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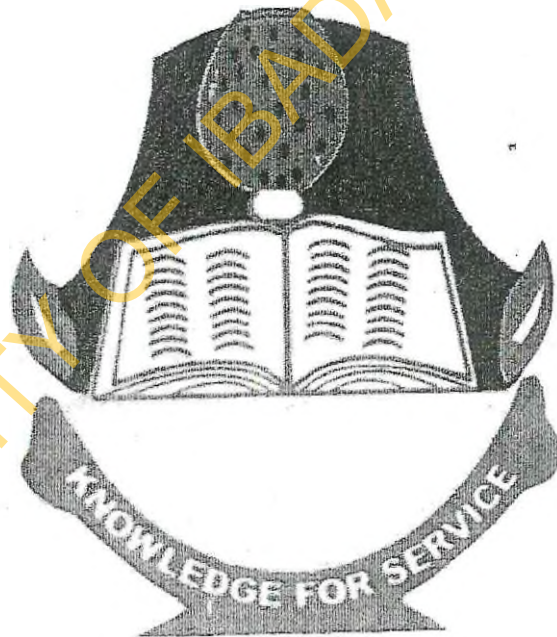
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## PEER INFLUENCE AND FAMILY FACTORS AS CORRELATE OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGH ABILITY GIRLS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OWERRI, IMO STATE

By  
G.A. Adedodun, Ph.D  
&  
G.I. Ibeabuchi

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### Abstract

*It has become obvious that it is difficult to determine factors that have direct relationship with academic achievement of students, most especially the high ability girls in our secondary schools. It is on this basis that this study investigated peer influence and family factors as correlate of academic achievement of high ability girls in secondary schools in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design of the ex-post facto type. Simple random sampling technique was used to select ten secondary schools in Owerri, Imo State. Ten participants were purposively selected from each school making a total of one hundred (100) participants. The main instruments used for the study include: Slosson Intelligence Test (SIT), Students' Academic Record as well as Family Cohesion, Broken Home, Parental Socio-Economic Status, Peer Influence and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (FaBSPAQ) developed by the researchers. Data were analysed using simple percentage and Pearson's Product Moment correlation at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that, there is a positive and significant relationship between broken home and family cohesion ( $r=0.461$ ), parental socio-economic status related to family cohesion  $r=0.539$ , and parental socio-economic status with broken home  $r=0.594$ . Peer influence has a relationship with family cohesion  $r=0.457$  and parental SES  $r=0.308$  respectively. Therefore, there is relationship among the independent variables but not statistically significant. Findings also revealed that none of the four independent variables has any significant effect or contribution to the prediction of academic achievement among high ability girls with family cohesion ( $\beta = -.066$ ,  $t = -.500$   $p>0.05$ ), broken home, ( $\beta = -.031$ ,  $t = .236$   $p>0.05$ ), parental SES ( $\beta = -.189$   $p>0.05$ ), and peer influence ( $\beta = -.128$ ,  $t = -1.114$   $p>0.05$ ). Finally, the findings revealed that there is no significant combined influence of independent variables to the prediction of dependent variable. The ANOVA result of the regression analysis shows that there was no significant joint influence of the independent variables on academic achievement. The model summary table revealed that adjusted  $R^2$  of 1.21% of the variance observed in the achievement of the student which was statistically not significant.  $F(4,95) = .742$ ,  $p>0.005$ . it is therefore recommended that schools, parents and researchers should identify other factors that may affect the academic achievement of high ability girls. Recommendation was also made that parents should promote unity at home as this may promote positive emotional status of high ability girls which in turn could lead to improved academic achievement.*

**Keywords:** Peer Influence, Family Factors, Academic Achievement, High Ability Girls

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### Introduction

High ability girls could be described as average. In most cases, they demonstrate high female students who possess a minimum of potential in virtually all school subjects. The intelligence quotient (IQ) of 120 and whose intellectual ability of these set of students are academic performance is consistently above



significantly higher than average when compared to their peers which is manifested in superior academic achievement.

Academic achievement is seen as the knowledge attained or skills shown in a particular school subject. It is the school evaluation of the classroom work on the basis of the grades awarded. Academic achievement according to Ayodele (2007) is of two types: positive and negative (poor) achievement. Among other factors, family factors and peer influence have been shown to affect students' academic achievement in school.

The academic achievement of high ability girls has long been a topic of interest in research community. Numerous factors contribute to a child's level of academic success, one factor being the family factor and the other is the peer influence as mentioned above. For the purpose of this study, some variable that will be generated from family factor include: Family Cohesion, broken home and parental socio-economic status. The family unit is considered one of the most influential components of a child's academic achievement due to the fact that the family is the first source of informal education for a child (Summani, Hussin, & Siraji, 2010). The family is the child first place of contact with the world. The child as a result, acquires initial education and socialization from parents and other significant persons in the family.

The parental socio-economic status of a girl with high ability is majorly determined by combining parents' educational level, occupational status, and income (Jeynes, 2002). It is believed that low socio-economic status affects academic achievement because it prevents access to vital resources which might aid academic achievement and it may cause stress at home. The economic hardships that are caused by low socio-economic status can lead to disruptions in parenting, an increasing amount of family conflicts and an increased likelihood of depression in parents and two parents households (Eamon, 2005).

Life in a single parent family or broken home can be stressful for both the child and the parent. Such families are often faced with

challenges of inadequate financial resources. If students from unstable homes are to be compared with those from stable homes, it would be seen that the former have more social, academic and emotional problems. The family and its structure play a great role in children's academic achievement. Researches have shown that marital instability brings about stress, tension, lack of motivation and frustration. Obviously, these manifestations act negatively on a child's academic performance. For example Kaufman (2015) asserts that children of broken homes often fail at school and are at risk emotionally. However, this may not be completely applicable in all cases of broken homes.

Various studies reported profound family influences on development of high ability girls. According to Davis & Rimm, (2014), parents may engage in three unhealthy approaches to dealing with their daughter's giftedness: some parents deny their daughter's giftedness in an attempt to give her a "normal" life, other parents do not talk to their daughter about her gifts and talents because they are afraid it will "swell her ego", still others acknowledge the giftedness but try to "put her in her place" so she would not think she is better than others. Callahan et al, (2004) analysed influences of family on high ability teenage girls to face and cope with barriers to their academic achievement.

As earlier stressed in the second paragraph of this study, apart from family factors, peer group influence has also been discovered to affect students' academic achievement. Peer influence refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes and values in order to conform to group norms (Kirk, 2000). While most educators believe that peer pressure has an influence on children's academic achievement, Kirk, (2000) observes that few studies have been done to prove this assertion. Castrogiovanni, (2002) sees peer group as a small group of similar age, family close friends, sharing the same activities. He further stressed that peer group is an important socialization agent.

The researchers are interested in working on high ability girls because the influence of gender on academic achievement has been an

issue of concern to most researchers. Many researchers believe that gender has some powerful effect on learning. Although research results vary widely, the following conclusions have been drawn; Bielinska & Davison, (2003) came up with the findings that males are more abstract learners, females have more anxiety about study success, males are more instructive, and that females are more analytical and organized. Fauto-sterling (2005) and Friedman (2005) discovered that there is no significant difference in cognitive ability between males and female while Okoye (2000) postulated that sex differences have little or no effect on academic achievement, rather, he submits that eventual achievement by learners is predicted more on personal effort than sex variable.

Undoubtedly, the aforementioned reasons informed the choice of high ability girls so as to confirm whether or not gender plays a significant role in students academic achievement. Furthermore, it is assumed that peers, parents, siblings and teachers, all play a large role in students' function in everyday living. There is a need to know how these factors influence the high ability girls. These reasons informed the researchers' decision to carry out a research on peer influence and family factors as correlate of academic achievement of high ability girls in secondary schools.

#### Statement of the Problem

There is a global awareness of the importance of family factors and peer influence on students' academic achievement. Castrogiovanni, (2002) notes that the environment in which the students come from can greatly influence his academic achievement. The effects of broken homes may impact greatly on the internal organization of the family and by extension; affect a child's emotion, personality and academic achievement. Bearing in mind the role of the family in a child's education, the failure of the family to perform its duties could hinder the child's academic achievement.

Both family factors and peer group influence has been discovered to affect students' academic achievement. Studies have shown that girls are strongly influenced by their peer groups

which often have an implication on their academic achievement. The incidence of poor academic achievement in high achieving students in secondary schools is worrisome. This is evident in the results of different external examinations; particularly the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) conducted in Nigeria in the last one decade. This phenomenon is not only a source of concern to government and educators but also to parents. Since the home is the cradle of child's development, there is the need to understand the role of family in enhancing the academic achievement of students. This is the motivation behind this present study which aims at examining whether or not there is a relationship between peer influence and family factors and academic achievement of high ability girls in secondary schools.

#### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study is to examine the relationship that exist between peer influence, family factors and academic achievement among high ability girls in secondary schools. The secondary objectives are:

- (i) To examine the relationship that exists between family cohesion and academic achievement among high ability girls.
- (ii) To examine the relationship that exists between broken home and academic achievement among high ability girls.
- (iii) To examine the relationship that exists between peer influence and academic achievement among high ability girls.
- (iv) To examine the joint contributions of the independent variables to the prediction of academic achievement among high ability girls.

#### Research Questions

The study provided answers to the following research questions.

- (i) Is there any significant relationship among the independent variables (family factors and peer influence) and the dependent variable (academic achievement) among high ability

- girls?
- (ii) What is the relative contribution of each of the independent variables (family factors and peer influence) to the prediction of academic achievement among high ability girls?
  - (iii) What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (family factors and peer influence) to the prediction of academic achievement among high ability girls?

### Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design of the ex-post facto type. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting ten (10) Senior Secondary Schools out of fifteen (15) Senior Secondary Schools in Owerri, Imo State. Ten (10) students were randomly selected from each school through a multidimensional approach (use of multiple criteria) making a total of hundred (100) participants. This multifaceted approach included the use of Slosson Intelligence Test (SIT), School Academic Records and Achievement Test to ensure to ensure the

participants are high ability students.

The main instruments used for the study include: Slosson Intelligence Test (SIT) (to screen for high ability girls), Students Academic Record (to screen for high ability girls) and Family Cohesion, Broken Home, Parents' Socio-Economic Status, Peer Influence and Academic Achievement Questionnaire (FaB3PAQ). The adapted questionnaire was subjected to a test retest pilot study. The reliability co-efficient of the test retest pilot study was 0.72 using Cronbach's Alpha.

The instruments were administered on one hundred (100) respondents. Data were analysed using simple percentage and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance.

### Results

#### Research Question 1:

Is there any significant relationship among the independent variables (Family Cohesion, broken home, peer influence and parental socioeconomic status) and the dependent variable (academic achievement) among high ability girls?

**Table 1: Correlation matrix between the independent variables and the dependent variable**

	Achievement Test	Family Cohesion	Broken Home	Parental SES	Peer Influence
Achievement Test	1.00				
Family Cohesion	-.125	1.000			
Broken Home	-.033	.461	1.000		
Parental SES	-.083	.539	.594	1.000	
Peer Influence	-.163	.457	.138	.308	1.000

Table 1 above showed the inter-correlation matrix of the relationship among the predictor variables (family cohesion, broken home, peer influence and parental socioeconomic status) and the dependent variable (academic achievement). The table reveals that, there is a positive and significant relationship between broken home and family cohesion ( $r = 0.461$ ), parental SES related to family cohesion  $r = 0.539$ , and parental SES with broken home  $r = 0.594$ , peer influence has a relationship with

family cohesion  $r = 0.457$  and parental SES  $r = 0.308$  respectively. Therefore, there is relationship among the independent variables but not statistically significant.

#### Research Question 2

What is the relative contribution of the each of the independent variables to the prediction of academic achievement among high ability girls?

Table 2: Standard Coefficient table showing joint contributions of the independent variables to the prediction of academic achievement among high ability girls

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
(Constant)	33.834	1.640		20.632	.000
Family Cohesion	-.038	.077	-.066	-.500	.618
Broken Home	-.013	.056	.031	.236	.814
Parental SES	-.010	.054	-.026	-.189	.851
Peer Influence	-.063	.057	-.128	-1.114	.268

Table 2 showed the standard regression coefficient, the accompany t-value and the significant level is used to determine the relative contribution of the variables in the model to the prediction of academic achievement. The result revealed that none of the four independent variables has any significant effect or contribution to the prediction of academic achievement among high ability girls with family cohesion ( $\beta = -.066$ ,  $t = -.500$   $p > 0.05$ ) broken home ( $\beta = .031$ ,  $t = .236$   $p > 0.05$ ), parental SES ( $\beta = -.026$ ,  $t = -.189$   $p > 0.05$ ), and peer influence ( $\beta = -.128$ ,  $t = -1.114$   $p > 0.05$ ).

### Research Question 3

What is the joint contribution of the independent variables to the prediction of academic achievement among high ability girls?

Table 3: Regression analysis result of independent variables and academic achievement among high ability girls

Multiple R	= .174 <sup>a</sup>
Multiple R <sup>2</sup>	= .003
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	= -.011
Std. error of the estimation	= 2.554

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Mode	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	19.335	4	4.839	.742	.566 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	619.555	95	6.522		
Total	638.910	99			

Table 3 above revealed that there is no significant combined influence of independent variables (family cohesion, broken home, peer influence and parent socio-economic status) to the prediction of dependent variable (academic achievement). The result yielded a coefficient of multiple regressions  $R = 0.174$ , multiple  $R^2 = 0.003$  and Adjusted  $R^2 = -.011$ . Furthermore, the ANOVA result of the regression analysis shows that there was no significant joint influence of the independent variables on academic achievement. The model summary table reveals that adjusted  $R^2$  of 1.21% of the variance observed in the achievement of the student which was statistically not significant.  $F(4,95) = .742$ ,  $p > 0.005$ .

### Discussion of Findings

The results of the study for research question one revealed that family factors and peer influence had a significant relationship but do not predict academic achievement among high ability girls. The implication is that there exist a significant relationship among family factors as well as between family cohesion and peer influence. This corroborates the findings of Friedman (2005), who discovered that there was a positive relationship between peer group influence and family background among high ability students.

For research question two, there was no significant relative contribution of family cohesion, broken home, parental socioeconomic status and peer influence to the prediction of academic achievement among gifted girls. This is in line with the findings of Kirk, (2000) who stated that peer influence does not contribute to academic achievement of students. This does not agree with the findings of the following researchers though conducted using regular students: Smith, Fagan and Ulvund (2002), Krampe and Newton (2008), Jeynes (2002), Jeynes (2007), Ayodele (2007), Olson and Gorall (2003) who all observed that family factors and peer influence contribute to academic achievement.

The findings of the research question three showed that there was no joint relationship between family cohesion, broken homes, parental socioeconomic status and academic achievement. This is in agreement with the findings of Clark, (2006); Jacobson, (2000) and Sak, (2004) who all discovered that high ability girls are intrinsically and highly motivated to achieve their goals. This implies that high ability girls require little or no external motivation to excel in academics. However, the findings of this study disagrees with that of Jeynes (2007). Jeynes, (2007) and Ayodele, (2007) found out that, family factors and peer influence predicts academic achievement of students.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, in this study, it is evident that family factors and peer influence are variables that do not influence the academic achievement among high ability girls. This implies that high ability girls are motivated to achieve academically with or without the contribution of the aforementioned independent variables. Nevertheless, parents should always make the home conducive for learning and recognize the importance of family cohesion to the holistic development of their high ability daughters. Parents and teachers should always promote healthy and positive relationships between high ability girls and their regular peers.

Through this study, it was observed that

peer influence do not contribute to the academic achievement of high ability girls. Therefore, high ability 'girls are encouraged to embark on independent studies to help maximize their potentials and unleash them into the world of creativity.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- ❖ Schools, parents and researchers should put into consideration to identify other factors that may affect the academic achievement of high ability girls.
- ❖ Schools and parents should encourage high ability girls to embark on independent studies. This will boost their ability and confidence to undertake and complete difficult tasks without support from their peers.
- ❖ Though it was observed that family cohesion did not predict academic achievement, parents should promote unity at home as this may promote positive emotional status of high ability girls which in turn could lead to improved academic achievement.
- ❖ High ability girls should be encouraged to continue to excel in their specific academic endeavours and to engage in fields or areas dominated by their male counterparts.
- ❖ Parents and guardians should always monitor the peer groups which their children relate with. It should be healthy and this may positively influence their academic achievement.

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