



## PARENTAL POVERTY FACTORS AND ATTITUDE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TO ACADEMIC WORK IN FACULTY OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

The negative Attitude to Academic Work (AAW) among some undergraduate students in Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan (FoEUI), appears to be on the increase. This might be due to parental poverty factors - low level of AAW and Socio-Economic Status (SES). This study, therefore, investigated the parental poverty factors and attitude of undergraduate students to academic work. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 2,184 undergraduates in ten departments of (FoEUI) Simple random sampling technique was used to select 292 (20%) undergraduates from each department. Three research questions were answered with descriptive statistics. The findings showed that AAW of undergraduates was negative: mean = 2.48, SD = 0.87; level of SES of parents moderately high: mean = 2.60, SD = 0.82; and positive significant relationships between SES of parents and AAW, ( $r = 0.36$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), education of parents ( $r = 0.27$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), parental involvement ( $r = 0.37$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). It was concluded that poverty level of parents led to the negative attitude towards students' academic work. Recommendation was made that parents should strive to provide adequate needs of undergraduate students. Government should also increase financial support for students and improve the learning conditions in universities.

**Keywords:** Attitude to academic work, Parental poverty factors, Socio-economic Status, Undergraduate students.

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## Introduction

Some undergraduates' attitude to their academic work demand deep reflection. The harsh socio-economic situation in Nigeria may be the cause of the seemingly lackadaisical attitude of undergraduate students to their academic work. This situation is becoming a great concern to the stakeholders in the educational sector. Scholars might associate this attitude of lack of interest in academic work to the poverty status of parents or sponsors of the undergraduate students. According to Adedeji (2023), problems of poor condition of service, poor remuneration of teachers, delay in payment of salaries, lack of adequate resources and poor community involvement contributed to the parental poverty factors, which resulted in poor attitude of undergraduate students to academic work. Attitude is regarded as a contributor to higher or lower academic achievement in any field of specialization. It refers to a learned tendency of a student to respond positively or negatively towards a particular course of study in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) particularly in a university. Undergraduates' attitude to courses of study is a relatively strong factor that determines the academic success of students in university.

The present status of undergraduates in the faculty of education in the University of Ibadan is of concern as some of them do not go for lectures regularly. Some of the students appear to use their time to engage in unlawful protest, lawless behaviour, hooliganism and cultism instead of facing their academic work. This kind of undergraduates' attitude negatively affects their academic work. Echiverri, Chen and Wang (2020) stated that undergraduates in Nigerian universities nowadays are easily distracted from their academics by many things such as social activities, cyber addiction and peer influence.

Attitudes are expressions of inner feelings that reflect whether a person is favourably or unfavourably predisposed to specific situations Echiverri, Chen and Wang (2020) stated that undergraduate students always hold different attitudes to academic work, varying from positive to negative. This implies that students' success depends on negative or positive attitudes to their academic work in university.

Students' attitude to academic work is the most common factor responsible for high or low academic achievement. Candeias, Rebelo, Oliveira and Mendez (2010) were of the opinion that the students' attitude toward learning influenced how students behave in the school, how students develop interest in their courses, how they relate to peers and lecturers. The researchers further stated that many Nigerian students seem to have substandard learning attitude and this could result into low academic work. Students who are late comers and who submit their assignments after the time line specified more likely to fail or drop out. Students need to be actively involved in the accomplishment of tasks through their personal efforts (Anghelache, 2013). Ralph (2014) reported that undergraduate's attitude to academic work in the area of educational expectations and assignment is poor.

Undergraduates' negative or poor attitude to academic work may be attributed to poor parental factors of some parents. Parental factors are those issues which affect the growth and development of the child. Indeed, parents as custodian to nurture, encourage, protect and



secure the development of their children (Amadi, 2020). Samal (2012) assessed attitude of parents towards the education and schooling of their children. His findings showed that the overall attitude of the respondents was moderately favourable and positive towards schooling and education of their children.

Researchers generally agree that a group of parental poverty factors exert significant influence on the educational aspirations and academic achievements of undergraduate students. Ogunsola, Osulale and Ojo (2014) identified parents' attitudes, parental education and socioeconomic background as parental factors expected to influence undergraduates' attitude to academic work. The indices used for measuring parental poverty factors in this study are socio-economic status of parents, parental involvement, parental attitude and educational background of the parents.

Socio-economic status is a composite measure of an individual's economic and sociological standing. It is a complex assessment measured in a variety of ways that account for a person's work experience, economic and social position, based on income, education, and occupation, in relation to other persons in the society,. A parent's socio-economic status can be described by his or her income, education, and status occupation. A parent's socioeconomic status can be categorized as high, middle, or low. It is important to understand the relationship that exists between socio-economic status and students' attitude to academic work. According to Maikudi and Okpe (2018), academic success of students will be guaranteed if the socio-economic status of parents is high.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Negative attitude to academic work has been found to be a contributing factor towards underachievement in the educational pursuit of undergraduate students. This attitude might not be unconnected with the parental poverty and socio-economic status of the sponsors of the students. Some of the undergraduate students do not go to lecture room as it expected. They are not punctual in the lecture room. Some of the students use their time to engage in unlawful protest, lawlessness, hooliganism and cultism. This negative or poor attitude to academic work among undergraduate students in Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan may be attributed to the poor status of the parental factors of some parents. This study, therefore, examined parental poverty factors and the attitude of undergraduate students to academic work in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of parental poverty factors on attitude to academic work by undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria. The objectives of the study are to:

- i. investigate the attitude of undergraduate students to academic work in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria;
- ii. find out socio-economic status of parent of undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria; and



- iii. examine the relationship between parental poverty factors (socio-economic, educational background, parental attitude) and the attitude of undergraduate students to academic work in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

Based on the above stated purpose of the study, this study answered the following questions:

- i. What is the attitude to academic work by undergraduates of the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria?
- ii. What is the level of socio-economic status of parents of undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between parental poverty factors (socio-economic status, educational background, parental views) and attitude to academic work by undergraduates of the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria.?

**Research Methodology**

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The reason for the adoption of this research design was to present the respondents’ position without alteration. This enabled the researchers to obtain respondents’ perception through questionnaires. The population of the study comprises the 2,184 undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education in University of Ibadan, during the 2021/2022 academic session. The study adopted simple random sampling technique to select five departments out of the ten existing departments in the Faculty of Education, as all the departments are homogeneous in characteristics. 20% of the undergraduate students from the selected departments were selected, using simple random sampling technique. A total of 292 undergraduate students were sampled for this study as indicated under Table 1.

**Table 1: Selected Sample for the Study**

S/N	Department	Students by level				Total	20%
		100	200	300	400		
1	Educational Management	46	66	68	66	246	49
2	Guidance and Counseling	65	64	65	66	260	50
3	Arts and Social Science Education	-	178	160	145	483	97
4	Science and Technology Education	71	71	66	24	232	48
5	Adult Education	58	56	69	57	240	48
	<b>Total</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>435</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>1461</b>	<b>292</b>

*Source: NUESA’ Office, Faculty of Education University of Ibadan (2023)*

**Results and Discussion**

**Research Question 1:** What is the attitude of undergraduate students to academic work in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria?

**Table 2: Attitude of Undergraduate Students to Academic Work**



S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std D
Students from poor families:							
1.	are active in group activities	92 (31.7%)	163 (56.2%)	21 (7.2%)	14 (4.8%)	3.15	0.75
2.	skip class for no reason	20 (6.9%)	62 (21.4%)	115 (39.7%)	93 (32.1%)	2.03	0.90
3.	hang out with my friends than going to lecture room to receive lecture	22 (7.6%)	46 (15.9%)	95 (32.8%)	127 (43.8%)	1.87	0.94
4.	feel tired going to faculty	22 (7.6%)	92 (31.7%)	109 (37.6%)	67 (23.1%)	2.24	0.89
5	have interest in teaching and learning activities	111 (38.3%)	125 (43.1%)	28 (43.0%)	26 (9.0%)	3.11	0.91
		<b>2.48</b>	<b>0.87</b>				
<b>Weighted Average</b>							

Table 2 shows negative responses to items 2, 3 and 4; while responses to items 1 and 5 are positive. For instance, 87.9% respondents agreed that they are active in group activities (mean = 3.15) and 81.4% respondents agreed that they do have interest in learning (mean = 3.11). However, 71.8% respondents disagreed that they skip class for no reason (mean = 2.03); about 76.6% respondents disagreed that they like hanging out with their friends than going to lecture room to receive lectures (mean = 1.87) and 60.7% respondents agreed that they feel tired going to faculty (mean = 2.24). This shows that attitude to academic work by undergraduates of the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria is negative as the weighted average mean = 2.48; SD = 0.87

**Research Question 2:** What is the level of socio-economic status of parents of undergraduates in the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria?

**Table 3: Level of Socio-Economic Status of Parents**

S/N	Statements	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN ( $\bar{X}$ )	Std D
1	Students from higher social economic status will have positive attitude to their academic work	64 (22.1%)	117 (40.3%)	81 (27.9%)	28 (9.7%)	2.75	0.91
2	Families with lower income have negative attitude to their course of discipline	21 (7.2%)	61 (21.0%)	161 (55.5%)	47 (16.2%)	2.19	0.79
3	Students from low social economic status have negative attitude to study	25 (8.6%)	54 (18.6%)	160 (55.2%)	51 (17.6%)	2.18	0.82
4	Being economically wealthy, gives me self-confidence to be active in class	49 (16.9%)	112 (38.6%)	100 (34.5%)	29 (10.0%)	2.62	0.88
5	A well-provided home is helpful to have positive attitude to academic work	113 (39.0)	143 (49.3%)	29 (10.0%)	5 (1.7%)	3.26	0.704
<b>Weighted Average</b>		<b>0.82</b>	<b>2.60</b>				

Table 3 indicates that respondents agreed with all the items on the table except item 2 and 3. For instance, 62.4% of the respondents agreed that students from higher social economic status will have positive attitude to their academic work (mean = 2.75); more that 50 % of the respondents agreed that being economically wealthy, give them self-confidence to be active in lecture room (mean = 2.62) and 88.3% of the respondents agreed that a well-provided



home is helpful to have positive attitude to academic work (mean = 3.26). However, 71.7% of the respondents disagreed that Families with lower income have negative attitude to their course of discipline (mean = 2.19) and 72.8% of the participating students disagreed that students from low social economic status have negative attitude to their study (mean = 2.18). The weighted average mean (2.60) and SD (0.82) shows that the level of socio-economic status of the undergraduate students’ parents was fairly on the on the high side.

**Research Question 3:** What is the relationship between parental poverty factors (socio-economic status, educational background, parental views) and attitude to academic work by undergraduates of the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria.?

**Table 4: Correlational Matrix of the Predictor Variable**

Variables	attitude to academic work	socio-economic status of parent	educational background of parent	parental attitude	parental involvement
Attitude to academic work	1.00				
Socio-economic status of parent	0.357** 0.000	1.00			
Educational background of parent	0.267** 0.000	0.627** 0.000	1.00		
Parental attitude	0.115 0.026	0.341** 0.000	0.454** 0.000	1.00	
Parental involvement	0.366 0.000**	0.312 0.000**	0.220 0.000**	0.144 0.007	1.00
MEAN ( $\bar{x}$ )	12.40	13.00	14.44	16.12	12.38
St. D	2.477	2.928	3.013	2.758	3.792

\*\*denotes significant at  $p < 0.05$  level of significant

Table 4 indicates that there was a positive significant relationship between socio-economic status of parent, ( $r = 0.36$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), educational background of parents ( $r = 0.27$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) and parental involvement ( $r = 0.37$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) to attitude to academic work by undergraduate students. This indicates that socio-economic status of parents, educational background of parent and parental involvement are significantly related to attitude to academic work by undergraduates. However, parental attitude is positive but not significantly related to attitude to academic work by undergraduates of Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria.

**Findings**

The results that emanated from this study were discussed above. The findings of the study are highlighted as follows:



- i. The findings of this study revealed that students from poor families are active in group activities that take place in the classrooms. However, the results also showed that students from the poor families skip class for no reason. This showed that students from poor families are easily discouraged from going to school or attending classes when they have any challenges related to their financial needs.
- ii. Students perceived to belong to the economically wealthy families, have self-confidence, which motivates them to be also active in class. Furthermore, positive attitude to academic work was observed from students who come from wealthy homes.
- iii. Respondents to questions under the first research question confirm that students from poor homes hang out with my friends instead of going to receive lectures. They are also reluctant and feel tired when they are expected to go for lectures in their respective faculties.
- iv. With a weighted average mean of 2.48 and standard deviation of 0.87 the results showed that the attitude to academic work by undergraduates of the Faculty of Education in the University of Ibadan, Nigeria is negative.
- v. It was also found out that students from higher social economic status had positive attitude to their academic work due to the adequate resources made available for them from their home background
- vi. Respondents to item 3 under the second research question buttress the fact that students from low social economic status have negative attitude to their studies. This was the resultant effect of the inadequacy of resources made available for the completion of the academic work, of students from low social economic status.
- vii. With a weighted average mean of 2.60 and standard deviation of 0.82, the results showed that the level of socio-economic status of the undergraduate students' parents was fairly on the on the high side.
- viii. It was found out that the socio-economic status of parents, their educational background as well as their parental involvement are significantly related to the attitude to academic work by undergraduates.
- ix. Parental attitude to students' academic work was positive but not significantly related to attitude to academic work by undergraduates of Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan Nigeria.

### Conclusion

This study concluded that the unfriendly and harsh socio-economic situation in Nigeria, has impoverished and increased the poverty level of some of the parents of undergraduate students. This led to the poor attitude of some of the undergraduate students to their academic



work. It was established that the negative attitude or lack of interest in academic work by undergraduate students, is a resultant effect of the poverty status of their parents or sponsors. Scholars also associated this attitude of lack of interest in academic work to the poverty status of parents or sponsors of the undergraduate students.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Undergraduate students should be encouraged and motivated by parents to have positive attitude to academic work so that they can make good grade in their course of study.
2. Educational managers should organize seminars and workshops for undergraduate students, parents, sponsors and the society at large to develop positive attitude towards university academic work.
3. Parents should strive to provide the adequate needs for their children, especially when they are engaged in undergraduate studies.
4. Government agencies should also increase financial support for undergraduate students in tertiary institutions, especially in the universities.
5. Provision of adequate infrastructural facilities, conducive learning environment, internet facilities and uninterrupted power supply, for teaching and learning of university undergraduate students should be ensured by the educational agencies that are responsible.
6. The management of universities should provide feedback to parents concerning the academic work of their children such that the parents would continuously monitor their progress.

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