

# Family Size as Correlates of Academic Achievement in Social Studies in Nigerian Secondary Schools

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## Abstract:

This paper investigated the influence of family size on the academic performance of junior secondary school students in Nigerian Social studies classroom. The study adopted descriptive survey method of research. The targeted population consisted of 4000 Junior secondary schools students. The sample consisted of 200 students selected from 11 schools. A self-developed questionnaire titled IFSOAPOSIN was used to collect data. The validity of the instrument was determined using face and content validity with a reliability coefficient of 0.85 obtained, considered high enough for the study. Other descriptive statistics employed were frequency counts, simple percentage and t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that there was negative effect of large family size homes on academic performances of students in junior secondary schools. The finding also revealed that students from small family homes performed academically better than their counter part from large families. It was therefore recommended that parents should endeavor to control the size of the family, so that available resources in the home would be enough to cater for the academic needs of the children. And also, governments should formulate policies that will regulate child birth for family to arrest the consequences of large family type in the society.

**Keywords:** Academic Achievement, Achievement in Social Studies, Social Studies, Nigerian Secondary Schools,

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## Introduction

The best gift a country can leave its citizens, particularly its youths, is education. This is due to the fact that education plays a crucial role in the growth of any society. Education is the dissemination of knowledge to society at large (Okafor, 2018). The term "education" refers to a broad concept that includes all of a person's learning opportunities. According to Nwabachili and Egbue (2013), passing on knowledge from one generation to the next is the primary function of education. In this sense, education encompasses all of the processes, formal and informal, that help a child become a contributing member of society. Acquiring information about the world and its inhabitants via everyday interactions is the goal of informal education. According to the views of Nwabachili and Egbue (2013), schooling is a sort of socialisation that is both intentional and structured. Non-formal education, they said, encompasses any and all training and instruction that takes place outside of a conventional classroom. The family is a crucial component in achieving all of these goals in schooling.

The family is the first group a child interacts with after birth. According to Clifford (2017), a child's primary environment is still their family. He stressed the importance of family environment in determining whether or not a child's intelligence develops. The primary purpose of a family, according to Akubue and Okolo (2018), is to socialise children through natural means. A primary social group consisting of parents, children, and potentially additional members of the household is what Okunniyi (2014) calls a family.

There is a wide range of family sizes. The term "family size" refers to the number of individuals who live together as a unit, which may include not just the nuclear family but also the father, mother, children, and even grandparents. Alio (2015) argued that there is a connection between family size and academic achievement. He emphasised that the number of children in a family has a significant impact on the amount of time and physical care each child receives. Lower-class communities tend to have larger family sizes. As a result of financial strain and a lack of parental support and stimulation, children from large households often struggle academically (Eamon, 2015).

He further emphasised that students with fewer siblings are more likely to receive more parental attention and greater support, which leads to better school performance, consistent with the finding that small family sizes are associated with high academic accomplishment (Majoribank, 2016). Every child's primary environment is still their family, no matter how big or small it is. Education and care for the child's emotional and physical well-being are provided by the family. This lends credence to Maduewisi's (2018) argument that a child's intelligence is heavily influenced by factors such as their family life, social circle, and geographical placement at school. She argued that poor family circumstances can cause once-gifted children to lose their acuity. She continued by saying that a person's state of mind affects how intelligent they become. This is in agreement with the findings of Odo (2017), who found that children's natural potentials cannot be realised without an adequately stimulating family environment. The inference is that a child's full potential for performance will be realised in a family environment that is intellectually challenging and uses effective teaching techniques.

Researchers Durosaro and Durosaro (2020) looked into the possible connection between students' family sizes and their academic performance and discovered that family size did, in

fact, have an effect. Children from tiny families outperformed those from both medium and large families in their academic performance. In addition, Yoloye (2019) investigated the potential contribution of variables related to their family histories in influencing their academic success. Family size and parental education level are just two examples of the demographic factors that were taken into account for this analysis. According to his research, the naturally large family sizes in polygamous societies decrease the likelihood that children will enrol in school. Children from low-income families who attend schools also have a lower probability of succeeding. Thirdly, in comparison to literate nuclear families, the parents of these families are largely illiterate and unable to adequately motivate their children in schools.

Okunniyi (2014) provides a more thorough explanation of the economic effects of having a high family size, noting that parents simply cannot provide as much one-on-one care for their children as they once did. They could not afford to give them the advantages that would allow them to make the most of their school years, such as books, computers, study spaces free from distractions like the television, trips to interesting places, recreational activities, and travel opportunities. He thinks the most crucial finding is that parents with large families do not engage in as much one-on-one conversation with their children as those with smaller families do.

The composition of the family is yet another element of the surrounding environment. A family might be shattered or complete depending on its structural makeup. When a family unit is unable to function as intended due to factors such as parental death, marital dissolution, child abandonment, or even illegitimacy, we say that the family is shattered. In 2016, according to Coukline. Reduced resources, new roles and responsibilities, a different pattern of intrafamilial interactions, and a reorganisation of routines and schedules are just some of the stresses that a child and parent in a single-parent family may experience.

Children from single-parent households may experience emotional and social difficulties that negatively impact their academic performance. According to Danesy and Okedian's (2012) research, the poor academic performance and drop out syndrome seen in young school students is a direct result of the psychologically imposed problems of street hawking among secondary school students. These problems include sex networking behaviour and juvenile delinquent behaviour, both of which take up a significant amount of students' time and distract them from their studies. They also complained that the young students' lacklustre performance in government exams like the JSCE, WASSCE, and NECO may be traced back to their mothers' and fathers' inability to provide for them. Like (Okunniyi 2014), I argue that a child who experiences both parental and social deprivation is more likely to struggle academically and even miss school. This is because the kid could not have enough money for things like school supplies or clothes. He argues that single parents who are overworked and stressed out as a result of their own emotional reaction to their position are less likely to be patient, understanding, and kind to their children.

Here, "family size" means the total number of children in the family, including the child in question, while "birth order" means the child's position in the family's chronological birth order. However, a child's academic performance is typically influenced by the type of family they come from, which can range from monogamous to polygamous. It's worth noting that

whether a family is monogamous or polygamous, the number of members must conform to the type of family. The polygamous family structure is unique to Africa and, more specifically, Nigeria. Polygamous family is prevalent in the Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State, and it may be found in both wealthy and impoverished households. At the very top of their respective fields, both professionals and leaders have an equal chance. Polygamy is more common among low-wage employees at the bottom of the economic ladder, but it is just as common among families with advanced degrees who have libraries full of new books and those who have never read a book in their lives.

When evaluating students' success, academic performance is a crucial factor. According to studies and assessments, students nowadays face an increasingly steep learning curve, making it more difficult than ever for them to achieve academic achievement. At the primary, primary school, and tertiary levels of education in Nigeria, subpar academic performance has been documented.

There have been complaints about Nigerian students' academic performance at all levels of the country's educational system for as long as anyone can remember. Soyinka (2019) has noted the fall in academic performance of students in Nigeria and has concluded that the country's education system needs revamping. He continued by saying that the quality of the graduates generated by the nation's schools is uncertain and open to reevaluation because of the dramatic decline in academic standards.

Educationists, particularly guidance and counsellors, have expressed significant concern over students' dismal academic performance. Low academic performance is consistently reported by schools despite the presence of numerous assistance programmes and counselling initiatives designed to raise students' achievement. Ekiti state schools' low performance necessitates an investigation into the root causes. Although many factors, including pupils' attitudes towards school, approaches to learning, and academic self-concept, have been blamed for students' poor performance. There are other variables that result in low performance besides student factors, school factors, and parent issues. Family size and birth order can have a positive or negative impact on students' academic performance, as can parents' socioeconomic status and educational background.

In a recent study carried out by Danesy and Okedira (2002) they found out that maternal and paternal deprivation of the essential need of young students as a result of large family structure have prompted their poor performance in public examination. The findings of Okiemute (2015) however is contradictory to the position of Danesy and Okedira above that the poverty of parent as a result of large family structure have moderate impact on pupils academic work especially at the elementary classes. Their opinion differs, but there is a general assumption that the social class or background a child came from automatically affects his or her academic performance. This research is therefore an attempt to establish if correlation exists between the size of a family and pupils achievement in some selected schools in Ado local government area of Ekiti state.

The purpose of the study is to examine if family size is an important determinant of grades achieved by children in schools. The study sought to determine if relationship between the family size and academic achievement of pupils in schools is inverse or not. This study is also part of efforts to address the issue that if parents should make decision to limit the size of

their families, it should not be seen as purely because of academic attainment. The study also sought to establish if academic attainment of children in schools could be driven by other factors such as the parents (ability, wealth, education and cultural factors) by intergenerational transmission mechanism as low endowed parents may produce low endowed children in respective of the family size. Finally, the study would predict the relationships if any, exist between family size and academic achievement of children in Nigerian schools.

### Research Questions

Based on the background to the study and controversy about the theme above, the following research questions were generated

1. What is the effect of small family size on academic performance of students in Nigerian secondary schools?
2. What is the effect of large family size on academic performance of students in Nigerian secondary schools?

### Research Hypothesis

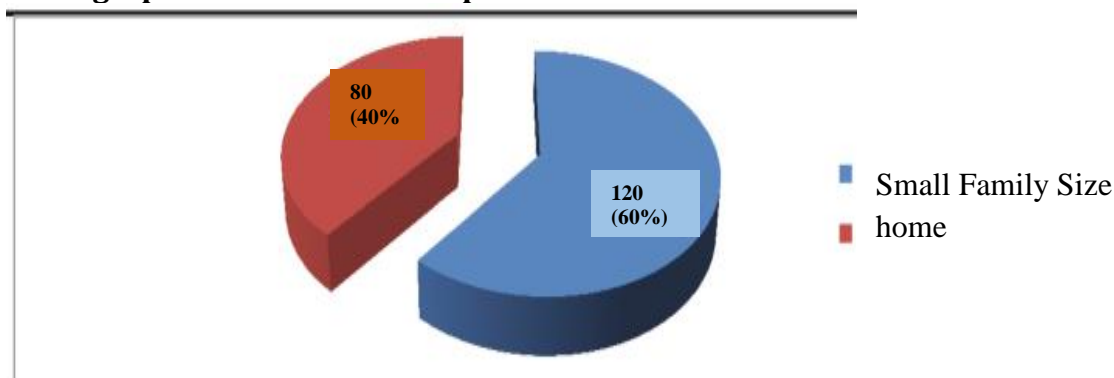
H<sub>0</sub>; There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of student from large families and those from small families structure in Social studies examinations in Nigerian schools.

### Methodology

The survey design of descriptive type of research was used for the study. The design involves consideration of each variable involved in the study without manipulation. The population of the study consisted of all students in all the secondary schools in Ado local government Area of Ekiti state. The sample for the study consisted of 200 (two hundred) students purposely selected across all the secondary schools in the local government Area. An instrument titled; Effect of family size on the academic achievement of students in Social studies classroom in Nigeria schools (EDFSAADS) was used to collect relevant data for the study. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by giving samples to experts in the field of Social studies and tests and Measurements for necessary evaluation. Amendment and corrections were effected in the final draft of the instrument. Test and retest method of reliability was used to establish the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered on 20 students outside the sample subject group. This instrument was administered twice within two weeks intervals. The reliability coefficient of 0.91 was obtained via the Cronbach statistics and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data collected were collated and analyzed, while the research hypothesis was tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

## Result

### Demographic Profile of the Respondents



The Pie Chart in Figure 1 revealed the distribution of the respondents by their family size. It was shown that 120 (60%) of the respondents which constitute the majority are from large family size while 80 (40%) are from small family size. This implies that students from small family size are more than students from large family size.

**Research Question 1:** What is the effect of large family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti?

**Table 1: Effect of large family size homes on academic performance in junior secondary schools of students**

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	Large family size home find it difficult to provide for the needs of their children thereby affecting students' academic Performance Negatively.	76 (38%)	116 (58%)	4 (2%)	4 (2%)	3.32	Agreed
2	Children from large family size often lack access to educational learning materials and facilities which reduce their performance.	110 (55%)	72 (36%)	18 (9%)	0 (0)	3.46	Agreed
3	Children from large family size usually have less focus/concentration in school due to large family stress thereby affecting students' academic performance Negatively.	64 (32%)	112 (56%)	16 (8%)	8 (4%)	3.16	Agreed
4	Large family size home lack opportunity of attending	120 (60%)	80 (40%)	0 (0)	0(0)	3.60	Agreed

	standard schools which affect their academic performance.						
5	Large family size home lack means of providing better diet for their children which also affect their intellectual ability and lowers their academic Performance.	20 (10%)	160 (80%)	0(0)	20 (10%)	2.90	Agreed
<i>Grand Mean</i>						3.30	Agreed

### Mean greater than 2.50 'Agreed' otherwise 'Disagreed'

The result of analysis presented in Table 1 revealed the effect of large family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti. It was revealed that majority of the respondents agreed with all the statements in item 1-5 as their mean responses were greater than 2.50. This implies that large family size home find it difficult to provide for the needs of their children thereby affecting students' academic performance negatively (3.32), Children from large family size often lack access to educational learning materials and facilities which reduce their performance (3.46), students spend more time on Facebook, Twitter and other social media which affect their academic performance (3.16), large family size home lack opportunity of attending standard schools which affect their academic performance (3.60) and large family size home lack means of providing better diet for their children which also affect their intellectual ability and lowers their academic performance (2.90). The grand mean value in the table was greater than 2.50 which indicated that there is effect of large family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti.

**Research Question 2:** What is the effect of small family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti?

**Table 2: Effect of small family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools**

S/N	Items	SA	A	SD	D	Mean	Decision
1	Small family size home enhances students' ability to listen and concentrate effectively thereby affecting his/her achievement.	60 (30%)	120 (60%)	20 (10%)	0 (0)	3.20	Agreed
2	Students from small family size often have access to learning materials to boost their	40 (20%)	160 (80%)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.20	Agreed



	performance.						
3	Children from small family size most times have access to quality education through quality schools which promote their academic performance.	40 (20%)	140 (70%)	0 (0)	20 (10%)	3.00	Agreed
4	Students from small family size homes have access to qualitative education in standard schools, home and abroad which influence their performance in Schools.	180 (90%)	20 (10%)	0 (0)	20 (20%)	3.90	Agreed
5.	Small family size homes provide personal teachers to teach their children after school hours in order to improve their academic performance in School.	120 (60%)	80 (40%)	0(0)	0(0)	3.60	Agreed
Grand Mean						3.42	Agreed

### Mean greater than 2.50 'Agreed' otherwise 'Disagreed'

The result of analysis presented in Table 2 revealed the effect of small family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti. It was revealed that majority of the respondents agreed with all the statements in item 1-5 as their mean responses were greater than 2.50. This implies that small family size home enhances students' ability to listen and concentrate effectively thereby affecting his/her achievement (3.20), students from small family size often have access to learning materials to boost their performance (3.20), Children from small family size most times have access to quality education through quality schools which promote their academic performance (3.00), Students from small family size homes have access to qualitative education in standard schools, home and abroad which influence their performance in schools (3.90) and Small family size homes provide personal teachers to teach their children after school hours in order to improve their academic performance in school (3,60). The grand mean value in the table was greater than 2.50 which indicated that there is effect of small family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti.

### Hypothesis Testing

Students from large family homes do not differ significantly from their counterparts from small family homes in their academic performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Ekiti state.

**Table 3: t-test Statistics for mean difference between large family homes and small family homes**

Variable	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab	P-value	Decision
Large Family Home	80	2.34	0.76	198	4.06	1.96	0.00	Significant
Small family homes	120	3.76	1.89					

**P>0.05**

The result presented in table 3 revealed that t-calculated (4, 06) was greater than the t-table (1.96) and  $P > 0.05$  level of significance. The null hypothesis was rejected, which implies that students from large family homes do differ significantly from their counterparts from small family homes in their academic performance in junior Secondary Schools in Ekiti state. This implies that students from small family homes performed academically better than students from large family home.

**Discussion**

The findings of the study revealed the effect of large family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti, It was revealed that large family size home find it difficult to provide for the needs of their children thereby affecting students' academic performance negatively, children from large family size often lack access to educational learning materials and facilities which reduce their performance, students spend more time on Facebook, Twitter and other social media which affect their academic performance. Large family size home members lack opportunity of attending standard schools which affect their academic performance and large family size home lack means of providing better diet for their children which also affect their intellectual ability and lowers their academic performance Hence, there is negative effect of large family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti.

The findings of the result revealed the effect of small family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti. It was revealed that small family size home enhances students' ability to listen and concentrate effectively thereby affecting his/her achievement. Students from small family size often have access to learning materials to boost their performance, students from small family size most times have access to quality education through quality schools which promote their academic performance. Students from small family size homes have access to qualitative education in standard schools, home and abroad which influence their performance in schools as small family size homes provide personal teachers to teach their children after school hours in order to improve their academic performance in school (3.60). Hence, there is positive effect of small family size homes on academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti.

Another finding of the study was that the null hypothesis that students from large family homes do not differ significantly from their counterparts from small family homes in their academic performance in Junior Secondary Schools in Ekiti state was rejected which implies

that students from small family homes performed academically better than students from large family home.

### Summary of the Study

This study examined the effects of family Size on academic performance of Junior Secondary school students in Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The study specifically examined the academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti from large family size homes and the academic performance of students in junior secondary schools in Ado Ekiti from small family size homes. In view of these, two research questions and one hypothesis was raised and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that small family size homes enhance students' academic performance than large family size homes in Ado Ekiti. Hence, family Size has effect on academic performance of Junior Secondary school students in Ado Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that:

1. Parents should endeavor to control the size of the family so that the available resources in the home would be enough to cater for the academic needs of the children.
2. Government should formulate policies that will regulate child birth for family to avert the consequences of large family type in the society.

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