

Perceived Influence of Family Conflict and Interpersonal Relationship on Academic Performance of Peacock College of Nursing Sciences, Akure

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Abstract: *This study investigated the influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationships on the academic performance of undergraduates at Peacock College of Nursing Sciences, Akure, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design of the ex-post-facto type was employed, and a total enumeration technique was used to include 116 Nursing students. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire, and four hypotheses guided the study. The data were analyzed using Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product Moment Correlation at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed significant interrelationships among the study variables. Family conflict and interpersonal relationships jointly accounted for 18.3% of the variance in students' academic performance ($R = .431$; $R^2 = .186$; $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .183$; $F(1,115) = 76.752$; $p < .05$). Family conflict ($\beta = .284$; $t = 9.249$; $p = .000$) was found to be the stronger predictor of academic performance compared to interpersonal relationship ($\beta = .185$; $t = 5.856$; $p = .000$). Furthermore, gender was found to moderate these influences, with a higher impact observed among female students ($R = .371$; $R^2 = .137$; $F(1,68) = 9.041$; $p = .011$) compared to males ($R = .332$; $R^2 = .110$; $F(1,46) = 5.893$; $p = .007$). The study concluded that family stability and healthy interpersonal relationships are crucial to students' academic achievement. It recommended implementing counselling and family support programmes to mitigate the effects of negative home environments on students' educational development.*

Keywords: family conflict, interpersonal relationship, academic performance, undergraduates

INTRODUCTION

Academic performance extends far beyond mere intellectual ability; it is intricately linked to the social, emotional, and familial environments that shape a student's development. In many educational contexts, the problem of poor academic achievement among students remains a persistent challenge, often rooted in domestic instability, parental neglect, or unresolved family conflict. The increasing rates of divorce and separation in contemporary society have contributed significantly to this trend, leaving many students vulnerable to emotional distress and negative peer influences. Such conditions have broader implications, including the erosion of family values, moral decay, and the proliferation of social vices such as drug abuse, prostitution, and juvenile delinquency. While intellectual ability remains an essential determinant of academic success, it is becoming increasingly clear that the emotional and relational dynamics within the family profoundly influence students' motivation, concentration, and academic resilience. Yet, despite this understanding, there is a paucity of research examining how family conflict and interpersonal relationships jointly shape students' academic performance, a gap which the present study seeks to address.

The family serves as the most fundamental social unit and the first environment in which a child learns to interact, regulate emotions, and acquire values that shape future behavior. A stable and nurturing family environment provides emotional security, moral guidance, and intellectual stimulation, all of which are essential for academic success. Conversely, when the family atmosphere is marred by conflict, the psychological and emotional well-being of children becomes compromised. Family conflict refers to a breakdown in communication and harmony among members of a household, often resulting from mistrust, disrespect, financial instability, alcoholism, or unemployment. Such conflicts may occur between parents, or between parents and their children, and they tend to disrupt the sense of belonging and security that children require to thrive academically. When left unresolved, these conflicts can lead to family disorganization, which has long-term effects on children's emotional development, moral conduct, and social relationships within and outside the school environment.

Empirical studies have reinforced the argument that the home environment exerts a substantial influence on children's academic outcomes. Ndayambaje and Umwari (2020) observed that children from conflict-ridden or disorganized families are at greater risk of psychological instability, poor health, and diminished academic performance. Similarly, Dinh, Cooklin, and Leach (2017) established that persistent marital conflict negatively affects children's mental health and, consequently, their long-term academic and social development. As Olanrewaju (2015) noted, the home remains the primary agent of education and socialization; the values, routines, and behaviors learned there shape the child's entire learning trajectory. In the same vein, Kellaghan (1993, as cited in Ezeokoli, 2017) emphasized that academic success depends significantly on what parents do at home—how they guide, support, and model appropriate behaviors for their children.

Thus, when the home ceases to provide these fundamental supports due to conflict or structural instability, students' academic engagement tends to suffer correspondingly.

Parent-child interactions constitute one of the most powerful determinants of students' academic motivation and performance. As Ogunsawo (2018), Olanrewaju (2015), and Stephen and Ceci (2011) observed, the quality of these interactions directly influences the cognitive and emotional development of the child. The family is not only responsible for material sustenance but also for laying the psychosocial, moral, and spiritual foundations of a child's character. Although the role of mothers in nurturing emotional security is widely acknowledged, the father's presence has been shown to be equally critical in shaping children's social competence and academic ambition (Ayodele & Idoro, 2012). Parenthood, therefore, requires a cooperative commitment between both parents to ensure the holistic development of their offspring. When this equilibrium is disrupted whether by death, divorce, separation, or abandonment, the family becomes "broken," and both the parent and child must adapt to new emotional and practical realities that often prove detrimental to learning.

A broken family, as defined by Ogunsawo (2018), is one that lacks structural or emotional cohesion due to loss or separation. Life within such families often involves economic hardship, restructured responsibilities, and emotional distress, all of which interfere with effective parenting. Studies by Ayodele (2004) and Agulanna (1999) suggest that single parents facing overwhelming financial and emotional burdens may become irritable and inattentive, thereby neglecting the psychological needs of their children. This neglect can manifest in low academic motivation, behavioral problems, and difficulties in social adjustment. The cumulative effect of these challenges is a reduction in academic achievement, which may persist throughout the child's educational journey.

Beyond family structure, the quality of interpersonal relationships also plays a crucial role in determining students' psychosocial adjustment and academic success. Interpersonal relationships, both within the family and among peers in educational settings affect emotional stability, motivation, and self-concept. Positive relationships are characterized by trust, cooperation, empathy, and mutual respect, all of which foster an atmosphere conducive to learning. Conversely, negative relationships marked by hostility, rivalry, or exclusion create environments of anxiety and tension that hinder concentration and cognitive performance (Limber, 2002; Rigby, 2002; Ayodele & Bello, 2008). From a psychological standpoint, a supportive relational environment stimulates emotional security and academic engagement, whereas a hostile environment reinforces fear, withdrawal, and self-doubt.

Relationship quality, therefore, serves as a key indicator of psychosocial well-being and a predictor of academic performance. A school or home environment that encourages collaboration and mutual respect promotes the development of social skills and enhances cognitive outcomes. On the other hand, persistent conflict and relational dysfunction can lead to stress, aggression, and declining academic productivity (Ayodele, 2011; 2014). These findings underscore the need to

examine how family conflict and interpersonal relationships collectively influence students' academic performance, especially in higher education settings where independence and emotional resilience are crucial.

Given the growing body of evidence highlighting the critical role of parental involvement and relational stability in academic success, this study seeks to investigate how family conflict and interpersonal relationships individually and collectively influence the academic performance of undergraduates at Peacock College of Nursing Sciences, Akure, Nigeria. The broad objective of this study was to investigate the perceived influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on academic performance of undergraduates at Peacock College of Nursing Sciences, Akure, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to;

- i. investigate the relationship among the variables: family conflict, interpersonal relationship and student's academic performance;
- ii. investigate the combined influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance at Peacock College of Nursing Sciences, Akure; and
- iii. examine the significant relative influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance at Peacock College of Nursing Sciences, Akure.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study employed a descriptive research design, which was deemed appropriate for the investigation as it allowed for a detailed account of the existing relationships among the variables under study such as family conflict, interpersonal relationship, and undergraduates' academic performance. This design was particularly suitable because it enabled the researcher to describe and interpret the prevailing situation without manipulating any of the variables. The influence of the independent variables (family conflict and interpersonal relationship) on the dependent variable, academic performance, had already occurred naturally within the participants' environment. Thus, the study aimed to capture these real-life dynamics as they existed. The target population consisted of all undergraduates at Peacock College of Nursing Sciences, Akure, Nigeria. However, for feasibility and relevance, the sample was drawn specifically from students enrolled in the college, excluding those in their first year (100 level) whose academic standing had not yet been firmly established. The total enumeration sampling technique was adopted, involving all 116 students in the eligible population. This approach ensured comprehensive coverage and increased the representativeness of the findings by including all available participants who met the criteria.

Two major instruments were utilized for data collection in the study: the Family Conflict Scale and the Interpersonal Relationship Scale. Both were self-developed questionnaires designed to capture the nuances of the respective constructs. The Family Conflict Scale consisted of twenty items structured on a four-point Likert format, ranging from "Strongly Agree" (SA) to "Strongly Disagree" (SD). Similarly, the Interpersonal Relationship Scale comprised fifteen items, also

organized on a four-point Likert scale. These instruments were designed to assess participants' perceptions and experiences regarding family interactions and interpersonal dynamics within their immediate environments. To measure students' academic performance, the researcher obtained their Cumulative Grade Point Averages (CGPAs) from the institution. The use of CGPA as an objective measure of academic performance provided a reliable quantitative indicator that complemented the subjective responses gathered through the questionnaires. Together, these instruments provided both subjective and objective data, allowing for a more comprehensive assessment of the relationships among the study variables.

To ensure the validity of the instruments, the researcher employed the content validity approach. All relevant variables identified in the study's conceptual framework were carefully incorporated into the questionnaire items. The draft versions of the instruments were subjected to expert review, whose feedback contributed significantly to refining the items for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. This process helped eliminate ambiguities, overlapping statements, and irrelevant content, thereby enhancing the content validity of the tools. Reliability testing was conducted through a pilot study at tertiary institution outside the sampled location. This pilot phase enabled the researcher to identify and rectify potential issues related to item clarity and response consistency. The split-half method was applied to assess the internal consistency of the instruments, yielding a reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of 0.732. This coefficient indicated an acceptable level of reliability, suggesting that the instruments consistently measured the intended constructs across different items and respondents.

Data collection was carried out through a structured approach involving the direct administration of the research instruments to the respondents. The researcher, assisted by two colleagues, facilitated the distribution and retrieval of the questionnaires. Prior to data collection, official permission was obtained from the college authorities to ensure compliance with institutional ethics and to promote cooperation among students. Respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study and assured of the confidentiality of their responses. Upon completion of data collection, the gathered data were systematically organized and prepared for analysis. Data analysis entailed the use of descriptive and inferential statistical methods, including simple percentages, correlation coefficients, and multiple regression analyses, all conducted at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). The CGPAs obtained from the head of school through class coordinators were standardized for uniformity. The raw scores were first converted into Z-scores to normalize the data and eliminate discrepancies arising from varying academic scales. These Z-scores were then transformed into T-scores to remove negative values and decimal fractions, making the data more interpretable.

RESULTS**Table 1: Socio-demographic profile of the study population**

SN	Variable		N = 116	
			Freq.	%
1	Gender	Female	69	59.5
		Male	47	40.5
2	Age	Less than 20 years	29	25.0
		21-25 years	76	65.5
		26 years above	11	9.5
3	Marital Status	Single	93	80.2
		Married	23	19.8
4	Ethnicity	Yoruba	96	82.8
		Hausa	2	1.7
		Igbo	13	11.2
		Others	5	4.3
5	Religion	Christianity	88	75.9
		Islam	23	19.8
		African Traditional Religion	5	4.3

The socio-demographic profile of the study population based on the gender revealed that majority (59.5%) of the respondents were female. The respondents were within the 17 to 26 years' age range with a mean age of 21.7 ± 8.01 (SD). The majority (65.5%) were between 21 and 25 years, 80.2% were single; 80.2% were Yorubas; and Christians were in the majority (75.9%).

Table 2: Relationship between family conflict, interpersonal relationship and undergraduates' academic performance

		Family conflict	Interpersonal relationship	Academic Performance
Family conflict	Pearson Correlation	1	.401**	.387**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.013	.007
	N	116	116	116
Interpersonal relationship	Pearson Correlation	.401**	1	.448*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.013		.000
	N	116	116	116
Academic performance	Pearson Correlation	.387**	.448*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.000	
	N	116	116	116

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 2 indicated that there is a significant inter-relationship among the variables (family conflict, interpersonal relationship and undergraduates' academic performance) of the study. A significant high relationship was observed between family conflict and undergraduates' academic performance ($r = .387$) as well as interpersonal relationship and undergraduates' academic performance ($r = .448$). It was further shown from the table that a significant relationship equally exist between family conflict and interpersonal relationship ($r = .401$).

Table 3: Model Summary of the Regression Analysis for the composite contribution of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance

Source of variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-Ratio	P
Regression	139.261	1	139.261	4.221	.000 ^b
Residual	3761.772	114	32.998		
Total	3901.033	115			

R = 0.431; Multiple R = 0.186; Multiple R² (Adjusted) = 0.183;

Stand error estimate = 5.744

a. Dependent Variable: undergraduates' academic performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), family conflict and interpersonal relationship

The results in Table 3 indicated that with all the predictor variables (family conflict and interpersonal relationship) in the regression model jointly predicted undergraduates' academic performance ($R = .431$; $R^2 = .186$; Adj. $R^2 = .183$; $F_{(1, 115)} = 76.752$; $p < .05$). This showed that all the predictor variables accounted for 18.3% of the variance in the undergraduates' academic performance. The null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant combined influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance was rejected by this finding. This implies that there is a significant combined influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance.

Table 4: Beta coefficients and t ratio for relative influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	21.059	2.479		7.363	.000
Family conflict	.169	.018	.284	9.249	.000
Interpersonal relationship	.180	.031	.185	5.856	.000

a. Dependent Variable: undergraduates' academic performance

The results in Table 4 revealed the strength of causation of the predictor variable on the criterion variable. The most potent predictor of undergraduates' academic performance among the predictor variables of the study is family conflict ($\beta = .284$; $t = 9.249$; $p = .000$). Interpersonal relationship

is the next potent factor ($\beta = .185$; $t = 5.856$; $p = .000$) in the prediction of undergraduates' academic performance. The hypothesis of no significant relative contribution of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance was rejected by this finding. This implies that there is a significant relative influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance, while family conflict was observed as the most potent predictor among the two.

Table 5: Model Summary of the multiple regression analysis of the moderating effect of gender on the influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance

Model	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	SE	Change Statistics				
					R ² Change	F Change	d f 1	d f 2	Sig. F Change
Gender									
Female	.371	.137	.136	5.445	.136	9.041	1	68	.011
Male	.332	.110	.107	6.836	.107	5.893	1	46	.007

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, family conflict, interpersonal relationship

b. Dependent Variable: Undergraduates' academic performance

The results in Table 5 indicated that when gender entered into the regression model to family conflict and interpersonal relationship, it predicted undergraduates' academic performance. For female undergraduates ($R = .371$; $R^2 = .137$; $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .136$; $F_{(1,68)} = 9.041$; $p = .011$), it was observed that family conflict and interpersonal relationship accounted for 13.7% variability of undergraduates' academic performance; while 10.7% was observed for male undergraduates' academic performance ($R = .332$; $R^2 = .110$; $\text{Adj. } R^2 = .107$; $F_{(1,46)} = 5.893$; $p = .007$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that Gender will not significantly moderate the influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationship on undergraduates' academic performance at Peacock College of Nursing Sciences, Akure was rejected by this finding. This implies that family conflict and interpersonal relationship influenced the female undergraduates' academic performance compared to their male counterparts.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed a significant interrelationship between family conflict, interpersonal relationships, and undergraduates' academic performance. This outcome reinforced the conclusions of earlier scholars such as Ogunsawo (2018), Olanrewaju (2015), and Stephen and Ceci (2011), who emphasized that positive parent–child interactions are crucial determinants of strong academic outcomes. Similarly, the degree of home conflict experienced by a student, as noted by Olanrewaju (2015), was found to exert a profound influence on academic engagement and achievement. The home environment serves as the first socializing context for the child, shaping emotional responses, attitudes toward learning, and behavioral dispositions. Although schools provide formal instruction and shape intellectual growth, the home remains the foundation

upon which the child's character, discipline, and motivation are built. The present findings are consistent with those of Ortese (1998), Agbo (1997), and Ayodele (2013), who observed that children raised in intact and harmonious homes tend to develop balanced personalities, emotional stability, and stronger academic performance. These children benefit from parental love, security, and consistent supervision of their academic progress, enabling them to adapt more effectively to the demands of schooling.

Furthermore, the study revealed a significant combined influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationships on undergraduates' academic performance, with both variables jointly accounting for 18.3% of the variance in academic outcomes. This suggests that the interplay between family stability and relational quality contributes meaningfully to students' educational success. The implication of this result is that academic achievement is not merely a reflection of cognitive capacity but also of the emotional and relational conditions under which learning occurs. These findings corroborate the works of Akinlana (2014), Clark and Shields (2014), and Darling (2010), who all reported that students from disrupted or conflict-ridden homes typically display lower self-esteem, reduced motivation, diminished persistence, and weaker academic performance compared to peers from stable, supportive households. Homes characterized by conflict often lack the essential positive relationship qualities such as companionship, empathy, assistance, and trust that foster psychological security and academic diligence. Consequently, the absence of these relational supports manifests in poor concentration, anxiety, and a general decline in academic engagement among affected students.

The study also found that family conflict exerted a stronger influence on academic performance than interpersonal relationships. This finding implies that students raised in homes marked by chronic conflict, emotional neglect, or lack of parental support face greater academic and social challenges. Consistent with Heard (2017), the results demonstrated that children from conflict-prone families were more likely to experience disciplinary problems in school and to hold lower academic aspirations. Heard further noted that each additional year a child spent in a turbulent home environment corresponded to a measurable decline in their grade point average. Similarly, Ogunsanwo (2018) reported that weak interpersonal relationships hindered students' ability to perform effectively, regardless of their academic level. Ayodele (2003) also observed that children from broken homes exhibited higher rates of behavioral problems, and their varying capacities to cope with these issues accounted for differences in academic achievement. Collectively, these findings suggest that prolonged exposure to family discord undermines not only students' emotional stability but also their cognitive focus and resilience in learning contexts.

Finally, the findings revealed that gender significantly moderated the influence of family conflict and interpersonal relationships on academic performance among undergraduates at Peacock College of Nursing Sciences, Akure. Family conflict and interpersonal relationships jointly accounted for 13.7% of the variation in academic performance among female students and 10.7% among male students, indicating that female undergraduates were more adversely affected by familial and relational instability. This observation aligns with Richford (2012), who reported that

male students at both high school and college levels tended to demonstrate higher confidence and performance, particularly in mathematics, science, and technology-related subjects. Richford attributed this disparity in part to the heightened emotional sensitivity of female students to negative home environments. Similarly, Silverwise (2010) found that male students from stable backgrounds generally performed better academically than their female counterparts under comparable conditions. However, these results diverge from Aremu and Tella (2009), who reported that gender exhibited an insignificant correlation with mental ability and mathematics achievement. Taken together, the present findings underscore that while both male and female students are influenced by family and relational factors, the effects of these variables tend to be more pronounced among female students, highlighting the complex interplay of gender, family environment, and academic performance.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that family conflict and interpersonal relationships were significant determinants of undergraduates' academic performance. The findings demonstrated a strong interrelationship among the three variables, confirming that the quality of a student's family environment and social interactions directly influenced academic outcomes. Students from conflict-prone families or those experiencing poor interpersonal relationships tended to perform less effectively than their peers from stable and supportive homes. The combined effect of family conflict and interpersonal relationships was shown to meaningfully predict academic achievement, underscoring the importance of emotional and social stability in students' educational success. Among the two predictors, family conflict emerged as the stronger influence, suggesting that unresolved domestic tensions and lack of parental cohesion can disrupt students' concentration, motivation, and overall performance. Furthermore, gender was found to moderate these relationships, with female undergraduates being more adversely affected by family conflict and poor interpersonal dynamics than their male counterparts. Overall, the study concluded that a harmonious family environment and healthy interpersonal relationships are essential for promoting positive academic performance among undergraduates, highlighting the need for targeted family and institutional interventions to foster supportive learning conditions.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Governments, private organizations and individuals concerned with the business of education should endeavor to address the obstacles hindering effective academic performance of students. This can be done by developing achievement motivation in students through achievement motivation training.
2. There is the need for the recognition of individual differences in students and the need to deal with them accordingly. Counselors should provide the necessary assistance and psychological support for students from single parent family so as to overcome their emotional problems.

3. There is also the need to keep enlightening the parents of the importance of the home structure on the life of children. This is necessary so that parents can understand the implications and consequences of parental separation and thus mobilize all resources to curtail the problems arising from the situation.
4. Generally, there is need to combat the continuing declining state of education by providing more funds and materials for the upliftment of our educational system.
5. Finally, school counselors should be employed in institutions of learning and adequate supervision to be put in place to ensure provision of necessary guidance services to students.

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