

Influence of Parents' Socio-Economic Status on ... Ejale, O. J., Et. al. (2026)

Influence of Parents' Socio-Economic Status on Academic Performance among Public Secondary School Students in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study was carried out to examine the “Influence of Parents’ Socio-Economic Status on Students’ Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Cross River State, Nigeria”. One objective of the study focused on; influence of parents’ economic status on students’ academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria and the research question and null hypothesis were in line with the objective of the study. The population for this study is 87,071 comprising of all principals’, teachers, students of public secondary schools in Cross River State. Three hundred and eighty-two (382) respondents were sampled to represent the total population. Out of the distributed copies of the questionnaire, three hundred and seventy-five (375) copies of questionnaire were retrieved. Descriptive survey was used for the study. One instrument was employed to collect data for the study. The research instrument was validated by three experts through face and content validity. The reliability index shows .783 using Cronbach Alpha for its analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to answer research question and ANOVA was used in testing the hypothesis. The findings of the study reveal that parents with stable or average socioeconomic status significantly enhance students’ academic performance in public secondary schools across the state. The economic status of parents was found to determine students’ ability to participate in both curricular and extracurricular activities. The study concludes that, parents’ economic status plays a critical role in shaping students’ academic outcomes among other. The study recommends that: parents, government, and NGOs should provide financial support and educational assistance to children from low-income families through scholarships, free textbooks, and school meal programs.

Keywords: Parent’s Economic Status, Students’ academic performance, Public secondary schools

Introduction

Socio-economic status of parents plays an important role in this dynamic, as families with limited financial resources may struggle to support their children’s education, particularly when long commutes are involved. Students from lower socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to face challenges such as absenteeism due to fatigue or the need to assist with household chores or economic activities. This reality can significantly hinder their academic performance, as consistent attendance and engagement are crucial for success in secondary education. Parents’ economic status is widely recognized as one of the most significant family-related factors influencing students’ academic performance across the world. Economic status refers to the financial capacity of parents to provide essential educational resources such as school fees, textbooks, learning materials, internet access, transportation, private lessons, nutritious food and a conducive home environment for learning (Adeyemo & Kelani, 2025). Students from economically stable families are more likely to enjoy uninterrupted schooling, regular attendance, adequate nutrition and access to modern learning technologies, all of which contribute positively to academic achievement. Conversely, students from low-income households often experience educational disadvantages arising from inadequate learning materials, poor health, irregular school attendance, inability to meet school-related expenses and limited parental support due to financial hardship. These disparities have continued to widen educational inequalities, particularly in developing countries where household income significantly determines access to quality education (Aina & Adekunle, 2022).

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In Nigeria, the economic realities confronting many households have heightened concerns about the relationship between parents' economic status and students' academic performance. According to Obiakor, (2021), rising inflation, unemployment, increasing transportation costs and declining household purchasing power have made it difficult for many parents to adequately finance their children's education. Consequently, many students in public secondary schools struggle to acquire prescribed textbooks, school uniforms, laboratory materials and digital learning devices necessary for effective learning. Parental income, occupation and educational investment significantly predict students' academic outcomes, as economically advantaged families are better positioned to provide learning opportunities that enhance academic success. Home-school distance does not operate in isolation but is closely linked to parents' economic status. Families with higher economic resources can afford accommodation closer to schools, reliable transportation, or even enrol their children in better-located schools. In contrast, economically disadvantaged families often reside in remote or rural communities where students travel long distances to attend school. The inability to afford daily transportation exposes students to fatigue, lateness, absenteeism, and reduced study time, all of which negatively affect academic performance. Thus, parents' economic status indirectly shapes the effects of home-school distance by determining students' ability to overcome transportation and accessibility challenges (Bernadine & Timson, 2026). Against this background, examining the influence of parents' economic status provides an important dimension for understanding the broader phenomenon of home-school distance and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Parents' economic status constitutes a major concern in studies on home-school distance because it determines families' ability to cope with the challenges associated with long commuting distances to school. Parents with higher income levels are more likely to provide reliable transportation, pay for school buses or commercial transport, relocate closer to quality schools and meet other educational expenses that reduce the negative effects of distance on students' learning. Conversely, students from low-income households often walk long distances to school due to financial constraints, resulting in lateness, fatigue, absenteeism, and reduced concentration during classroom instruction. These conditions may ultimately contribute to poor academic performance. In Cross River State, where many communities are rural and transportation infrastructure is inadequate, the economic capacity of parents may either lessen or worsen the educational challenges associated with home-school distance. Although previous studies have acknowledged the importance of parental socioeconomic status in educational outcomes, limited attention has been given to how parents' economic status interacts with home-school distance to influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State. This gap underscores the need to examine parents' economic status as a significant factor in understanding the relationship between home-school distance and students' academic achievement in the study area.

Objectives of the Study

The following objective was formulated to guide the study:

1. To Examine the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Research Question

1. To what extent do parents' economic status influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria?

Null Hypothesis

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents regarding parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria

Theoretical Framework

The theory was propounded by Abraham Maslow in 1943 as part of his paper "A Theory of Human Motivation." Maslow introduced the concept of a hierarchy of needs, which asserts that human motivation is driven by the fulfillment of basic to complex needs (Reid-Cunningham, 2008). This hierarchy is depicted as a pyramid with five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization. Maslow posited that lower-level needs must be met before individuals can focus on higher-level aspirations, such as personal growth or academic achievement. For students, this framework implies that basic needs, such as food, rest, and safety, must be satisfied to facilitate optimal learning and performance. Maslow's theory revolutionized the understanding of human behavior by emphasizing the role of motivation



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in achieving potential and aligning it with environmental factors that support or hinder. In relation to home-school distance and students' academic performance, the theory suggests that students must have their basic needs, safety, and sense of security adequately met before they can effectively concentrate on learning. Long distances between home and school may expose students to fatigue, hunger, transportation difficulties, and safety risks, which hinder their ability to focus and participate actively in academic activities. Therefore, reducing home-school distance and providing safe, accessible learning environments can help satisfy students' basic and security needs, thereby enhancing motivation, school attendance and academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria

Parents' Economic Status on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools

Parents' economic status is the financial capacity of parents or guardians to provide the educational, social, and material resources required to support their children's learning and overall academic development. It is commonly measured through indicators such as family income, parents' occupation, ownership of productive assets and the ability to meet educational expenses. In public secondary schools, parents' economic status plays a significant role in determining students' access to quality learning materials, transportation, healthcare, nutrition, digital resources and a conducive home environment, all of which directly or indirectly influence academic performance (Rintep & Akoji, 2025). Students from families with high economic status are generally more likely to achieve better academic outcomes because their parents can adequately provide school fees where applicable, textbooks, uniforms, internet access, private tutoring and other instructional materials that facilitate effective learning. According to Bankole (2024) financially stable parents are also better positioned to provide nutritious meals, comfortable accommodation and a peaceful study environment, thereby enhancing students' concentration, attendance, motivation and academic engagement. Furthermore, economically advantaged families often expose their children to educational technologies and extracurricular learning opportunities that improve cognitive development and academic achievement. Odom, Ishiwu and Osuji (2024) found that parental socio-economic status significantly influences students' academic performance, emphasizing that parental income and educational support enhance students' learning outcomes in secondary schools. Students from economically disadvantaged families frequently encounter numerous challenges that hinder academic success. Limited financial resources may prevent parents from purchasing textbooks, paying transportation costs, providing internet-enabled devices, or creating a conducive learning environment at home. Some students from low-income households engage in petty trading, farming, or other income-generating activities to support their families, reducing the time available for studying and completing assignments. Financial hardship may also result in absenteeism, lateness, psychological stress, poor nutrition and irregular school attendance, all of which negatively affect academic performance.

Parents' economic status influences the level of parental involvement in education. According to Atolagbe, Oparinde and Umaru (2019) parents with stable incomes are more likely to participate actively in school activities, monitor their children's academic progress, communicate with teachers, and provide continuous academic encouragement. Although financial resources alone do not guarantee academic excellence, they create opportunities for sustained educational support and improved learning experiences. Within the context of public secondary schools in Cross River State, parents' economic status may determine students' ability to cope with challenges associated with long home-school distances. Families with adequate financial resources can afford reliable transportation, bicycles, motorcycles, or boarding facilities that reduce travel fatigue and improve punctuality, attendance and classroom participation. In contrast, students from low-income households often trek long distances to school, arrive late, become physically exhausted and experience reduced concentration during lessons. Consequently, parents' economic status may either mitigate or exacerbate the influence of home-school distance on students' academic performance (Bankole, 2024). Therefore, improving household economic conditions and providing targeted educational support for students from low-income families are essential strategies for enhancing academic performance in Nigerian public secondary schools

Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research approach. Descriptive survey design is a method that is use to gather information about a particular population or phenomenon at a specific point in time, it is commonly employ to examine characteristics, perceptions, behaviours, or conditions within a defined group. The population of this study is 87,071 which comprises of all the public secondary school principals, teachers and students in Cross River State, Nigeria. Cross River State have a total number of 355 public secondary schools' principals, 4,988 teachers and 81,728 students. Cross River

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State comprises of three (3) Educational Zones; Calabar Educational Zone, Ikom Educational Zone and Ogoja Educational Zone. The sample size for this study is 382. The decision to use 382 sample sizes was based on the Research Advisors Table (2006) of sample specification. Simple random sampling technique using balloting was used by the researcher to select six (6) Local Government Areas out of the total 18 Local Government in the State. As regard, the selection of sample Local Government is in line with Olayiwola (2007) who stated that 10-30% of a population can be used as a sample to represent the entire population. The researcher wrote the names of all local government in each educational zones in the state and shuffle thereafter, asked one research assistant to pick 2 local government each out of the three (3) educational zones within the state. Thereafter, proportionate sampling was adopted in selecting the principals, teachers and students to respond to the questionnaire. This technique was used because of the uneven distribution of Educational Stakeholders across each Educational Zones. A self-structured questionnaire was used to collect information from the respondents. The instrument, developed by the researcher, included five (5) items on a five-point Likert scale: SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), U (Undecided), D (Disagree), and SD (Strongly Disagree). Data were analyzed using mean for the research questions, while the hypothesis was tested using ANOVA.

Presentation of Results

Research Question One:

To what extent do parents' economic status influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria?

This section examines respondents' perspectives on the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. It directly addresses research question, which seeks to determine the views of principals, teachers, and students regarding the degree to which parents' economic status has influence students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Table 1: Analyzes the Influence of Parents' Economic Status on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

S/N	Item Statements	Category of Respondents	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
1	Parents' ability to prompt payment of school fees affects students' academic performance	Principals	46	17	1	5	5	4.27
		Teachers	88	19	3	4	2	4.61
		Students	113	51	19	1	1	4.48
2	The economic status of parents influences the quality of educational materials that their children use in school.	Principals	28	30	6	4	6	3.95
		Teachers	79	27	4	3	3	4.52
		Students	115	61	1	3	5	4.50
3	Students perform better academically when parents can provide all necessary school materials	Principals	55	11	4	1	2	4.97
		Teachers	88	25	1	1	1	4.71
		Students	119	45	11	8	2	4.46
4	Parents' economic status determines students' ability to participate in extracurricular activities.	Principals	38	28	3	3	2	4.31
		Teachers	69	39	2	4	2	4.46
		Students	125	49	3	4	4	4.55
5	The financial situation at home affects students' concentration and focus on studies.	Principals	51	16	1	3	3	4.47
		Teachers	83	21	4	3	5	4.50
		Students	111	47	8	11	8	4.31
6	The economic challenges faced by parents negatively impact students' motivation to excel academically.	Principals	38	23	2	6	5	4.12
		Teachers	82	22	8	2	2	4.55
		Students	89	68	7	11	10	4.16
7	Parents' economic status affects the level of support students receive academically	Principals	37	28	4	3	2	4.28
		Teachers	69	33	8	2	4	4.39

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		Students	115	67	1	1	1	4.59
8	The economic difficulties of parents cause students to worry, which affects their academic performance.	Principals	27	30	7	5	5	3.93
		Teachers	89	18	3	4	2	4.62
		Students	150	24	5	2	4	4.70
9	Students feel less confident in their studies because of the financial struggles at home.	Principals	36	29	5	3	1	4.30
		Teachers	85	23	5	2	1	4.63
		Students	127	41	7	6	4	4.52
10	Students experience stress due to parents' financial situation, which affects their academic performance.	Principals	47	16	7	3	1	4.42
		Teachers	83	27	1	4	1	4.61
		Students	99	57	9	12	8	4.23
Cumulative								4.44

Source: Researcher's Field Work (2026)

Table 1 summarizes respondents' views on the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that all the mean scores exceeded the benchmark of 3.00, with a grand mean of 4.44, indicating respondents' agreement that parents' economic status significantly influences students' academic performance. The results suggest that financially stable parents are better able to support their children's educational needs, facilitate participation in academic and extracurricular activities, and provide resources that enhance learning outcomes. The findings also indicate that government interventions, such as scholarships, bursaries, free tuition and subsidized instructional materials, play an important role in reducing financial barriers and promoting equitable educational opportunities for students from low-income households.

Null Hypothesis One (H₀₁):

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the opinions of respondents regarding parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on the perceptions of principals, teachers and students on influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria

Source	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F-ratio	P-value	Decision
Between Groups	242.839	2	121.42	74.58	0.060	H ₀₁ Retained
Within Groups	164.494	373	0.442			
Total	407.333	375				

Source: Researcher's Field Work (2025)

Table 2 reveals that the computed probability value of 0.060 exceeded the study's alpha level of 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained, indicating that there were no statistically significant differences in the opinions of principals, teachers, and students regarding parents' economic status on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Cross River State, Nigeria.

Summary of Finding

Students whose parents have stable or average socioeconomic status tend to achieve better academic outcomes because they receive consistent financial, emotional and educational support throughout their schooling. Such parents are also more capable of providing learning resources and enabling their children to actively participate in curricular and extracurricular activities, which further enhances their academic performance and overall development.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study also revealed that parents' economic status plays a crucial role in shaping students' academic performance in public secondary schools across Cross River State. Students from financially stable or average-income families performed significantly better compared to their peers from low-income households. This is because economically empowered parents are able to provide essential educational resources such as textbooks, exercise books, uniforms, digital devices, and consistent transport fares, which facilitate effective learning. In contrast, students from disadvantaged backgrounds often face challenges such as irregular attendance, inability to pay school levies, and lack of study materials,



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all of which negatively affect their academic outcomes. These findings confirm the broader understanding that socioeconomic status is a key determinant of educational attainment and access to opportunities for learning (Nwokike and Nwadike, 2023). The study further demonstrated that parents' financial strength not only supports academic needs but also determines the extent of students' participation in extracurricular and enrichment activities. Respondents noted that students from higher or average socioeconomic families are more likely to attend extra lessons, have access to private tutors, and engage in school programs that broaden their learning experience. On the other hand, students from low-income homes tend to combine academic demands with household chores or petty trading to support family income, which reduces the time and energy they can devote to learning. This imbalance contributes to disparities in academic performance and often widens the gap between students from different economic backgrounds within the same schools (Adeyeye, 2023). The evidence underscores the significant advantage that financial stability offers in enhancing students' motivation, focus, and readiness to succeed academically. The implications of these findings highlight the need for deliberate government interventions and community support to mitigate the effects of poverty on education. The state government has already initiated programs such as scholarship schemes, bursaries, and free tuition to reduce the financial strain on low-income families, but these efforts need to be expanded and sustained. Provision of subsidized or free educational materials, improved school feeding programs, and financial assistance targeted at vulnerable students would help bridge the educational gap caused by economic inequality. In accordance to (Chukwuma & Ibe, 2024) supporting disadvantaged families and ensuring that all students, regardless of parental income, have access to the same educational opportunities, the government can significantly enhance equity and improve overall academic performance in public secondary schools across Cross River State

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that parents' socioeconomic status has a significant influence on students' academic performance in public secondary schools. Students from financially stable households are more likely to achieve better academic outcomes because they receive adequate financial, emotional and educational support that promotes effective learning and active participation in school activities.

Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusion of the study, it has been recommended that:

1. Government should strengthen financial support programmes, such as scholarships, bursaries and educational grants, for students from low-income families to reduce the adverse effects of poor parental economic status on their academic performance in public secondary schools.
2. Parents should be encouraged through school-community partnerships and awareness programmes to prioritize educational support for their children by providing essential learning materials and creating a conducive home environment that promotes academic success, regardless of their economic status.

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