



Socio-Economic Status and Academic Achievement of Undergraduates in Southwestern, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study aimed at investigating the level of academic achievement, level of socio-economic status and mechanisms through which socio-economic status affects academic achievement among undergraduates in federal, state and private universities, Southwestern, Nigeria. An expo-facto descriptive design was used for the study which included 282,834 undergraduates in total, with a target population of 72,062 undergraduates. This study's sample size was 1,526 which was determined by a multistage sampling technique. The dominant Academic achievement in federal (41.0%) and state universities (44.5%) was second class lower grade, while that of the private university was second class upper (43.1%). Tertiary education, tertiary occupation and high-income status dominated the Socio-economic status with the respective highest percentages in Private Universities (84.1%, 79.4% and 75.4%), followed by State Universities (55.1%, 52.0% and 39.5%) and Federal Universities (54.0%, 50.1% and 30.5%). Income, Education and Occupation ($F_{(3,1342)} = 9.528$; $\text{Adj.}R^2 = 0.019$) significantly influenced academic achievement. It was recommended that parents must do all in their power to encourage their children's education. Also, government should fund public universities (Federal and State Universities), by reducing tuition fees, so as to leverage access to education both by the rich and poor, so as to bridge the gap on academic achievement between public and private universities, since all graduates of Nigerian universities are equal in the labour market.

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Socio-Economic Status, Undergraduates

Introduction

Academic achievement can be described as an outcome of an educational process, reflecting the pace at which students and education stake holders achieve specific short and long-term learning objectives. It serves as an indicator of students' skill levels, knowledge and individual efforts. Also, academic achievement is widely acknowledged as a key indicator for assessing the cognitive abilities of students, ultimately contributing to the

overall quality of life within society. Academic achievement is a way to assess students' understanding, abilities, and expertise as well as their capacity to fulfil the learning goals established by universities.

Gizem (2020) described academic achievement as a measure of performance based on examinations and tests to assess students' level of understanding. In essence, the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural domains are captured by academic achievement. While the emotional component explains the development of experiences or feelings in handling circumstances, the cognitive component describes the development of abilities linked to information, understanding, applied analysis, synthesis, and assessment associated with learning and problem-solving. On the other hand, the psychomotor domain is the application of learning into practice which is reflected in the potential and capabilities of undergraduates in desired learning. However, the constant decline in the academic achievement of Nigerian graduates is contrary to the high expectations of stakeholders in the education sector, generating serious debates across the world and hindering international competitiveness (Olatunji, 2020).

Academic achievement is a challenge to most students in tertiary institutions, as it reveals deficiencies and failure to achieve desired educational goals. Many parents complained of low academic achievement obtained by their wards, without being informed of the reasons and the means to resolve them (Samer and Mohammad, 2015). In some cases, students found it difficult to obtain a minimum of 1.0 Grade Point Average (GPA) after a session of two semesters. In another instance, some students failed compulsory courses till they had no opportunity to register for them again. All these could lead to low academic achievement and withdrawals of undergraduates from various academic programmes in Nigerian universities, which seemed disheartening to education stakeholders. The observation was traced to various universities where statistics have shown that relatively newly admitted students into various institutions do not graduate, as some withdrew due to poor academic achievement in every academic session from the academic planning unit.

Furthermore, low academic achievement could also be observed in some students with low-class degrees. Low-class degrees are the degree that cannot attract scholarship opportunities or further studies. It can also be classified as students graduating with a third class or pass division (Duffy and Goldberg, 2014). However, there are various categories and sub-divisions to measure the academic achievement of all graduates who passed the final examinations in Nigerian universities (Anyikwa, 2006). For bachelor's degree programmes, these categories are first class, second class upper and lower divisions, third class, and pass; nevertheless, the first class and distinction students are classified as high academic achievers, credit, second class upper, and lower divisions are classified as average achievers while third class and pass are classified as low achievers. Noor, Saim, Alias and Rosli, (2020) explained that at the initial stages of enrolment, most

undergraduates want to achieve first-class results, however, most of such dreams seem dashed as some find themselves graduating with a third class or Pass. All of them pointed to poor undergraduate achievement shows that this tendency has been rising annually among graduating students in each academic session.

Low academic achievement results in academic wastage and social crimes (Gimenez and Barrado, 2020). Academic wastage can be described as the inefficient use of available educational resources, including early dropout, unemployment and brain drain (Durosaro, 2012). This has led some affected students into drug peddling, prostitution, armed robbery, cyber-crime, depression of not achieving career goals and frustration of not having a better living standard than their colleagues who had high academic achievements. Academic performance is one of the primary criteria that businesses take into account when hiring new employees, according to Olufemi, Adediran, and Oyediran (2018), who also noted that some graduates do not get well-paying jobs after completing their university degree. This contradicts the goal of university education, which is to continually attract, promote and train competent, knowledgeable and talented individuals (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006). Many graduates experience brain drain as some are underemployed, while some do not find fulfilling employment in spite of academic achievements (El-Khawas, 2004).

On the contrary, high academic achievement is expected to be a catalyst for positive societal change. It is the fundamental goal of every student to have lucrative employment choices and economic success (Hout, 2012). Moreover, high academic achievement as a result of sound education is expected to improve students' standard of living, enhance societal values, prevent criminal activities, provide immense opportunities, reduce threats and increase a strong sense of self-esteem in society (Agarana and Ehigbochie, 2015). Nevertheless, many undergraduates struggle to attain high academic achievements while some find it difficult to maintain high grades in various programmes.

Valentine and Dubois (2005) and Marsh, Trautwein, Ludtke, Koller, and Baumert (2005) have both studied the connection between secondary school students' academic achievement and their intellectual dignity. The results of these studies indicated a favourable correlation between academic achievement and self-perception, which have not yielded meaningful results as the problem still persists. This study therefore linked academic achievement to socio-economic status of parents and sponsors of undergraduates' in Nigerian Universities.

The socioeconomic position of students may be defined as their parents' or sponsors' hierarchical social rank in terms of money, education, and employment. Socio-economic status, as defined by Ogunlesi, Dedeke, and Kuponyi (2007), is a thorough financial and sociocultural evaluation of an individual's or a household's social and financial position in comparison to others based on variables such as earnings, schooling, and occupation. The most common and basic classes are often the upper, middle, and lower

classes. Payne (2003) asserts that a student's socioeconomic status affects their academic achievement, especially when it comes to receiving excellent grades. Students appreciate their parents' views (Magnusson and Witko, 2004). Socioeconomic status is determined by occupation, income, and educational background (Tehseen and Safia, 2021).

One measure of socioeconomic position that influences academic achievement, is the educational attainment of the parents or sponsors. Parents' or sponsors' educational attainment might show up in a variety of ways. A secure and appropriate atmosphere, instructional materials, cognitive replication, parent-child dialogues, exemplary role models embodying favourable social and educational values, elevated dreams for personal achievement, interacting with the institution for information exchange, participation in academic events, and governance that substantially impacts programme selection and academic achievement are among these factors (Bukhari, Gul, Bashir, Zakir, and Javed, 2021). According to Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq, and Berhanu (2011), children from educated homes so outperform and attain higher academic levels. Children from homes with lower levels of education and literacy often do worse academically than children whose parents have more education (Ahmad, 2013). Therefore, the educational background of parents or sponsors could influence students' academic achievement.

In addition, the income level of parents or sponsors can also be a barrier to academic achievement. Income is the money or funds which an individual parent or sponsor receives (Duncan, Morris and Rodrigues, 2011). This can be in the form of wages and salary or profit to a business owner. Students' living conditions are determined by the sponsor's income. When the sponsor's income is insufficient, the issue lies not only in fulfilling educational and school obligations but also in addressing basic living necessities, including dietary requirements, fitness, and health care, among others. Lack of learning resources coupled with inadequate support from parents or sponsors can affect students' grades. Therefore, parents' or sponsors' level of income appears to influence academic achievements.

In addition, parents' and sponsors' occupations provide a source of income. Parents who are unemployed often suffer from health issues including starvation, physical and psychological abuse, and chronic illnesses, which may influence their children's academic performance (Ratcliff and Hunt, 2009).

Objectives

The objectives of the study are to investigate the;

- i. level of academic achievement among undergraduates in Southwestern, Nigeria
- ii. level of socio-economic status among undergraduates in Southwestern, Nigeria
- iii. mechanisms through which Socio-economic status affects academic achievement among undergraduates in Southwestern, Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. What is the level of academic achievement among undergraduates in Southwestern, Nigeria?
- ii. What is the level of socio-economic status among undergraduates in Southwestern, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

H₀₁ Socio-economic status (education, income and occupation) of parent or sponsor does not have influence on academic achievement among undergraduates.

Methods

An *expo-facto* descriptive design was used for the study. The research included 282,834 undergraduates in total, with a target population of 72,062 undergraduates in 200 level at 6 Federal, 6 State, and 13 Private Universities in Southwestern Nigeria. This study's sample size, which was determined by a multistage sampling technique, is 1,526 respondents. Two of the six Southwestern states Oyo and Osun state were chosen at the first stage using a straightforward random selection procedure. The inability to secure data has limited the generalization of this study to two states. In the second stage, a purposive sampling technique was used to select federal, state and private universities from the 2 sampled states established before 2015 with common academic programmes (6 universities). Eight faculties, comprising four each of sciences, Arts/humanities were sampled. In the third step, 200 level students from the selected faculties were chosen using the purposive sampling approach. This study considered undergraduates admitted through post-UTME only. This is because they are relatively new students and the 200 level is considered a volatile stage in which either the university or individual students can decide to withdraw from the academic programme. Also, at the 200 level, the institution would have tested the academic abilities of students admitted through JAMB, through various examinations at the departmental, faculty and university levels to have generated a grade point average (GPA) in which the outcome determines continuity in the programme. In the fourth stage, two departments in each of the sampled faculties (16 departments) were randomly selected. This gives a grand-total of 5,404 undergraduates. In the fifth step, 25% of the students in each studied department were chosen using the proportionate-to-size sampling approach, yielding a total of 1,526 responders.

Questionnaires and evaluation proforma served as key sources of data for the research. The researcher created two instruments to gather the data. These are; Instrument for Faculty officer (Student Academic Achievement Proforma) and Instruments for

undergraduates (Socio-economic Status Scale).

Student academic achievement proforma was used to collect data on undergraduate academic performance from the sampling faculty's examination records. The proforma was answered based on observation of the content of the list of academic grade point averages provided by the faculty officer or any academic staff in-charge of undergraduate results in the 200 level only. Also, socio-economic status scale, was used to gauge the socioeconomic standing of the parents or sponsors of students. Descriptive statistics such as Frequency counts, simple percentages, mean and standard deviation were used for demographic information and Research question. Multiple Regression was used to analyze the hypothesis.

Results And Discussion

This section explained the demographic information of the respondents, results and discussion of findings on the socio-economic status and academic achievement.

Table 1: Demographic indices of the respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	16-19	568	42.2
	20-23	667	49.6
	24-27	76	5.6
	27- 30	31	2.3
	Above 31	4	0.3
Total		1346	100%
Gender	Male	666	49.5
	Female	680	50.5
Total		1346	100%
Sponsor	Self	75	5.6
	Parents	1200	89.2
	Guardian	62	4.6
	Scholarship	9	0.7
Total		1346	100%
Parent's Marital Status	Marriage intact	1125	83.6
	Single parent	165	12.3
	Divorced	36	2.7
	Both late	20	1.5
Total		1346	100%
Parent's Residence	Owned	1011	75.1
	Rented	312	23.2
	Company/Government quarters	23	1.7
Total		1346	100%

Table 1 shows the age range of respondents. In the table 42.2% (568) are between the ages 16-19 years, 49.6 % (667) are between the ages 20 -23 years, 5.6 % (76) are between ages 24 -27years, 2.3 % (31) are between the ages 27 -30 years, 0.3% (4) are above 31 years. The Table also shows that 49.5(666) are male while 50.5% (680) are female. This implies that the majority of the undergraduates in the South-West are female. Similarly, it is shown that the sponsors of respondents. In the table 5.6 % (75) are sponsored by self, 89.2 % (1,200) are sponsored by parents, 4.6 % (62) are sponsored by guardians and 0.7 % (9) are sponsored through scholarship. In addition, the Table shows the parents' marital status of respondents. In the table, 83.6 % (1,125) have parents whose marriages are intact, 12.3 % (165) are from single parents, 2.7 % (36) are from divorced homes, and 1.5 % (20) are orphans. The table also indicates the place of residence of the respondents'

parents. In the table, 75.1 % (1,011) have parents who are living in their own houses, 23.2 % (312) live in rented houses, are 1.7 % (23) are living in Company/Government quarters.

Table 2: Level of academic achievement in federal state and private universities in Southwestern, Nigeria

Academic Achievement						
	Federal Universities		State Universities		Private Universities	
Class of Grade	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
First Class	69	10.4	20	4.1	40	20.7
Second Class Upper	212	32.0	131	26.9	84	43.1
Second Class Lower	272	41.0	218	44.5	53	26.9
Third Class	90	13.6	110	22.6	18	9.3
Pass	8	1.2	9	1.9	0	0
Probation	12	1.8	0	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	<i>663</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>488</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>195</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 2 shows the level of academic achievement in federal, state and private universities in Southwestern, Nigeria. In federal universities, second class lower has the highest frequency 41 % (272) and pass grade 1.2 % (8) has the lowest, followed by students on probation. 1.8 % (12) thus, academic achievement is low in federal universities. In state universities, second class lower has the highest frequency while pass grade has the lowest frequency thus, academic achievement is low in state universities. In private universities, the second-class upper has the highest frequency 43.1 % (84), and there is no pass and probation, thus, academic achievement is very high in private universities. This implies that academic achievement is very high in private universities, average in state universities but very low in federal universities.

In the research question, it was revealed that academic achievement among undergraduates in southwestern, Nigeria is low. This could be because of other factors affecting learning and assessment. This is supported by Canales and Ríos, (2009) who stressed that student failure is usually very evident in the first year of university. Also,

Baars *et al.* (2017) explained further that most undergraduates fail in the first year due to difficulty in adapting easily to the cognitive environment and systems of the university, since they have not experienced them in previous stages of their studies.

It also shows that academic achievement is very high in private universities, average in state universities but very low in federal universities. This is because undergraduates at private universities are sponsored by highly privileged parents due to exorbitant school fees. Dave (2004) explained that income and wealth reflect our social status. Buchmann (2002) explained that compared to their classmates from better socioeconomic backgrounds, children from deprived neighborhoods see themselves as being at a disadvantage. Furthermore, it has been noted that the admission standards for most private institutions in Nigeria are less stringent than those of state universities in order to attract a larger student population (Ajadi, 2010). This often impacts their educational standards to retain learners.

Table 3: Level of socio-economic status among undergraduates' parents or sponsors in Southwestern, Nigeria

Socio-economic Status	Lower Class	Average Class	High Class
Occupation	103 (7.6%)	507(37.6%)	737(54.7%)
Education	66(4.9%)	489(36.3%)	792 (58.8%)
Income	365(27.1%)	430 (31.9%)	548 (40.7%)

Table 3 shows the level of socio-economic status among undergraduates in southwestern, Nigeria. Occupation (54.7%) among the high class is high, these are parents or sponsors who are professionals, senior officials and managers. Also, education (58.8%) among the high class is high, these are sponsors or parents with first degrees and other qualifications is high. Income (40.7%) among the high class is high, these are parents or sponsors whose monthly income ranges from 210,000 to one million above. Table 4 presents the level of socio-economic status of undergraduates' parents or sponsors in federal, state and private universities in southwestern, Nigeria.

Table 4: Level of socio-economic status of undergraduates' parents or sponsors in federal, state and private universities in Southwestern, Nigeria

Socio-economic Status	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Dev	Socio-economic Status								
			Federal University			State University			Private University		
			<i>Low Class</i>	<i>Average Class</i>	<i>High Class</i>	<i>Low Class</i>	<i>Average Class</i>	<i>High Class</i>	<i>Low Class</i>	<i>Average Class</i>	<i>High Class</i>
Occupation	2.47	0.633	61 (9.2%)	266 (40.1%)	336 (50.1%)	31 (6.4%)	203 (41.6%)	254 (52.0%)	10 (5.1%)	38 (19.5%)	147 (75.4%)
<i>Rank</i>					3 rd			2 nd			1 st
Education	2.54	0.589	46 (6.9%)	259 (39.1%)	358 (54.0%)	19 (3.9%)	200 (40.0%)	269 (55.1%)	1 (0.5%)	30 (15.4%)	164 (84.1%)
<i>Rank</i>					3 rd			2 nd			1 st
Income	2.14	0.818	217 (32.9%)	242 (36.7%)	201 (30.5%)	128 (26.2%)	167 (34.2%)	193 (39.5%)	20 (10.2%)	21 (10.8%)	154 (79.4%)
<i>Rank</i>					3 rd			2 nd			1 st

Decision rule: 3.0 - 4.0 Very High, 2.0 – 2.9 High, 1.0 – 1.9 Low, 0.0 - 0.9 Very low

Table 4 highlighted parents or sponsor's socio-economic status (occupation, education and income) of undergraduates in federal, state and private universities in southwestern, Nigeria. Occupation has a weighted mean of 2.47 as against the threshold of 2.0, thus, occupation of parents or sponsors is generally high. In addition, the chart includes the occupations of parents or sponsors. The occupation of parents or sponsors at private universities is 75.4%, representing the largest proportion among the occupational levels within the upper-class group. The state university has a percentage of 52.0%, ranking second among the greatest levels of parental or sponsor occupation, while the federal university has a percentage of 50.1%, ranking lowest among the highest levels of the profession. This indicates that the parents or sponsors of students at private institutions possess better occupational status compared to those of freshmen in state and federal universities.

The weighted mean for the section on parents' or sponsors' education is 2.54, which is higher than the criterion of 2.0, indicating that parents' or sponsors' educational attainment is typically high. Similarly, parents' or sponsors' educational attainment at private universities is 84.1%, the highest percentage among high-class educational levels; at state universities, it is 55.1%, the second-highest among parents' or sponsors' educational attainment; and at federal universities, it is 54.0%, the lowest among the best. This implies that parents or sponsors of undergraduates in private universities have higher levels of education than undergraduates in state and federal universities.

The section for the income level of parents or sponsors has a weighted mean of 2.14 as against the threshold of 2.0, thus, the income level is generally high. Also, income level of parents or sponsors in private universities is 79.4 % which is the highest percentage among the levels of income in the group of the high class, state university is 39.5 %, which is the second rank among the highest levels of income of parents or sponsors, while federal university is 30.5 % which is the lowest rank among the highest level of income. This implies that parents or sponsors of undergraduates in private universities have higher levels of income than undergraduates in state and federal universities.

The results obtained for the third study question showed that students in southwest Nigeria had a poor socioeconomic status. Also, parents or sponsors of undergraduates in private universities have higher levels of occupation than parents or sponsors of undergraduates in state and federal universities. This is because, Nigeria is a developing country, in which a higher percentage of the population is poor, thus, most less privileged parents or sponsors cannot afford the cost of private university education but can still struggle for federal or state university education for their children. The results of Heckman and Masterov (2004) indicate that children raised in less advantageous surroundings attain lower educational levels, despite the greater economic gains associated with learning. Parental socioeconomic variables are often defined by the educational attainment of parents, their professional reputation, and family income. Marmot (2004) elucidated that parents with superior occupations consistently provide their children with enough schooling with economic, social, psychological, and emotional assistance, thus facilitating their academic success.

The data indicate that parents or sponsors of students in private institutions possess greater levels of education compared to those of freshmen in state and federal colleges. Osa-edoh and Alutu (2011) assert that the offspring of bankers, physicians, teachers, and merchants get a distinct education compared to the children of farmers, domestic staff, cleaners, labourers, and small dealers.

The findings show that parents or sponsors of undergraduates in private universities have higher levels of income than undergraduates in state and federal universities. This is in line with the findings of Dave (2004) who explained that income and wealth reflect our social status. However, poverty is not evenly distributed and social inequalities exist that vary according to socio-economic status. Krueger (2004) also evaluated the various roles played by family background and backed up the idea that financial limitations significantly affect academic achievement.

Table 5: Multiple Regression on Socio-Economic Status (Education, Income and Occupation) of Parent or Sponsor on Academic Achievement among Undergraduates in Southwestern Nigeria

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.289	3	10.763	9.528	.0000 ^b
	Residual	1515.961	1342	1.130		
	Total	1548.250	1345			
R = 0.144 ^a R Square = 0.021 Adjusted R Square = 0.019 Std. Estimated Error = 1.063						
a. Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement b. Predictors: (Constant), Income, Education, Occupation						

Table 5 revealed socio-economic status (education, income and occupation) of parent or sponsor on academic achievement among undergraduates in Southwestern Nigeria. The results present a model summary and a table. The findings showed a joint contribution of socio-economic status (education, income and occupation) of parent or sponsor on academic achievement among undergraduates in Southwestern Nigeria ($R = 0.144$; $p < 0.05$). The coefficient of determination (Adjusted R Square = 0.019) showed that changes in the independent variable accounted for 1.9% of the variation in academic achievement, with other factors not included in this study accounting for the remaining 98.1%. In Southwestern Nigeria, it was determined that the linear combination of socioeconomic status (income, education, and occupation) had no discernible effect on undergraduate students' academic performance ($F_{(3, 1342)} = 9.528$, $p < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis that states that the socio-economic status (education, income and occupation) of the parent or sponsor will not have a significant influence on academic achievement among undergraduates in Southwestern Nigeria is hereby rejected. This suggests that parental or sponsor socioeconomic status (education, income, and occupation) will influence undergraduate students' academic achievement in southwest Nigeria.

The hypothesis revealed socio-economic status (education, income and occupation) of the parent or sponsors will have a significant influence on academic achievement among undergraduates in Southwestern Nigeria. This is supported by Adekeye (2002) who explained that children are raised to be productive citizens primarily through the efforts and skills of their parents. When parents possess the resources and skills, they use them to raise their children in a way that is both joyful and efficient. Society as a whole gain, which promotes development and harmonious coexistence while

providing enjoyment and advantages to the nation. Their parents and society at large are delighted when the children themselves feel good.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made

- i. Academic achievement was very high in private universities, average in state universities but very low in federal universities.
- ii. Parents or sponsors of undergraduates in private universities have higher levels of occupation, education and income than parents of undergraduates in state and federal universities.
- iii. Parental or sponsor socioeconomic status (education, income, and employment) will influence undergraduate students' academic achievement in southwest Nigeria.

Recommendations

As specified by the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were presented:

- i. Government should fund public universities (Federal and State Universities), by reducing tuition fees, so as to leverage access to education both by the rich and poor. This will bridge the gap on academic achievement between public and private universities in Nigeria. All graduates of Nigerian universities are equal in the labour market.
- ii. Government should renovate public university facilities and equipment to improve the quality and standard of education in public universities. This will remove the conception considering private universities being at a better advantage than public universities. Also, funding of public universities increases their carrying capacities in the admission of students and making better economic arrangements for the employment of graduates to foster academic achievement.
- iii. To improve the economic circumstances of society and themselves, parents (literate or not) must do all in their power to encourage their children's education. This is because their children are their representatives in the future. They must also understand that the level of education acquired by their children is the determinant of their future standard of living, especially in their old age.
- iv. Undergraduates should work towards improvement in their academic achievement as this will determine their future privileges

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