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## **FAMILY TYPE, FAMILY SIZE AND SCHOLASTIC SUCCESS OF SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENTS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study was designed to ascertain the relationship between family size, family type and scholastic success of Social Studies students in Cross River State. To achieve the purpose of this study, two null hypotheses were formulated to be tested at .05 confidence level. An Ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. One thousand (1000) Social Studies students were selected for the study through proportionate stratified random sampling and simple random sampling techniques from a population of 19,169 junior secondary three students. Family type was categorized into two (monogamous and polygamous) while Family size was categorized into three (large, medium and small). The only instrument for the study was the Social Studies Academic Achievement Test (SOSAAT). The SOSAAT was paired with the categorized variables for data collection and trial tested using the split-half reliability estimate to establish reliability indexes of 0.78 and 0.82 while the reliability coefficient for performance test was 0.79 respectively. The reliability test was conducted in one of the schools within the study population but not among the sampled schools for the main study. The data collected were duly coded and analyzed in consistent with the formulated hypotheses using the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test-statistics. The results revealed that students' family size and family type are significantly related to students' scholastic success in Social Studies. Based on these findings it was concluded that students' scholastic success is dependent on family size and family type. The work recommended, inter alia, that since small size family has greater positive influence on scholastic success of students in Social Studies, parents should maintain small size families they can adequately nurture and positively impact on. Moreover, parents should endeavour to live together and maintain intact homes so that they can give children the warmth, nurture and encouragement to contribute to the development of the required academic excellence. (Word count: 305)*

**KEYWORDS:** family size, family type, scholastic success, social studies, students

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## **INTRODUCTION**

It is assumed that the more stable the family is the more secure the child will be in the home. The child living in the shadow of the broken home is often bewildered by comings and goings and by the mere fact that essential relationships are not promoted or are broken off and disrupted at a very impressionable time. Both parents would have to be essential elements in the growth and development of the child. This is provided by the mutual relationships and interactions among and between parents and child to give the child a focus. The roles they have to play are different but, at the same time complementary. Human personality is born and made, first and foremost, in the family. Temperamentally, they are 'born' with the inherited endowments of the both parents genes and they are 'made' through the social climate of the family (Ene, 2005). It is because of this reason that the family is viewed as essential institution

in the first place, which also produces human personalities who will be persons or things oriented in their scholastic pursuance and eventual career preference.

The family does not only permit some safeguards for the child during its formative period of biological immaturity, it also provides for the child's primary socialization and initial education (Dave, 2008). This education formal or informal is a pre parathion, a sine-qua-non, for future performance and living depending on what appears to the family to be ideal occupation. The style adopted by each family in its socialization efforts differs one from another due largely to their temperament make up, since no two individuals have identical or similar temperaments. With these differences in thought processes and actions follows differences in the level of scholastic success and achievement from one student to another.

The size of a family is of great importance to this study because of the opinion that children from small size families have greater propensity to academic excellence than those from large size families. To this end, Eamon (2005) asserts that family size; large or small affects the scholastic success of the child. Moreover, a child's intelligence is largely determined by the family circumstance. To him, measured intelligence does correlate with family size. He also notes that the culture of a family and that of the school has to be in conflict since un-skilled manual workers tend to have the largest family size despite their lowest income. He therefore, concludes that family size and poverty adversely affect children's educational progress.

Ihenacho (2002) on his part observes that a family that is large in size may impede learning because the provision of adequate learning facilities may be lacking. He further affirms that the more closely spaced the family, the lower the test intelligence of the children. Parents with fewer children devote more attention to, and interact more with each child. Such children, he asserts, feel more the warmth of family affection and are thus, motivated to perform better academically. Isangedighi (2007) posits that large family is not ideal in language development because parents may not be able to interact with many children all at once. He further notes that, first born children receive more attention because they may be in a position to interact well with parents before the arrival of other children. Moreover, he observes that socio-economic status accounts for about 16 percent of the variance average on the parents of lower socio-economic status. Parents, who were found to marry earlier than others, bear children rapidly and continue bearing till later age. He interferes that because of such differential reproduction rate, the intelligence might be declining as much as two or three points per generation.

Children from smaller families tend to receive more attention from their parents than those from larger homes. This can result in better school success (Eamon, 2005). Nsibiet (2011) has shown that the environment of a large family constitute a handicap to the verbal development, consequently to general mental development. He explains that since the amount of verbal communication with adults is limited in a large family, children from such families are backward in language development. Moreover, that there is a strong evidence that a child who is equipped verbally is bound to score highly on intelligence test (Van Ejick & DeGray, 1995). Similarly, Esseme (2004) found out that the size of a family could predict how students fare or perform in school. The researcher drew this conclusion from a study of 500 students in Akwa Ibom State. In a similar study in Cross River State (Essien, 2015) corroborated this finding.

### **Statement of the problem**

In this era of illiteracy eradication, one of the seeming concerns of most families is to bring up children who will engage in meaningful education and obtain high scholastic success to socialize and succeed in their academic life thereby providing for themselves and their families. The essence of education is to socialize and develop the innate potentialities of individuals so that they can be satisfactorily useful to themselves and maximize their contributions to the educational, economic, social and political growth of the society. More often than not, this laudable objective of the family seems to elude most secondary school adolescents as a result of poor scholastic performance.

Abysmal performance in academic work at school, often give rise to pass your examination at all cost, a syndrome which has rocked the entire academic system. Other correlates to abysmal performance include frustration, disobedience, vandalism, teenage pregnancy, dropout, forgery and impersonation, falsification of school results sent to parents, public assault, pervasive feeling of inadequacy, timidity, robbery and rape, cultism, and a lot more. These deter academic progress promote low productivity and un-employability. One way of identifying the source of scholastic success of adolescent students is to take a close look at their family size, type and socialization processes of families. This is to enable answer to the question as to; whether family variables like family size and family type could influence scholastic success of secondary school adolescents? In this study therefore, aspects of family variables will be isolated and studied to determine their relevance in explaining how they correlate with scholastic success.

Admittedly, individual differences exist in physical appearances, temperaments, intelligence, abilities, and aptitudes of children and are variously parented; yet the school remains a common learning environment where all interact and acquire knowledge. However, it is a concern that differences exist in the behavioural dispositions and attitudes of secondary school students to work though exposed to the same learning environment. The researcher is poised to pose the question as to why some students pursue academic work with strong desire and zeal while others drift along nonchalantly. How do we explain the fact that in a class some students with determination perform in the optimum while others grapple with minimal academic achievement? Is the students' family type and size responsible for this seeming disparity in scholastic success? How does family size and family type, influence the academic success of students? Could family size and family type influence academic performance of students in Social Studies? Ultimately, the attempt to find answers to these questions constitute the problems this study seeks to address. It is against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to investigate family size, family type and scholastic success of Social Studies students in Cross River State to unravel the mystery behind this seeming disparity and elicit answers to the questions.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research design adopted for this study is ex-post facto. The researcher decided to use this design because the events (variables under study) had already occurred before the study. In other words, there was no manipulation of the independent variable to produce an effect on the dependent variable. In this study, the ex-post facto design is appropriate because the researcher

is investigating family correlates, (family size, family type) and scholastic success of students' in Social Studies as the dependent variable.

### Validity of the instrument

In order to ascertain the face validity of the research instrument, the family type variable was categorized into two(monogamous and polygamous) while family size variable was categorized into three(large, medium and small). **This was paired with the fifty achievement test items and submitted to** experts in Test and Measurement. The two experts thoroughly checked and scrutinized the instrument in terms of relevance, appropriateness of wordings and representativeness of items. The in-appropriately worded and irrelevant items were dropped and replaced with new ones. Few of the items with grammatical error were reframed while the clear and correct items were retained. By so doing the face validity of the instrument was ascertained.

To ascertain the content validity of the objective test used in testing students' scholastic success in Social Studies, a table of specification (test blue print) for a fifty (50) item test in Social Studies was prepared to guide the researcher. This was also done to ensure that the performance test adequately covered all the behavioural domains measured in relation to the content areas, as derived from the junior secondary social studies syllabus. This was done with the assistance of social studies teachers in West African People's Institute (WAPI) who also confirmed that all the content areas selected were taught to the students. The table of specification (test blue print) is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Table of specification for a 50-item Social Studies test

No. of Weeks	Content areas	Objectives						Total
1.		Know ledge 25%	Compre hension 25%	Applica- tion 20%	Analysis 15%	Synthesi s 10%	Evaluation 5%	
2	People and their environment	2	2	2	1	1	1	9
4	Culture	3	4	2	2	1	1	13
3.5	Social issues and problems	3	3	2	2	2	1	13
2	Science, Techn. and Society	2	2	2	1	1	1	9
1	Family	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
12.5	Total	11	12	9	7	6	5	50

Source: Junior Secondary Social Studies Syllabus (2008)

### Reliability of the instrument

Reliability is the degree to which a test or instrument produces consistency of test scores when people are tested with the same or an equivalent instrument (Akinade, 2005). The social studies student's family type and family size categorized variables was administered to forty (40) social studies students in Junior Secondary three. This was inclusive of the test items to measure students' scholastic success in social studies or Social Studies Academic Achievement Test (SOSAAT). The forty students (subjects) formed part of the study population but were not part of the sample. The split half reliability coefficient was calculated using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the odd and even items in the questionnaire. After which the r-value obtained from the result was further analyzed using the Spearman Brown Prophecy formula for the correction of test length. The result of the split-half reliability estimate of the variables shows that the Reliability Coefficient for the family size and type variables was 0.78 and 0.82 while the Reliability Coefficient for the performance test was 0.79. Nenty (1986) maintains that the reliability coefficient of 0.50 would suffice at the early stage of a research. Using the above data generated on the reliability coefficient, it could be assumed that the various tests used in this study possesses sufficient reliability indices to justify their use for the purpose of this research.

### Data Analysis

#### Hypothesis one

Family size does not significantly influence scholastic success of students' in Social Studies. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used in the testing of the hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2

One-way analysis of variance for family size and scholastic success of students in Social Studies

Family size	N	Mean	SD
Small	139	38.597	6.798
Average	355	37.408	7.705
Large	502	36.247	7.893
Total	996	36.989	7.720

Source of variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F-ratio	p-level
Between groups	698.298	2	349.147	5.916*	.003
Within groups	58606.584	993	59.020		
Total	59304.879	995			

\*Significant at .05 alpha level with  $p < .05$ .

The result in table 2 shows that the mean score of 38.597 is obtained for students from small size families. It is greater than the mean score of 37.408 obtained for students from average size families. It is also greater than the mean score of 36.247 obtained for students from large

size families. The implication of this is that the mean scores differ and their difference is statistically significant since the F-ratio of 5.916 is obtained at .05 level of significant with p-value of .003. The F-ratio is significant; therefore the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of family size on scholastic success of students in Social Studies is rejected. It means that since the mean score for students from small families is greater than those from both average and large families, the small size family has greater positive influence on scholastic success of students in Social Studies. Since students academic performance in Social Studies is significantly influenced by family size, the source of the difference is determined using Scheffe Post Hoc test comparison analysis. The result is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Scheffe Post Hoc Test for family size and scholastic success of students in Social Studies

Family size	N	Mean	Mean difference	p-level
Small	139	38.597	1.189	.303
Average	355	37.409		
Small	139	38.597	2.350*	.006
Large	502	36.247		
Average	355	37.409	1.161	.093
Large	502	36.247		

\* Mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

The result of the Scheffe Post Hoc test in Table 3 reveals that the mean difference is not significant when comparing students from small size families and those from average size families (MD=1.189, p=.303). It further reveals that the mean difference is significant when comparing students from small size families and those from large size families (MD=2.350, p=.006). It finally reveals that the mean difference is not significant when comparing students from average size families and those from large size families (MD=1.161, p=.093) all at .05 level of significance. This shows that the larger the family, the lower the scholastic success, but the fewer the number of children in a family, the higher the scholastic success of students' in Social Studies.

This is so because better attention will be given to children from families with few children than children from large families. Family type has also been implicated in students' performance in school. For example, Uwaifo (2008) observed significant disparities in the school success of students from polygamous and monogamous families. Study with similar findings include Francesconi, Seltze and Ermisch (2005) who report that family type and school outcomes share common unobserved factors as growing up in a polygamous family is generally associated with worse outcomes. However when endogeneity is accounted for, that is, comparing siblings who experienced different family types, or by comparing children who experienced parental loss through death or divorce with those from monogamous and intact families, there is little evidence that family type significantly influence children's scholastic success. Yeung, et al (2002), note that an extensive body of empirical research identifies family

type as a key determinant of children's later performance. They further maintain that growing up without a biological parent, be it mother or father, is negatively associated with schooling attainment.

Booth and Kee (2006) indicate that "educational outcomes for children in blended families, that is, step children and their half-sibling, are similar and worse than the outcomes of those who grow up in families in which all the children are the biological children of both parents". Nsibiet, (2011) also found that growing up in a polygamous family has a negative and significant influence on schooling performance. Asikhia (2010) reports that living in a lone-parent family has a negative influence on students' test scores and that living with a step-parent or with half-siblings has no influence on students' cognitive development. Furthermore, Dermie (2007) observed that a family where both parents remain married and provide a culture of scholarship could contribute to the success of the children. On the other hand, a broken home could result in children displaying untoward behaviours. Eweniyi (2005) study of university students showed that undergraduates from polygamous and monogamous families differed greatly in their academic attainments.

Cotton and Wiklund (2005) found evidence to support the hypothesis that intact homes seem to favour the scholastic achievement of students. In a related study, Wilkins (2007) contends that boys from polygamous and single-mothers homes are affected by father's absence. These children have trouble concentrating and do poorly on academic matters. The effects of father absence on girls depends, among other things, "on the age of the child at the time of separation from the father, the quality of mother-father relationship before separation, availability of appropriate substitute male model and the emotional state of the mother during and after separation"(p29). When a girl reaches adolescence, the outcome of the relationship becomes apparent. If the father is absent and if father-daughter relationship is halted, she becomes passive, withdrawn and shy with males and school work. Family type has also been implicated in students' performance. For example, Uwaifo (2008) observed significant disparities in the school success of students from polygamous and monogamous families. Study with similar findings include Francesconi, Seltze and Ermisch (2005) who report that family type and school outcomes share common unobserved factors as growing up in a polygamous family is generally associated with worse outcomes. However when endogeneity is accounted for, that is, comparing siblings who experienced different family types, or by comparing children who experienced parental loss through death or divorce with those from monogamous and intact families, there is little evidence that family type significantly influence children's scholastic success. Yeung, et al (2002), note that an extensive body of empirical research identifies family type as a key determinant of children's later performance. They further maintain that growing up without a biological parent, be it mother or father, is negatively associated with schooling attainment.

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**Hypothesis two**

Family type has no significant influence on scholastic success of students' in Social Studies. To test the hypothesis, Independent t-test analysis was employed as presented in

**TABLE 4.**

Independent t-test of family type and scholastic success of students in Social Studies

Variables	N	Mean	SD	t-test	p-level
Monogamy	713	37.874	7.089	5.335*	.000
Polygamy	283	34.760	8.745		

\*Significant at .05 alpha level with  $p < .05$

The result in Table 4 shows that the score for students from monogamous homes is 37.874 which is higher than the score of 34.760 for students from polygamous homes. The implication of this is that the score for the students from monogamous homes significantly differ from the score for students from polygamous homes, with the calculated t-value of 5.335 at 0 .05 level of significance with 994 degrees of freedom and p-value of .000. With this result, the null hypothesis which states that family type has no significant influence on scholastic success of students' in Social Studies is rejected.

This implies that monogamous family has greater positive influence on scholastic success of students' in Social Studies in favour of those from monogamous homes. This is so because in monogamous families resources and attention are channeled among children from one mother unlike polygamous families where resources and attention are channeled to many wives and their numerous children.

**DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

The result obtained from testing reveals that a small size family has greater positive influence on scholastic success of students' in Social Studies than large family. The source of the difference was basically from the comparison of students from small size and those from large size families. This shows that the larger the number of children in the family, the lower the performance of students in social studies. This is so because better attention will be given to students from families with less number of children than those from families with many children. This is derived from the Schelfe Post HOC test comparison analysis which reveals that the mean difference was significant when comparing students from small size families and those from large families ( $MD = 2.350$ ,  $p = .006$ ).

The size of a family is of great importance to this study because of the opinion that children from small size families have greater propensity to academic excellence than those from large

size families. To this end, Eamon (2005) asserts that family size, large or small affects scholastic success of the child. Moreover, a child's intelligence is largely determined by the family circumstance and measured intelligence does correlate with family size. He further notes that the culture of a family and that of the school has to be in conflict since un-skilled manual workers tend to have the largest family size despite their low income. Family size and poverty, therefore, do pose adverse and negative influence on children's educational progress. This finding is in congruence with Esseme (2004) as well as Essien (2012)) which showed that large family size may impede learning because the provision of adequate feeding and essential learning facilities such as books, educational toys may be lacking. This in turn affects student's academic achievement negatively.

On the other hand, Nwafo and Ango (1997) are at variance with the finding of the present study, perhaps as a result of the type of instrument, error in the administration of the instrument or the location. The present finding is also consistent with Isangidighi (2007) who posits that large family is not ideal in language development because parent may not be able to interact with the children all at once. First born children, according to Isangidighi, receive more attention because they may be in position to interact well with parents before the arrival of other children. Moreover, he observes that socio-economic status accounts for about 16% of the variance average on the parent of lower socio-economic status. The implication of the present finding is that, students from small size families performed better than those from both large and medium or average size families in social studies. This may be due to availability of adequate learning materials, more warmth of family affection, motivation by parents to perform better academically, parental stimulation until the second children were born and more attention devoted by parents to interact and communicate with each child to develop their verbal skills. On the other hand, the inadequacy of these did contribute to the lower scholastic success of children from large families. Conversely, a small family system is a quality system. Small family living makes for individual emphasis on development and reasoning. Its driving force is one of ambition in an open class system in which everyone tries to be focused to perform maximally and raise their status.

The result from the testing of the hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of family type on scholastic success of Social Studies students indicates that monogamous families have greater positive influence on scholastic success of students' in Social Studies. This is because in monogamous families resources and attention are channeled among the children from one mother unlike the polygamous families where resources and attention are channeled to many wives and their numerous children. The frequent quarrels and rancor among numerous wives characterized by polygamous homes pose setbacks to student's scholastic success.

This finding supports Eweniyi (2005) and Wilkins (2007) who offer reasons for good or poor scholastic success among students from polygamous and monogamous families where he contends that boys from polygamous and single mother's homes are affected by father's absence. These children have trouble concentrating and do poorly on academic matters. Effects of fathers absence on girls depends, among other things, on the age of the child at the time of separation from the father, the quality of mother-father relationship before separation, availability of appropriate substitute male model and the emotional state of the mother during and after separation. If the father is absent and if father-daughter relationship is halted, she

becomes passive, withdrawn and shy with males and school work resulting to poor scholastic success. The study agrees with Cotton and Wiklund (2005) who noted that single-parents women who have jobs, may leave the care of their children to child-minders with a deleterious consequence on their academics. Spouses who maintain monogamous two-parent families will maintain warm cordial family atmosphere to encourage and increase their children's scholastic success, especially in social studies.

## CONCLUSION

With reference to the findings of this study discussed so far, it could be deduced that family background in terms of family size and family type, positively influence students' scholastic success, especially, in social studies. The implication is that small size families provide enabling environment for students to strive for greater scholastic success. Same goes for monogamous family type where each student lives with both parents together, resources and attention channeled among children from one mother rather than channeled among many wives and their numerous children. Such children from monogamous families have advantage over children from polygamous families in terms of scholastic success in Social Studies. Student's academic performance is, therefore, highly determined by the extent to which they are influenced by the size and type of families they are brought up or nurtured.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this studies and the subsequent conclusion, the study recommends that:

- (1) Parents should limit the size of their families to the number commensurable with their resources so that they can give their children the quality of education and care that will spur them to greater scholastic success.
- (2) Since monogamous family type makes for scholastic success, parents should promote monogamy for mutual, harmonious and cohesive habitation among the children.
- (3) Parents should occasionally pay visits to the school to dialogue with teachers teaching their children and other significant adults in the schools. By so doing consciousness will be created in the minds of the students to be alert to their school work and also maintain good and healthy relationship with both teachers and peers, since good rapport is capable of improving academic performance, especially in Social Studies.

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