a significant concern of parents. Children's first education begins from home, as their thoughts, attitudes, and overall conducts are refined during their formative years. Differences in student achievement may be directly related to family differences and its effects (James, 2018). Researchers have shown that, family is classified into monogamy and polygamy and both had different effects on a child's academic progress or achievement (James, 2018). Undoubtedly, the family issues exert substantial impact on a child's development and academic achievements.

As emphasized by Evans, cited in Egwuche (2019), family size largely determines the amount of time and physical attention each child receives from their parents. Having too many children in a family can lead to a dilution of individual attention, potentially affecting a child's cognitive development. Research from various studies indicates that measures of intelligence are positively correlated with family size, with this relationship transcending social class (Egwuche, 2019). During socialization, the family plays an important role, since a child is fully dependent on others, particularly friends and relatives, to live. The form of the family kids comes from monogamy (nuclear), polygamous, divorced parents, remarried parents, single parents, or stepparents typically influence the learning result of an infant (Ibrahim, et al 2021). Morrison (1975) also suggests that various distinctive family characteristics related to school experiences can impact a child's academic success. Students who come from families with access to books, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, and other reading materials are more likely to achieve superior academic results compared to their peers who lack exposure to such enriching literatures (Kathleen, 2010). Oladele (1981) firmly supports this perspective, stating that the family should create an intellectually stimulating environment that allows the child to demonstrate his or her interests and abilities.

Moreover, within the family environment, heredity is another factor influencing a child's academic performance. The genes inherited from one's parents play a substantial role in shaping a child's future (Kathleen, 2010). In fact, each student's emotional intelligence skills are essential to his/her academic success and test results (Low & Nelson, 2014; Moore, 2018). In fact, the home environment shapes a child's initial vision of learning. Parents' beliefs, expectations, and attitudes about their children's learning and achievement have an early and profound impact on students' perceptions of the place of education in their lives (Low & Nelson, 2014). Presently, some individuals believe that high income families live in the developed areas of the cities, like the Government Reservation Areas (GRA) where they have all necessary facilities essential services, and enough play grounds for sports games, play and recreation (Moore, 2018). These children are opportune to learn game like tennis, golf and swimming which enhances their psycho-motor skills effectively.

Family background holds sway over students' academic performance, educational outcomes, and school achievements, with socioeconomic status serving as a fundamental driver of both teacher and student engagement and functioning (Low & Nelson, 2014). According to Johnson (2016), parental poverty casts an extensive influence on their children's educational pursuits, as it restricts their capacity to provide financial resources for their children's schooling, as well as decent housing and access to essential medical and social services. Mba (1991) acknowledged that the impoverished circumstances of parents in rural areas hinder children, including those with disabilities, from pursuing learning and education. The research by Musgrave and Egwuche (2018) suggested that a larger number of children in a family correlated with lower measures of intelligence in subsequent children.

Fraser (2018) demonstrates a significant connection between socioeconomic class and academic

performance, labeling socioeconomic class as a primary contributor to educational inequality. In many Western nations, various public and private schools cater for different social strata. Fraser (2018) further elucidates that unequal educational opportunities arise when there is fierce competition for admission and stringent educational requirements, where students from more affluent socioeconomic backgrounds are generally expected to exhibit better academic performance (Egwuche, 2019). Dubey (2019) posits that socioeconomic status serves as the most critical family-related predictor of educational accomplishment. He concludes that its relationship with academic success remains consistent, regardless of whether one measures it based on their parents' occupation, educational achievements, or a combination of both factors (Ostendorf, Lyons & Frazier, 2018).

Family stability is also deemed to have significant implications for parenting. Instances like divorce and single parenthood can have an adverse impact on a child's educational performance (Ostendorf et al., 2018). Thus, it becomes evident that the quality of a student's parents and the home environment are determinants of the extent to which the child's functional, survival, and learning needs are met. Inadequate parental care, coupled with the inability to fulfill children's economic and social requirements, frequently results in diminished student outcomes. As per the US Department of Education (2000), poverty emerges as a pivotal element in elucidating disparities in student accomplishments and educational attainments across rural, suburban, and urban school districts (Fraser, 2018; Ostendorf et al., 2018; Egwuche, 2019).

Academic performance refers to the level at which educational objectives are achieved by those within the school system (Owan, 2017). This implies that academic performance of students measures the extent to which students' are achieving desired educational goals and objectives. In the opinion of Erum and Zahoor (2016), students' academic performance and achievement rates have been an area of concern, and investigation of factors relating to academic performance of secondary school students has been a topic of much interest to scholars. This scenario may arise because since schools were established for the students, their successes can be used to judge the effectiveness of school system (Owan, 2017). Ugunlade (2017) distinguishes between academic performances of secondary school students from different family backgrounds. Students from literate families typically achieve better academic results than their counterparts from illiterate families. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that a child's intelligence often mirrors that of their parents, who shape their children's attitudes. Parents who undervalue education and social advancement tend to raise children with lower levels of education. The parents' attitudes and desire for success significantly affect their children's achievements and motivation to succeed (Zajone, 2018; Altus, 2018). To this effect, numerous research work have been conducted on academic performance in Kwara central but not much have been done on family background and students academic performance, this therefore prompt this current study to investigate the predictors of family background on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central.

## Statement of the Problem

Poor academic performance has remained a recurring irritant in Nigeria's educational system, in spite of conscious efforts of governments at all levels to improve on the quality and content of education in the country (Egunsola, 2014). Arising out of the need for students to perform academically in the school, parents continue to have anxiety over the academic performance of their children. This concern arises out of the fact that children no longer perform well academically as well as their counterpart of past years. Some of the parents do not care or do not want to check if any extraneous factors are responsible for the poor academic performance of their children. If the anxiety of the parents is genuine, then one is bound to ask if there are any factors which influence the academic performance of children in school.

Despite the fact that there are many factors which may affect the academic performance of learners, attention has been drawn mainly to teacher/related, school/related, societal/related and

government/related factors  (Fajar, et al 2019). In some instances we record cases of parents coming to the school to bully teachers and intimidate the school authorities for causing the failure of their children. This is because they do not take their time to consider the home-related and family-related factors that could affect the academic performance of students. This study therefore addresses the gap observed in this regard by investigating the predictors of family background on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central

## Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the predictors of family background on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central. Specifically, the study tends to:
Assess the influence of parental educational background on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central.
Find out the influence of home environment on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central.

## Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant:
H01: There is no significant influence of Parental educational background on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central.
H02: There is no significant influence of Home environment on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central.

## Methodology

This study employed descriptive survey research design.  According to Creswell (2014), a descriptive survey research design involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis and answer the research questions raised in the study.  It also describes the characteristics of a studied phenomenon. This type of research attempts to report things as they are. It does not answer questions about how when and why a feature occurs, but it is interested in 'what' question. The population of the study comprised of all the public secondary schools in the five local government areas which constitute Kwara Central. These local governments include: Ilorin East, Ilorin West, Ilorin South, Asa and Moro LGA. Simple random sampling technique was use to select 300 students from 15 secondary schools that were randomly selected in Kwara Central.

Two research instruments were used for data collection: These include: parental educational background. This instrument is a self developed questionnaire and constructed using the following five variables: parental support, parental assistance with school activities, parents' knowledge on school activities, parental encouragement on school activities and discipline were taking into consideration when developing this scale. The scale has 15 items and these items were given scores of 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 which range from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree and strongly disagree respectively. The reliability coefficient of the sum of the scale is 0.78. A test retest was carried out using pilot tested method on 10 students who were not part of the original participants of this study and has Cronbach Alpha of 0.75. Home environment Scale (0.72). This is also a researcher developed instrument  with the following variables: frequent parental scolding, financial constraint, too much domestic tasks, satisfaction with parents living together, parents cooperation, exposure to drinking and smoking, favorable residence and lack of discipline. The determination of Home environment is based on nine (20) items. It made up of five point's scale (1) strongly disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) undecided, (4) strongly agree and (5) agree. It has reliability coefficient of 0.72 Participants' academic performance was measured using a teacher made test in English language and Mathematics using an approved textbook by Nigeria Educational Research and Development (NERDC).

The researcher with other research assistant physically went round all the selected schools to administer the questionnaire to the participants. It took two weeks to complete the exercise owing to the fact that the school are in different location. The completed questionnaires were returned immediately to avoid alteration. The participants were also motivated by the researcher to enable them respond to the questionnaire on time. The hypotheses were tested using the independent T-test at 0.05 alpha level of significance.

## Results

**H01:** There is no significant influence of Parental educational background on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central.

**Table 1:** t-test for the influence of parental educational bacground on academic performance of secondary school students

| Variable | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | t-test value | P. value Significant (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parental education | 300 | 10.19 | 1.87 | 10.0 | 1.73 | .085 |

$\propto$ = .05,        p < .05

The table 1 indicates the result of the implication of parental education on the academic performance of secondary school students. The result points out a mean of 10.19, a test mean of 10.0 and a calculated t of 1.73.  Testing of an alpha level of .05, the p-value is greater than the alpha level with .085>.05.  So, the null hypothesis which states that parental education does not have a significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central is accepted.  Consequently, parental education does not significantly influence students' academic performance.

**H02:** There is no significant influence of Home environment on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central.

**Table 2. : t-test for the influence of home environment on academic performance of secondary school students**

| Variable | N | Mean | Standard Deviation | Mean | t-test value | P. value Significant (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Home environment | 300 | 12.73 | 1.80 | 10.0 | 29.30 | .000 |

$\propto$ = .05, p < .05

The table 2 indicates the result of the implication of home environment on the academic performance of secondary school students.. The results showed that all the variables under investigation are significant. It also shows a mean of 12.73, a test mean of 10.0, and a calculated t of 29.30.  Testing at an alpha level of .05 the p value is less than the alpha level with .00<.05.  So, the null hypothesis which states that home environment does not have a significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara central is rejected.  Consequently, home environment has a significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students in the studied area.

## Discussion of findings

The first research hypothesis which stated that there is no significant influence between Parental education and academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central. Based on the result on the hypothesis one, it revealed that the null hypothesis is accepted. The result shows that parental education does not have a significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara central. This study upholds the findings of James (2018) that most students who are successful

and well adjusted do not necessarily come from families that are seriously educated. Rather, the study is in line with the study of Douglas (2016) as in the family sets pattern for the child's attitude towards people and society, aids intellectual growth in the child and supports his aspirations and achievement so it may not be surprising to see negative responses on this section. Also, the findings reject the opinion that parental education is a factor enhancing the academic performance of students which means that it is possible for students without good parental educational background to excel in their studies as posited by Williams et al. (2020). Since it has been acclaimed that most students who are successful, great achievers and well adjusted do not necessarily come from families that are educated, it has been discovered in practical terms that parental education and students academic performance do not tally (Shittu, 2014).

The second research hypothesis stated that influence of Home environment on academic performance of secondary school students in Kwara Central. The null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, home environment has a significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students in the studied area. The outcome of this study is consistent with the findings of Falilat (2018), who investigated the impact of the home environment on the academic performance of high school students in Ilorin. The study agrees that there is no substantial difference in the influence of the home environment on the academic performance of secondary school students based on gender and teacher qualifications.

## Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to investigate the predictors of family background and home environment on secondary school students' academic performance in Kwara central. The following conclusions were made based on the findings:

Against the opinions of some previous studies, it was concluded that parental educational background does not have significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students. Thus, a conclusion is drawn that family background's relationship with academic performance of secondary school students in term of parental education is negative in Kwara central.

In support of the opinions of previous studies, it was concluded that home environment such as neighbourhood, environmental culture, religion and peer pressure background has a significant influence on academic performance of secondary school students. Thus, a conclusion is drawn that family background's relationship with academic performance of secondary school students in term of home environment is positive in Kwara central.

## Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions the following recommendations were important for implementation in order to improve secondary school students' academic performance. The study recommends that:

Parental involvement is a key factor in a student's academic success. Schools should actively promote parental participation by organizing parent-teacher conferences, encouraging volunteering within the school community, and facilitating support at home.

Family environment should be improved to enhance improvement in the academic performance of students. Since the finding showed that there is a relationship between home environment and students' academic performance, therefore, the question of a good home environment should be given all due consideration by parents.

Both parents and teachers should monitor the nature of friends secondary school students associate with. Since peer pressure is one of the factors of home environment that influence students' academic performance, all guardians should ensure that the students are monitored on this.

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