

THE INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AND GENDER ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENT'S IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of parental Socio-economic Status and Gender on the Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School students in Kano state. Three research objectives with one corresponding research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. An ex-post facto research design was employed for the study. The study adopted expo-facto design. The population of the study consist of all SSIII students who have taken 2020/2021 session qualifying examination in Kano Municipal education zone out of which a sample of 346 students were drawn as sample. Socioeconomic status questionnaire (SESQ) is used as data collection instruments. The instruments were validated and found to have reliability index of 0.89. Simple percentage and independent sample t-test were used in analyzing the data. Computed result revealed that majority of the students belongs to the category of high level of parental socioeconomic status. The study equally revealed that students' academic achievement significantly differs on the account of parental socioeconomic status ($t= 4.576, p=.000, p < .05$) among Senior Secondary School students in Kano state and gender ($t= -2.270, p= .024, p < .05$). In line with the findings the study recommended that Government should find ways of developing and increasing socio-economic of the peoples so that no students will be left behind due to low level of socio-economic status of their parents. Also Parents should continue to support and guide their children to maximize their performances in school system for them to excel in their academic performance since parental supports maximize academic performance of students and minimized student's failure level. Parents should try to invest the little they possess on educational development of their children so as to equalize and minimize the disparity in academic performance of the (girls and boys) children. School counselors, should try to guide male students on how to bridge the existing gap in academic achievement between them and their counterpart.

KEYWORDS: Academic Achievement, Gender, Parent, Socio Economic Status, Secondary School Student's

I. INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic status according to American Psychology Association 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, while education is the process of developing or training an individual to cope with the challenges of living. The quality of educated individuals available in any society determines its pace of development. The community builds its schools and the schools are expected to build their community by

providing the human capital that will mobilize other material resources. Socioeconomic status (SES) was a measure of one's access to collectively desired resources and was a fundamental construct in the social and health sciences. Measures of SES, and statistics based on them such as variances, are necessary to quantify if not understand the level of stratification or inequality in or between societies. Without sound measures of SES, it is impossible to capture and understand changes to the structure of a society, understand the intergenerational change of social status over time, the relationship between other important social variables such as race or sex which were masked by the evident and often dominant relationship between outcomes and SES. Finally, SES matter because it has been related to health and life outcomes for as long as social groups existed. Socioeconomic status is classified into three levels; high, medium, and low. The three socioeconomic strata describe the areas a family or an individual may fall into. When placing families or individuals into one of these levels, any or all of the three variables of income, education, and occupation can be assessed. When teachers make judgments about students based on their class and SES, they are taking the first step in preventing students from having an equal opportunity for academic achievement. Educators need to help overcome the stigma of poverty. A student of low SES and low self-esteem should not be negatively reinforced by educators. Teacher looking at students in this manner will help them to not be prejudiced towards students of certain SES groups.

Gender can be seen as the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioral characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between masculinity and femininity (Haig, 2004). Depending on the context, the term may refer to biological sex (i.e. the state of being male, female or intersex), sex base on social structure (including gender roles and other social roles) or gender identity. Gender issues are currently the main focus of discussion and research all over the world, Nigeria inclusive. The question of gender is a matter of grave concern especially among academics and policy formulators. Intellectuals are worried about the role of male and female in the psychological, political, social, economic, religious, scientific and technological development of nations. For these reasons, concerns about academic achievement with respect to males and females have generated a considerable interest in the field of educational testing over the years (Udry, 1994). Differences in academic achievement of the two genders are likely to contribute disparities in the allocation of cognitive roles in the world of work.

Gender stereotype and the effects of stereotype threat is one of the most important gendered behaviors and it can provide an explanation as to the differences in achievement (Reyna 2000). Gendered stereotype effects on self-perceptions are strong when these stereotypes are salient (Blanton, Charlene & Maureen 2002). When a gender stereotype is significant, high school students rated themselves as having weaker abilities in science and also reported lower grades in math than when the stereotype is not that relevant. Insufficient equity in education is recognized as one of the major challenges in school system around the world (OECD, 2007; Ainscow et al, 2012 as cited in Kimmo Eriksson. & Jannika Lindvall 2023), countless studies have documented that students with richer and well-educated parents tend to perform better in school (White, 1982; Sirin, 2005; Harwell et. al, 2017). Furthermore, more than 30 years ago, a Swedish study found that SES gaps in scores achievement test were larger among boys than girls (Fischbein, 1990). However, Parents have profound influence on whether a home provides intellectual stimulation, physical and psychological safety, an appropriate degree of structure and supportive relationships. Children with opportunities at home to build academic skills tend to be better (Abosede, 2000). This study explores the influence of parental socioeconomic status and gender on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Kano State. Both, Parental socioeconomic status and gender are independents variables while academic achievement was dependents variable.

Education is universally perceived and acknowledged as an effective tool for meaningful development in every society, be it social, economic, political and technological, it had been used by people to promote their social, economic, and political status. In Kano state and Nigeria at large, after completion of senior secondary school, students take external examinations conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) or National Examination Council (NECO), and are awarded certificates. This certificate must not only certify that a candidate has fulfilled the set requirements but also express that has attained results that are comparable with similar cohorts elsewhere. It is observed that in Kano State parents of different

occupation, classes often have different styles of child rearing, different way of disciplining their children, and different way of treating the children based on their gender. These differences did not express themselves consistently as expected in the case of every family; rather they influence the average tendencies of families for different occupational classes.

Thus, education remains the best legacy parents can give to their children. In Kano state for the past eight years more than 45% of students were failing qualify examination every year. But in Kano Municipal only 30 percent use to pass qualifying examination every year. This is what led to the development of interest in finding out what are the reasons behind that failure in examination. Is that as a result of their parental socio-economic status is not helping the academic achievement? Or their gender is not helping their academic achievement. Gender is one of the personal variables that have been related to the differences found in motivational functioning and academic achievement. Gender involves the psychological and socio-cultural dimensions of being male or female. A gender role is a set of expectations that prescribes how females or males should think, act and feel. The concept of gender-role classification involves a personality-trait-like categorization of a person (Santrock, 2005). Two theories explaining personality differences between men and women have been proposed. The first suggests that the male is the prototypical human and females should be understood in relation to men. The second opines that men represent the cognitive domain, which is positively valued in Euro-American culture, and women represent the less-valued affective realm (Hall & Lucas, 1976 in Klein, 2004). In the social roles perspective, women have lesser power and status than men do and control fewer resources. The social cognitive theory of gender emphasizes that adolescents' gender development is influenced by their observation and imitation of others' gender behavior, as well as by the rewards and punishments of gender-appropriate and gender inappropriate behavior. Parents and siblings influence adolescents' gender roles. Peers are especially adept at rewarding gender appropriate behavior. Different research has also pointed out that girls usually make external attributions for successes and failures and that when they make internal attributions, these refer not so much to effort, but to ability (Postage, Perez & Sanz, 1999). However, boys usually attribute successes to stable internal causes like effort, thus showing an attributional pattern which enables them to enhance their own image of themselves (Smith, Sinclair & Chapman, 2002).

Experts in the study of gender, e.g. Hyde (2004) and Hyde & Mezulis (2001) believe that the cognitive differences between females and males have been exaggerated. Hyde (2004) points out that there is a considerable overlap in the distribution of female and male scores on math and visual spatial tasks. In a personal study by the U.S. Department of Education (2000) boys did slightly better than girls at mathematics and science. Overall though, girls were far superior students, earning better grades and were significantly better than boys in reading. In another national study, females had higher reading achievement and better writing skills than male with the gap widening as students progressed through school (Coley, 2001). Females are more likely than males to be assigned to special/remedial education classes – females are more likely to be engaged with academic materials, be attentive in class, put forth more academic effort, and participate more in class than boys (Dezolt & Hull, 2001). The literature portrays that students may differ based on intellectual abilities and learning. Students may have different grades and abilities due to gender differences. The objectives of the study are:

- (a). To find out the levels of Parental socioeconomic status among senior Secondary School Students in Kano State.
- (b). To find out the differences in academic achievement between students with low and high levels of parental socioeconomic status among Senior Secondary School Students in Kano State.
- (c). To find out gender differences in academic achievement among senior secondary school students in Kano State.

II. METHODOLOGY

Ex-post facto research design was employed in order to determine the influence of socioeconomic status and gender on academic achievement. Cohen, Monion and Morison (2000) An ex-post facto research design was used because of its appropriateness when attempting to determine causes, effect, influence between

events that have already occurred; that is causes are studied after they presumably have exerted their effects or influence on another/other variables. Since the research intends to use the results of the study for counseling, placement and improvement of educational achievement the researcher used ex-post factor research design. The population of the study comprised all SS III students who have taken 2020/2021 session qualifying examination in Kano Municipal education zone. According to statistical data obtained from Kano State Senior Secondary School Management Board, the population was ten thousand and seventy-three (10,073) SSIII students. In which five thousand four hundred and fifty-three (5,453) students were male and four thousand six hundred and twenty (4,620) were female. Furthermore, the students were all enrolled in public schools, they received the same instructions and their average age was ranged between 15 – 18 years. Sample size was attained using Research Advisor (2006) table of determining sample size for a given population, where the total population is four thousand and three, (4003), the sample size would be three hundred and forty-six (346). Therefore, 346 is the sample size for the research. The samples were drawn from Ten (10) randomly selected schools. Ten (10) schools were selected (5 boys and 5 girls schools) from the two local government of municipal zone which comprises (Kano Municipal and Tarauni Local Government).

Multi stage sampling technique was used for purpose of this study. Which involved; Cluster, proportionate stratified and simple random sampling in identifying the needed sample of the study.

The instrument used for this study was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The researcher developed instrument (“Titled”) Parental Socio Economic Status Scale (PSESS) the instrument was designed based on the objectives of the study and in line with ages and class levels of the respondents. The instrument was made up of two (sections A and B) section A Consist of students’ information while section B consists 20 items measuring parental motivation, and the Scoring Procedure were placed on a four-point Likert scale, Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), as well as Strongly Disagree (SD). 40 and above was placed as high, while all scores below 40 were placed as low scores. The standardized qualifying examination results for the respondents were used in determining student’s academic achievements collation to help eliminate influence of school and teacher factors on the scores.

The parent Questionnaire had face validity by expert in the field of psychology, test and measurement at BUK, Department of education, this is to ascertain the relevance of the items in relation to objectives of the study set to achieve. They ascertain the appropriateness of the language to the respondent and research objectives, while, 0.78 was found as reliability index of parental socio-economic status scale which indicate that the instrument is reliable to be used for the study.

The collected data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. At the descriptive level, mean and standard deviations were used in summarizing the data while frequency counts and percentage were used in answering research questions. For the inferential statistics, an independent sample t-test was used in testing the stated null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision to use t-test arises because the researcher is looking for difference in the mean academic achievement of students.

Research Question

What are the levels of parental socioeconomic status among Senior Secondary School Students in Kano State?

Research Hypotheses

- (a). There is no significant difference in academic achievement between students with low and high levels of parental socioeconomic status among Senior Secondary School Students in Kano State.
- (b). There is no significant difference in academic achievement across gender among Senior Secondary School Students in Kano State.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question: What are the levels of parental socioeconomic status among Senior Secondary School Students in Kano State?

Table 1: Levels of parental socio-economic status among senior secondary schools students in Kano State

Variable	Level	N	Percent%	Mean
Socio-economic status	High	330	95%	63.74
	Low	16	5%	35.06
Total		346	100%	

To determine the level of parental socioeconomic status among senior secondary school students in Kano state, collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentages. As indicated in table 4.2 above, the analysis revealed that there are two predominant categories or levels of parental socioeconomic status. From the table, a total of 330 students donating 95% of the respondents were found to have high level of parental socioeconomic status. While only 16 students donating 5% of the study sample were found to have low level of parental socioeconomic status. Base on the obtained figures, it is evident that senior secondary school students in Municipal Education zone of Kano state falls under two major categories of parental socioeconomic status (High and Low) with majority of the students belonging to the category of high level of parental socioeconomic status.

Testing Research Hypotheses

The stated null hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics. In particular, an independent sample t-test was used in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One (H₀₁): There is no significant differences in academic achievement base on the level of parental socioeconomic status among Senior Secondary School Students in Kano State.

Table 2: Differences in Academic Achievement with regard to Parental Socio-economic Status

Academic Achievement	N	M	SD	t	df	p	Sig-level	Decision
High level of PSES	330	63.74	24.15	4.576	344	.000	.05	Rejected
Low level of PSES	16	35.06	30.86					

An independent sample t-test was used in examining differences in academic achievement based on parental levels of socioeconomic status among Senior Secondary School Students in Municipal Education Zone, Kano State. From table 4.4, students from parents with high socioeconomic status were having an average score of (M= 63.74) on academic achievement while students from parents with low socioeconomic status were having an average score of (M= 35.06) on academic achievement. Computed result from t-test analysis ($t= 4.576$, $p= .000$, $p < .05$) revealed that the obtained average score on academic achievement for students from parents with high socioeconomic status (M= 63.74, SD= 24.15) is significantly different from that of students from parents with low socioeconomic status (M= 35.06, SD= 30.86). Based on the obtained result, the stated null hypothesis was rejected. The result revealed that a statistically significant difference exists in academic achievement due to parental level of socioeconomic status in favor of students from high socioeconomic status. Meaning students from high level of parental socio-economic status perform academically better compared to their counterpart.

Hypothesis Two (Ho2): There is no significant difference in academic achievement across gender among Senior Secondary School Students in Kano State.

Table 3: Differences in Academic Achievement on the basis of Gender

Academic Achievement	N	M	SD	t	df	p	Sig-level	Decision
Male Students	206	59.84	25.62	2.270	344	.024	.05	Rejected
Female Students	140	66.07	24.19					

An independent sample t-test was used in examining differences in academic achievement based on gender among Senior Secondary School Students in Kano State. From table 4.6, male students were having an average score of (M= 59.84) on academic achievement while female students were having an average score of (M= 66.07) on academic achievement. Computed result from t-test analysis ($t= -2.270$, $p= .024$, $p < .05$) revealed that the obtained average score on academic achievement for male students (M= 59.84, SD= 25.62) is significantly different from that of female students (M= 66.07, SD= 24.19). Based on the obtained result, the stated null hypothesis was rejected. The result revealed that a statistically significant difference exists in academic achievement due to gender in favor of female students. According to this study, female students are academically brighter than their counterpart.

Summary of the Findings

The following are the summary of the research paper:

- (a). Findings of the study revealed two major categories of parental socioeconomic status (High and Low) with majority of the students belonging to the category of high level of parental socioeconomic status. (High level of S.E.S N=330, 95% while low level of S.E.S N=16, 5%).
- (b). A statistically significant difference exists in academic achievement of students due to parental level of socioeconomic status in favor of students from high socioeconomic status (High Mean-63.74, Low-35.06).
- (c). A statistically significant difference exists in academic achievement due to gender in favour of female students (Male Mean-59.84, Female Low-66.07). (Issues of Boy-Child) Closing the gap implication:

The following are the implications of counselling at closing the gap in the influence of parental socioeconomic status and gender on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students:

- (a). The Counsellor is expected to educate the parents to diversify their sources of income to be able to provide fund for their children's schooling, *and* as a therapist should try to understand how the family's problems all fit together to help girl child perform better in schools.
- (b). Students whose parents involved and commit themselves financially in schools have better attendance and behavior, get better grades, demonstrate better social skills and adopt better to school.
- (c). There should be implementation of all the policies that aim towards bridging the between the haves and have not and gender based thereby elevating them, their children, the nation and world at large.

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, this study established that parental socio-economic status and gender significantly influence students' academic achievement in Kano State, with higher socio-economic status enhancing access to learning resources and performance, while gender stereotypes continue to shape differences between male and female students. To address these challenges, efforts must focus on reducing educational inequalities and promoting equal opportunities for all learners. However, there remains scope for further research to deepen understanding of these dynamics. Future studies could examine the role of parental involvement in children's education, conduct comparative analyses across different states or regions of Nigeria to capture

cultural and economic variations, and investigate school-related factors such as teacher qualifications, classroom environment, and resource availability. Additionally, exploring psychological and motivational aspects—such as self-esteem, resilience, and study habits—would provide a more comprehensive view of how socio-economic background and gender interact to shape academic achievement.

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