

## **FAMILY SIZES: IT'S IMPLICATIONS ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN SOCIAL STUDIES**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated implication of family size on student's academic achievement in Social Studies. It is a survey carried out in Abakaliki education zone of Ebonyi State. The population of the study consisted of all the 638 (six-hundred and thirty eight) Junior Secondary School Students in Abakaliki Education Zone that sat for the 2014 junior secondary school certificate examination . Out of this, a sample of 258 was selected from the population using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected through a 30 item objective questions on Social Studies Achievement Test (SOSAT) developed by the researcher to determine the academic achievement scores of the students' and a 37 researcher developed questionnaire instrument to obtain the background information of the students. The instruments were validated and tested for reliability. They yielded acceptable reliability coefficient values of 0.74 and 0.96 respectively on Home Environment Identification Check List and Social Studies Achievement Test using split half and Kuder-Richardson 20 (K-20) statistics. Data collected were analyzed using t-test rho statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study include among others: that the performance of students in Social Studies is being affected by family size. Another implication of the study is that there is an incidence of child labour among the poor socio-economic class, for the fact that a child starts suffering to earn a living when he/she is supposed to be attending school. Students who are from large extended family tend to abandon education and take to hawking, barrow pushing or motor conductors. The implication is that unless efforts are made by parents to give birth to the number of children that they can carter for, they will remain perpetually poor in academic achievement. Based on the findings, recommendations were made by the researcher as follows: Parents should make every effort to reduce if not completely do away with broken homes and



its causes since intact home begets good academic Working parents should act as sources of incentives, encouragement and reinforcement to their children so that they can perform well in schools, especially in Social Studies test.

## Introduction

Social Studies is a living subject that deals with matters of the moment taking care of people's future as well as discipline that deals with social change, better future and problem solving (Ikwumelu, 2003). According to Uche in Okpala and Bamidele (2005), Social Studies is a programme of study that provides adequate knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help people to know the different activities going on their home and also the best way to deal with fellow human beings; The Federal government of Nigeria, having know the relevance of Social Studies in its general perspective, introduced it into the primary and junior secondary school curricula. The importance of the introduction of Social Studies in the school system is not in doubt. Learning of Social Studies in schools is aimed at the development of high competences; skills acquisition required for solving mankind's diverse environmental problems for better and effective social living. Specifically, the focus of Social Studies is to promote good citizenship and value education needed to build a

virile Nigerian nation irrespective of ethnic diversity, religious differences as well as promotion of peace and conflict resolution.

According to Kissock (1981:5) "Social Studies is a course of study which helps the society to impact skills, ideas, values and equally inculcate the spirit of oneness among people". It is important to note that Social Studies derived its curricular elements such as facts, ideas, knowledge, values, and skills from various disciplines. The disciplines include: economics, sociology, anthropology, political science, geography, history and sciences. Ideas are drawn from these subjects and used in integrated way to solve problem of man.

Aremu (2000) opines that academic achievement is undoubtedly a research interest to many educationists. In an attempt to investigate what determines academic outcome of learners, some educators have rather postulated more questions than answers. In recent times, prior literature has shown that learning outcomes (academic) achievement have been



determined by such variable as family, school and motivational factors.

Despite the laudable aims of Social Studies in post-primary school curriculum, there has been a dismal poor outcome of students' result in internal and external examinations. Students' performance, specifically in Social Studies, has been on the decline. As revealed by the statistical record available with the Examination Development Centre (EDC) Abakaliki office concerning students' performance in Social Studies for 2008 – 2012. The results within the years under study show low performance.

The level of education of the parents also influences the academic achievement of their children. Kushmana (2014) asserts that most educated parents and families are characterized by motivation and encouragement to their children for good academic achievements. Akpan (2002:30), supporting this view, states that these families are noted for both "extrinsic and intrinsic motivation through external factors as opposed to the internal drives of intrinsic motivation". The parents of these families provide tangible rewards or pressure to their children, which in turn boost their academic achievements

(Igbo, 2000). These parents also motivate their children through intrinsic motivation by internal factors as opposed to external drives or extrinsic motivation (Jennifer, 2001).

### **Theoretic framework**

The following theory are relevant to the present work:

### **Need for Achievement Theory**

David McClelland (1963) claims to have discovered a motivational syndrome or drive which he labeled 'need for achievement' (n-achievement). The discovery resulted from laboratory testing and more evidence was advanced in his book, 'the achieving society'. The major hypothesis of David McClelland's work is that a nation or family with a generally high level of n-achievement will produce more energetic, entrepreneurial children, who in turn, will produce rapid economic development in the family or nation.

The need for achievement is one of a number of needs which characterize man and determine much of human behaviour in a family. Like other motives, it is created through a person's childhood experiences as an individual member of a family. David McClelland states further that social characteristics – class, religion, historical occurrences and



family background affect motivational levels primarily as they affect the family, or more specially the values of child-rearing practices of the parents.

David McClelland infers that the major sources of n-achievement are parents from a high socio-economic class, who teach their children to be independent early in child-hood, who are interested in their children's activities, and who expect much of them.

His experiment consists of giving intelligence test to two groups of students, upper and lower socio-economic-status children. The test group was informed that the tests were designed to measure intelligence among the different socio-economic status of children, which David McClelland claimed to have aroused their achievement motives. The control group took the test without any information, whatsoever, the difference between the test and control groups were attributed to the achievement motives.

David McClelland found in his tests that scores varied from one individual to another, but in general it was found that the upper socio-economic classes' children performed significantly better academically than the middle and low socio-economic-status children.

David McClelland further assert that the need to achieve is a personality variable within families, and that low socio-economic families suffer from low achievement – orientation. The results of this theories has implication for this study, thus the relationship between home environment and students' academic achievement in social studies.

### **Conceptual framework**

Epunam (1999) defines academic achievement as the learning outcomes of the child. These include the knowledge, skills and ideas acquired and retained through their course of study within and outside the classroom situation. Similarly, La Shawn (2011:7) refers to academic achievement as 'standardized test scores, grades, and overall academic ability and performance outcomes'. The concept of academic achievement also refers to the achievement by individuals, of objectives related to various types of knowledge and skills. These objectives are socially established based on the age, prior learning and capacity of individuals with regard to education, socialization and qualification.

### **Social studies**

Golep (2000) maintains that Social Studies has been accepted in



many societies as one area of study, which holds the promise to imbibe in the child the ability to interpret social frameworks (including the associated problems) in which he operates as a human individual.

From the above definitions, it is clear that man is the focus of the subject, Social Studies. As a course of study on how man lives in his environment, Social Studies is concerned with the totality of all the activities of man. It deals with the interactions of man in his physical and social environment. Equally, it goes a long way in helping man to identify his problems in the immediate environment and proffer possible solutions to them.

In an attempt to tackle the issue of vagueness that surrounds the meaning of Social Studies, Jarolimek (1977:10), discusses Social Studies as a discipline that concerns itself with:

*Studying human behavior, mode of interaction among themselves and possible roles and regulations that will govern them, develop the ability for the usability of the available resources within their home.*

### Statement of problem

Teaching and learning of Social Studies in Nigeria and Ebonyi State in particular are faced with many challenges. One of the such challenges is the poor academic performance of the students. Table 1 of page 4 shows students' performance in Social Studies in some selected schools within the state from 2011 – 2014 JSSCE. In summary out of 638 students that sat for Social Studies in 2014 JSSCE examination in ten (10) schools sampled, only 38 got distinction, 339 had credit level while 261 had ordinary pass (EDC: 2014). Also for 2013 no distinction, 457 had credits while 603 had ordinary pass.

Again, students appear not to take interest in studying Social Studies and other academic activities (Olaewe, 2004). The reasons for these have become a subject of national discourse involving relationship between home environment and student's academic achievements. In other words, it has not been empirically established comprehensively whether the poor academic achievement in Social Studies in Abakaliki Education Zone is as a result of such factors as socio-economic status, parental style, parental involvement and family size.



Furthermore, students in the State have various study habits which they employ in their study of Social Studies as a subject. These study habits are of various forms. They include non-chalant attitude to learning, lack of interest and lateness in the school as at the time when this subject is been taught. Ibe, (2008) it is questionable whether all these factors put together affects the performances of students in Social Studies. The researcher wonders whether the students' poor performance and non-chalant attitude in Social studies are as a result of the factors mentioned above. The statement of the problem is; what is the discernment impact of parents' motivation, expectation on students' academic achievements in Social studies.

### **Purpose of study**

1. Establish the relationship between family size and students' academic achievement in Social Studies.
2. Identify the relationship between parents' expectation and students' academic achievement in Social Studies.

### **Research question**

1. What are the relationship between family size and students' academic achievement in Social Studies?

2. What is the relationship between parents' expectation and academic achievement of students' in Social Studies?

### **Research Hypothesis**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the achievement mean scores of students in Social studies and family size.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between the achievement mean scores of students in Social studies and parents' expectations.

### **Methods**

This study is a co-relationship survey design carried out in Abakaliki Education Zone. The population for this study comprised all the six hundred and thirty eight (638) Public Junior Secondary school students in Abakaliki Education Zone of Ebonyi State. Out of this, the sample of study was drawn. A sample of 258 was selected from the population using simple random sampling technique. Data were collected through a 30 item objective questions on Social Studies Achievement Test (SOSAT) developed by the researcher to determine the academic achievement



scores of the students' and a 37 researcher developed questionnaire instrument to obtain the background information of the students. The instruments were validated and tested for reliability. They yielded acceptable reliability coefficient values of 0.74 and 0.96 respectively on Home Environment Identification Check List and Social Studies Achievement Test using split half and Kuder-Richardson 20 (K-20)

statistics. Data collected were analyzed using t-test rho statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The research questions were answered in individual basis using Mean and standard deviation, while the hypotheses were tested using t-test rho. Items that scored 2.50 were accepted while items that scored less than 2.50 were rejected as the decision rule.

## Results

**Table 1:** Correlation coefficient between achievement and family size

S/NO	VARIABLE	ACHIEVEMENT SCORE	FAMILY SIZE
1	ACHIEVEMENT SCORE	1.0000 (258) P = .	.0144 (258) P = .818
2	FAMILY SIZE	.0144 (258) P = .818	1.0000 (258) P = .

The result in Table 1 shows a very low but positive relationship between students' achievement in Social Studies and family size. This is shown by a

correlation index of 0.014. This implies that the performance of students in Social studies is being affected by the number of children in the family.



**Table 2:** Correlation coefficient between achievement and parents' expectations

S/NO	VARIABLE	ACHIEVEMENT SCORE	PARENT EXPECTATION
1	ACHIEVEMENT SCORE	1.0000 (258) P = .	.0284 (258) P = .649
2	PARENT EXPECTATION	.0.284 (258) P = .649	1. 0000 (258) P =.

The result in Table 2 shows a correlation coefficient index of 0.028 which is very low but positive. This show a very low relationship between students' achievement in Social Studies and parental expectations. This means that what parents expects from their children influences the performance of students in Social studies.

**Table 3** Significance of relationship between students' achievement in Social studies and family size.

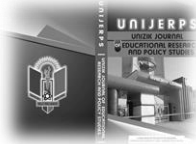
VARIABLE	COMPUTED R	R-SQUARE	ADJUSTED R-SQUARE	STD ERROR	BETA	T.CAL	SIGNIFICANCE OF T
Family size	0.0144	0.0002	-0.0037	6.0483	0.0144	0.231	0.8177
Constant						12.802	0.0000

The result in Table 3 shows that tcal value is less than the significance of t value. Therefore,  $H_{01}$  is not rejected; implying that there is no significant relationship between achievements mean scores of students in Social Studies and family size.

**Table 4:** Significance of relationship between students achievement in Social studies and parents' expectation.

VARIABLE	COMPUTED R	R-SQUARE	ADJUSTED R-SQUARE	STD ERROR	BETA	T.CAL	SIGNIFICANCE OF T
Parents' expectation	0.0284	0.0008	-0.0030	6.0465	0.0284	0.455	0.6493
Constant						12.686	0.000





The result in Table 4 shows that tcal value is 0.455 while the significance of t value is 0.6493. This means that tcal is less than significance of t. The researcher does not reject  $H_{02}$  which implies that there is no significance relationship between students' achievement in Social studies and parental expectations.

### Summary of major findings

The result in Table 1 shows a very low but positive relationship between students' achievement in Social Studies and family size. This is shown by a correlation index of 0.014. This implies that the performance of students in Social studies is being affected by the number of children in the family.

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### Discussion

#### Effects of family size and parental expectation on students' academic achievement

The result of the study in Table 1, indicates that correlation coefficient of 0.014 was obtained; signifying a very low but positive relationship between students achievement in Social studies and family size. This implies that the performance of students in Social studies is being affected by the number of children in the family.

This finding is in agreement with the work of Bradley and Corwyn (2002) who stated that the distress and distractions connected with crowding result in fewer and less-rich exchanges between parents and child. Having more siblings result in less allocation of time and attention to each child; this will in the long-run give rise to low achievement in school. Also Weinberg in Mezieobi & Opara (2007) bluntly



insists that large families are confronted with quality of life that is pitiable.

The result of the study in Table 2 parental expectation indicates that a correlation coefficient of 0.028 was obtained; signifying that there is very low but positive relationship between students' achievement in Social studies and parents expectation. However, this findings do not agree with the work of Mezieobi, Ndioho and Birabil (2004) who concluded that some parent are not bothered about their adolescents' abilities and interest in education, but rather force them to go to school and in fact impose educational programmes of their choices on the adolescent. Also agreeing with this result is the finding of Dubey, Edem and Thakur in Ikwumelu (2008) who asserts that the attitudes and aspiration that parents have concerning their children's schooling and success undoubtedly influence the way they behave towards their children and the support they give their children while attending school.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, it could be inferred that: Family size affects academic achievement of students in Social studies; and Parents expectation affects academic

achievement of students in Social studies.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher made the following recommendation.

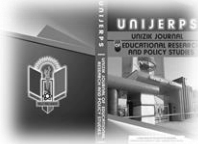
1. Parents should make every effort to reduce if not completely do away with broken homes and its causes since intact home begets good academic performance. On this, parents should be enlightened through workshop/seminars on the danger of unhealthy home environment.
2. Working parents should act as sources of incentives, encouragement, and reinforcement to their children so that they can perform well in schools, especially in Social studies tests.

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