

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF PARENTS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN ONITSHA NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ANAMBRA STATE.**

**Chidubem Emmanuel ASIEGBU, (Ph.D)**

E-mail: [ec.asiegbu@unizik.edu.ng](mailto:ec.asiegbu@unizik.edu.ng) or [blessedasiegbu@yahoo.com](mailto:blessedasiegbu@yahoo.com)

Phone: 08038683562

**Dr. Carol O. EZEUGBOR**

E-mail: [carolezeugbor@yahoo.com](mailto:carolezeugbor@yahoo.com)

Phone: 08068374278

Department of Educational Management and Policy  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Anambra State, Nigeria

**Abstract:** *This study was aimed at determining the relationship between socioeconomic status of parents and academic performance of students in Onitsha North L.G.A. of Anambra State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Correlation research design was adopted. From a population of 2,452, a sample of 100 respondents selected through the simple random sampling technique was adopted. For data collection, the junior secondary school annual examination was used, while questionnaire was also used to collect relevant information from students. Pearson product moment correlation was used to provide answers to the research questions, while the t- test was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. From the results; it was discovered that there is a positive relationship between high socioeconomic status of parents and student's academic performance, also that there is a negative relationship between middle socioeconomic status of parents and student's academic performance, and that there is a positive relationship between low socioeconomic status of parents and student's academic performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended that government should endeavor to implement the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme, as it will go a long way in helping students attain success in their academic pursuits. With this, the low academic performance of students that is characterized with low socioeconomic status of parents will be minimized.*

**Key words:** *socioeconomic status; parents; academic performance;*

## **Introduction**

In most African countries and in the western world, socioeconomic status of a family is usually linked with the family's income, parental educational level, parent's occupations and social status among their kindred and even at the global level. Ford and Harrison (1997) followed this logic while examining parental influences on African-American students' school achievement by focusing on specific socio-demographic factors including parent's level of education, marital status and family income.

It's generally believed that children from high and middle socioeconomic background are better exposed to a learning environment at home because of provision and availability of extra learning facilities. This idea is supported by Becker and Tomes (1979) when they assert that it has become well recognized that wealthy and well educated parent's ensure their children's future by providing them a favorable learning environment, better education and good jobs. In contrast to this belief, children from low socioeconomic status parents do not have access to extra learning facilities; hence the opportunity to get to the top may not be very easy.

Drummond and Stipek (2004) while discussing "low income" parent's beliefs about their role in their children's academic learning mentioned that their responsibilities were limited to meeting their children's basic and social-emotional support and socializing manners. So these parents shortsightedness towards their responsibilities in their educational process of their children and scarcity of funds to intensify such process could be a challenge to their children's success. But does the affirm impact of low socio-economic status of the parents really account for the student's low academic performances? Studies in some field have established that other factors inspite of socioeconomic status of parents can boost academic success among students, also certain socio-demographic variables account for the academic success or failure of minority students (Smith, Schneider and Ruck, 2005).

However, poor parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child, usually yield poor academic performance of the child. When a child also suffers from parental and material deprivation and care due to death, the child's schooling may be affected and he will not be financially buoyant to pay school fees, purchase books and uniforms. Such child may play truancy, thus his performances in school may be adversely affected (Shuttle, 2004).

Studies which examined Nigerian parents, recorded that parents who maintained positive views about the values of education and who hold high academic expectations have children who often experience higher levels of academic achievement (Ford, and Harrison, 1997; Steinberg 1992;). In another dimension, Nyirongo, (1989) states that students belonging to upper

socioeconomic status parents showed better academic performance than students from low socioeconomic status background.

Babcock and Lloyd (2002) on the relationship between school performance and parental socio-economic status conclude that students with high achievement values tend to come from families that are more educated and with a higher status of occupations, since low socio economic status of parents have been seen as hindrance to student's success, it could also lead to poor academic performance of student. An example is that most schools in poor suburban (rural areas) district of Anambra State always performs badly in external examinations like. J.S.S.C.E, WAEC and NECO, and the students of such school came from low socio economic status parents.

During one of the researcher's teaching practice exercise in one of the secondary schools at Onitsha, most excuses given by some students that came very late was that they have to go to their parent's shop, if not to open and tidy up the place, then it would be to sell thing before coming to school. Other factors influencing the academic performance of students includes resilience of students, school climate/environment, parent's occupations, parent's income and so on. The success or failure of students are summed up in these factors and that is what prompted the researcher to investigate if any relationship actually exists between high socioeconomic status of parents and high academic performance and also low socioeconomic status of students and low academic performance of students.

Relationships between the two variables mentioned above and student's academic performance in Anambra State secondary schools have not been exclusively established in literature. This is unfortunate because unless there is sufficient information on the relationship between socioeconomic status of parents and student's academic performance, parents and governments may not understand and may not be guided in knowing the ways of helping students from low socioeconomic status background to attain high academic performance.

It's against this background of low socioeconomic status of parents and poor student's academic performance, and the inadequacy of research in the area of high / middle socioeconomic status of parents and student's academic performance that this study was deemed necessary.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the relationship between socioeconomic status of parents and student's academic achievement in Secondary Schools. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Determine the relationship between high socio economic status of parents and student's academic achievement.

2. To find the level of academic achievement of students whose parents are in middle socioeconomic status?
3. Ascertain whether students from low socioeconomic status actually perform below expectation in their academic achievements.

### **Research Questions.**

The following research questions are formulated to guide the study;

- 1 What is the relationship between high socioeconomic status of parents and students academic achievement?
- 2 What level of academic achievement do students, whose Parents are in middle socioeconomic status, have?
- 3 How does low socio-economic status of parents affect their children's academic achievements in secondary schools

### **Hypotheses.**

The following hypotheses are tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide the study;

- 1 There is no significant relationship between high socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievement of students.
- 2 There is no significant relationship between the academic achievement of students from middle socioeconomic status and their academic achievement.
- 3 There is no significant relationship between low socio-economic status of parents and academic achievements of their children.

### **Method**

This study employed a correlation research design in which the subjects were observed in their natural settings, and data were collected through the use of questionnaire. The study was carried out in Onitsha North LGA of Anambra State. The population of the study is comprised of 2,452, junior secondary three (J.S. III) students, while 100 students were selected as the sample size, using simple random sampling technique, from five selected schools out of the eleven secondary schools in the area. 20 students were selected from each of the five schools making a total of 100 students that were used for the study.

Instruments for data collection were a questionnaire and a documented result of the students. The questionnaire was designed on the four point likert type scale measurement of: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Meanwhile the documented results were correlated with the student's response in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire which was validated by 3 experts was subjected to reliability testing using spearman's formula, in which 0.82 was obtained as the reliability index (very high). The researchers personally distributed and

collected the questionnaire. 100% distributed and collection was obtained due to the fact that lost or wrongly filled questionnaire were replaced and re-filled by the respondent concerned. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson product moment (mean scores) to answer the two research questions, while t-test was used to answer the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. In analyzing the students' scores, the following quantitative values of "A" distinction, "C" for credit, "P" pass, and "F" for fail, were assigned for the purpose of analysis as follows. A = 4 points, C = 3 points, P = 2 points, F = 1 point.

Then the scores for items in the questionnaires were collated and compared with the scores of students in their annual examinations using the Pearson product moment correlation analysis. From the figures obtained, the direction and the strength of the correlation between the two variables were observed.

## Result

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the data collected for the study. The research questions were taken one after the other and summary of the major findings of the study is also presented at the end of this chapter.

### Research Questions one

To what extent does a relationship exist between students of high socio-economic status parents and their academic achievements?

**Table 1:** Computation of Pearson "r" for the relationship between students of high socioeconomic status parents and their academic achievements.

No of students	$\Sigma x$ scores on Questionnaires	$\Sigma y$ Result of students	$\Sigma xy$	$\Sigma x^2$	$\Sigma y^2$	"r"
29	98.5	78.3	273.965	376.5	213.1585	0.94

In table 1, the "r" value is 0.94. This value is high positive because; it's close to + 1 than -1. The conclusion therefore, is that there is a high positive relationship between students of high socioeconomic status parents and their academic achievements.

### Research Questions Two

What level of academic achievements do students whose parents are in middle socio-economic status, have?

**Table 2:** Computation of Pearson "r" for the level of academic achievements of students with middle socioeconomic status parents.

No of Students	$\Sigma x$ Scores on Questionnaires	$\Sigma y$ Results of students	$\Sigma xy$	$\Sigma x^2$	$\Sigma y^2$	'r'
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32	89	83.11	230.19	271.5	219.0151	-0.09
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In table 2, the “r” value is -0.09. This value is high negative because; it’s close to -1 than +1. The conclusion therefore, is that there is a high negative relationship between the middle socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievements of students.

**Research Questions Three**

What is the relationship between low socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievements of their children?

**Table 3:** Computation of Pearson “r” for the relationship between low socioeconomic status of parents and their children’s academic achievements.

No of Students	Σx Scores on Questionnaires	Σy Results of students	Σxy	Σx <sup>2</sup>	Σy <sup>2</sup>	“r”
32	86	100.31	241.36	238.5	293.9029	0.5

In table 3, the “r” value is 0.5. This value is moderate and positive because it falls between +0 and +1. The conclusion therefore, is that there is a moderate positive relationship between low socio-economic status of parents and academic achievements of their children

**Null Hypotheses.**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>** = There is no significant relationship between high socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievements of students.

**Table 4:** t-test for the significance of difference of the degree of relationship between high socio-economic status parents and students academic achievement.

Respondents	N	“r”	D f.	t-Cal	t-critical	Level of significance	Decision
High socioeconomic status	29	0.94	27	19.94	2.05	.05	Rejects null hypotheses

As shown in table 4, the t – calculated value of 19.94 is greater than the critical value of 2.05, given degrees of freedom 27 and .05 significant level. This leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis that states that there is significant relationship between high socio-economic status of parents and student’s academic achievement. Therefore, high socioeconomic status of parents is significantly associated with the student’s academic achievements.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>** = There is no significant relationship between middle socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievements of students.

**Table 5:** t-test for the significance of degree of relationship between middle socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievements of students.

Respondents	N	“r”	d	t-cal	t-critical	Level of significance	Decision
Middle socioeconomic status	32	0.09	30	0.16	2.04	0.5	Accepts null hypotheses

As presented in table 5, with 30 degrees of freedom and .05 significance level, the t – calculated value of 0.16, is less than the critical value of 2.04. This leads to the acceptance of the null hypotheses, which states that there is no significant relationship between middle socioeconomic status parents and academic achievements of students.

**H<sub>03</sub>**= There is no significant relationship between low socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievements of students.

**Table 6:** t-test for the significance of difference of degree of relationship between low socio-economic status of parents and academic achievements of students.

Respondents	N	“r”	d	t-cal	t-Critical	Level of Significance	Decision
Low socioeconomic status	39	0.57	37	3.52	2.04	.05	Rejects null hypotheses

As presented in table 6, with 37 degrees of freedom and 0.5 significance level, the t–calculated value is 3.52. This value is greater than the critical value of 2.04, this leads to the rejection of the null hypotheses which states that there is no significant relationship between low socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievements of students.

The conclusion is that, there is a moderate or average and positive correlation between low socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievement of students.

### Summary of Major Findings.

The following findings emerged from the analysis

1. High socioeconomic status of parents is highly and positively correlated to student’s academic achievements indicating that it could be used to explain student’s academic achievements in school.
2. Middle socioeconomic status of parents is negatively correlated with student’s academic achievements. In addition, the null hypothesis two showed that this correlation is not significant, this indicates that it could be related student’s academic achievement but in only less than -0.09 percent of most cases.
3. There was a moderate and positive correlation between low socio-economic status of parents and student’s academic achievements. In addition, this correlation is significant. It indicates that low socio-economic

status of parents can be moderately related to the academic achievements of students.

4. It was also revealed from the t-test analysis of the relationship between high socio-economic status of parents and student's academic achievements, that there is a significant relationship, hence, the hypotheses was rejected.

5. From the t-test analysis of the relationship between middle socio-economic status of parents and student's academic achievement, there was no significant relationship between them; hence, the hypothesis was accepted.

6. It was also revealed from the t-test analysis of the relationship between low socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievements of students, that there is a significant relationship between them, hence the hypothesis was rejected.

### **Discussions of the Results**

For research question one, the findings were that, there was a high positive relationship between high socioeconomic status of parents and academic achievements of students. In addition, null hypotheses one, showed that high socioeconomic status of parents is significantly related with the student's academic performance.

What this means is that high socioeconomic status of parents have a tendency to marginally spur an increase in student's academic performance. Parents of high socioeconomic status provide everything for their children. Ezewu et al (1983) says that parents of high socio economic status put their children in the best schools in the society with facilities and staffed with well qualified teachers which enhances reading and learning.

He also observed that a child's economic position and educational level are partly determined by those of his parents and socioeconomic status. Generally, high socioeconomic status parents, have enough funds to cater for the needs of their children. They are likely to encourage their children more, because of their socioeconomic status.

In research questions 2, middle socioeconomic status of parents has a low and negative relationship with academic performance of students. In addition, the null hypotheses states that it's only in 0.09% of cases that middle socioeconomic status are associated with student's academic performance.

The middle socioeconomic status parents are termed the "selective consumer" of education in contrast to "the good consumer" attributed to high socioeconomic status and those that consumes education sparingly as in the low socioeconomic status. They are selective in the sense that they don't have over surplus and as such, education given to their children depends upon the value and importance, the getting along or getting ahead.



Another major finding which needs to be discussed in line with the study of water (1999) is the discovery of a moderate and positive relationship between low socio-economic status of parent and academic performance of students in research questions 3. In the null hypotheses, this relationship is significant.

In most cases, low socioeconomic status could be used to explain student's poor academic performance in schools. The reason for this finding is obvious. Students from low socio-economic status parents faces dots of obstacles in order to get quality education, they lack the funds to pay school fees, which must be paid or else they will be sent packing, which according to Donesy and Okadiran (2002) made some to engage in street hawking, sex networking behavior, juvenile delinquent behavior that takes much of the student's time which necessitated the poor academic performance and drop out syndrome noticed among students. They lamented that maternal and paternal deprivation of the essential needs of the young students have prompted their poor performances in public examinations such as J.S.S.C.E, WAEC and N.E.C.O.

The result of first null hypotheses shows that high socioeconomic status of parents is significantly related with the students' academic performance. The results of second hypotheses also shows that middle socioeconomic status are not significantly related with students' academic performance as the calculated value is 0.16 is less than the critical value 2.04.

The third hypotheses also show that middle socioeconomic status of parents are significantly related with the students' academic performance as the calculated value, 3.52 is greater than the t-critical, 2.04

### **Conclusion.**

Based on the findings the following conclusions were made, that the students from high parental socioeconomic class perform better academically than their counterparts in low socioeconomic background. Students from middle socioeconomic background also receive these conditions that enhance learning, but other factors must have propelled their success in their academic.

Students, from low socioeconomic status perform lesser in comparison to their counterparts in other socioeconomic status, but resiliency on the part of some students from this class improves their opportunities to achieve success in their academics.

## **Recommendations**

The major recommendation to this study is that Government should take the children from low socio-economic status into consideration and provide proper maintenance of infrastructures, also school facilities should be provided where necessary. Government should try to implement the Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.) not just to be in theory. Implementation of U.B.E, which specified that primary Education, shall be tuition free, Universal and compulsory will go a long way in helping the children from low socio-economic status to have access to basic education.

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