

EVALUATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' BACKGROUND AND THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ECONOMICS IN PANKSHIN LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF PLATEAU STATE

Mavollo, MalgitMashat

malgitmashat@gmail.com

Department of Economics
College of Education Gindiri
PMB 01000

Elam, Grace Maunde

maundegrace85@gmail.com

Renasant High School Mista Ali
P.O Box 5660. Bassa LGA

Nansak, NangwangDombong

dombongnansak123@gmail.com

Department of Social Science Education
University of Jos
Plateau State

&

Rangshak, Zatgak Bala

Rangshakzatgak247@gmail.com

Government secondary school Wokkos
PO Box 485, Pankshin LGA Plateau State

Abstract

This study evaluates the influence of secondary school students' backgrounds—specifically parental academic qualifications and school systems—on their academic achievement in Economics within Pankshin Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design with data from 250 Senior Secondary students across 10 selected schools, out of the population of 2500 students offering economics in all the 65 public secondary in the Local Government analyzed through simple percentages and chi-square tests ($\alpha=0.05$), it finds significant positive relationships: $\chi^2=90.71$ (df=7, $p<0.05$) for parental education and $\chi^2=160.69$ (df=7, $p<0.05$) for school systems, rejecting both null hypotheses. These results, supported by literature on socioeconomic factors and school effectiveness, highlight the need for enhanced parental involvement, school resources, and policy support to boost Economics performance.

Key words: Academic achievement, Evaluation, Student background, Economics

Introduction

Education is widely recognized as a crucial instrument for national development and individual advancement. At the secondary school level, education prepares students for higher education and equips them with knowledge and skills required for meaningful participation in society. One of the elective subjects taught at this level is Economics, which helps students understand how resources are allocated, how economic decisions are made, and how individuals and governments respond to economic challenges(Federal Government of Nigeria,2013)

Despite the importance of Economics in the secondary school curriculum, students' academic achievement in the subject has continued to raise concern among stakeholders in the education sector. Reports from schools and examination bodies indicate variations in students' performance, with many students recording low achievement in Economics. These variations suggest that factors beyond classroom instruction may be influencing students' academic outcomes (Mawak, Igabari& Mustapha,[2024](#)).

Students' background is one of the major factors believed to affect academic achievement. Background variables such as parents' level of education, socioeconomic status, family size, home environment, and availability of learning materials can either enhance or hinder students' academic performance. A supportive home environment often motivates students to study and perform better academically, while an unfavourable background may limit learning opportunities and negatively affect academic achievement.

In Pankshin Local Government Area, secondary school students exhibit varying levels of academic achievement in Economics. While some students perform well, others consistently perform poorly, which raises questions about the role of students' background in influencing their performance. Evaluating these background factors is therefore necessary to understand their impact on students' academic achievement in Economics. Against this background, this study seeks to evaluate the background of secondary school students and their academic achievement in Economics in Pankshin Local Government Area.

Jelman([2023](#)) acknowledges that socioeconomic background is an important background factor that shapes students' opportunities. Though the study's main focus is on teacher attitude, Jelman notes that economic challenges (poor home conditions, lack of money for materials) negatively affect students' concentration and performance in Economics, especially in low-income families in Jos-North. Mawak, Igabariand Mustapha ([2024](#)) argued that this variation is partly due to differences in school resources and home conditions, which are closely tied to students' socioeconomic background, and they recommend that schools in poorer areas be better supported to improve Economics performance. Maleka, ([2022](#)) found that students from better-resource backgrounds benefit more from modern teaching methods like simulation, possibly because they have more support at home.

In Economics classrooms, leadership influence manifests through professional development opportunities, allocation of teaching resources (textbooks, economic data tools), and establishment of clear academic expectations. Such systemic support enhances teacher instructional quality and boosts students' mastery of Economics concepts Teaching Practices and Assessment Strategies. Continuous assessment is an integral part of effective school systems, and recent studies indicate its positive influence on Economics achievement. For instance, research in Nigerian secondary schools found that regular formative assessments, including quizzes and teacher feedback, improved student performance in Economics by identifying gaps and encouraging ongoing learning habits (Owerri Municipal study, [2024](#)).

In Economics, where topics like market equilibrium and fiscal policy require iterative learning, formative assessment guides students toward better conceptual clarity. School Resources and Learning Tools Multiple researchers confirm that the presence of adequate instructional resources—such as textbooks, visual aids, ICT tools, and supplementary materials—enhances student achievement. Ohazurikeand Igwe ([2024](#)) showed that schools

with access to quality learning materials recorded higher student performance in Economics compared to resource-deficient settings. Students with access to interactive tools such as economic simulations and digital graphs demonstrated better conceptual understanding and engagement. This finding supports the educational production function approach, which argues that material and infrastructural inputs are essential determinants of academic achievement (Hanushek, [2011](#)).

Beyond physical resources, school climate — the quality of relationships and sense of belonging within a school — significantly influences student motivation and academic outcomes. Studies in Nigerian contexts indicate that positive school environments correlate with higher engagement, reduced absenteeism, and improved performance across subjects including Economics (Ogun State School Climate study, [2024](#)). A supportive climate enhances student confidence and willingness to attempt complex problem-solving tasks typical of Economics curricula.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim and objectives of this study is to evaluate the background of secondary school students and their academic achievement in Economics, specifically the study sought to:

1. To examine the role of parents' educational background on the academic achievement of their children.
2. To evaluate the role of school system as it influence the academic achievement of secondary school student.

Research questions

The following research questions have been formulated in order to guide the researcher in this study. These are:

1. To what extend does parents' academic qualification influence the academic achievement of their children?
2. To what extend does the school system influence the academic achievement of secondary school students in economics?

Hypotheses

The study can be directed by the following Research Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between parents' academic qualification and secondary school students' achievement in economics.
2. There is no relationship between the school system and the achievement of secondary school students in economics.

Methodology

The research design used in this study is the descriptive and inferential statistics specifically, simple percentage and chi-square. Descriptive design requires that the data are typically collected through questionnaire. Two research questions were answered using simple percentage and two Hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance using chi-square contingency table. Two factors considered in the study were; parents' academic qualification and secondary school students' achievement in economics, and the school system and the

academic achievement of secondary school students in economics. The population comprised of 65 senior secondary schools (both public and private) in Pankshin local Government Area of Plateau state from which 10 schools were randomly selected. The study was carried out using 250 participants with 25 each from the 10 selected schools, out of the population of 500 students offering economics in all the 65 public and private secondary schools in the Local Government. Questionnaire titled “factors affecting senior secondary school students’ achievement in economics was administered to the students by the researcher and the responses collected on the spot after the respondents’ responses. The data were analyzed using simple percentage (descriptive) and chi-square contingency table (inferential).

Results

Results are presented in tabular form according to research questions and hypotheses.

Research question one: To what extent does parents' academic qualification influence the academic achievement of their children?

Table 1: Shows responses on how parents' academic qualification influence the academic achievement of their children.

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES			
		SAA	D	SD	
		F	FFF		
1.	Educated parents serve as a second teacher to their children at home.	129	51	34	36
2.	The more educated parents are, the more concerned they are about their children's academic needs.	132	47	45	35
3.	Uneducated parents do not care about Providing their children with learning facilities Both at and in the school	99	65	46	40
4.	Educated parents do not have time for their children because of their work	20	80	30	20
5.	Children of uneducated parents are usually not motivated by their parent	100	60	50	40
6.	Children of the educated parents usually Strive for excellent in the school				

	because Of the fear of being punished by their parents for low Achievement.	88	71	43	48
7.	Parents' academic qualification has impact on the academic achievement of their children	69	91	40	50
8.	Uneducated parents are usually careless about their children's academic needs	79	58	70	43
Total		8807(39%),523(26%),367(18%),342(17%)			

Table1; Reveals that 807 responses representing 39% strongly agree, 523 responses which represents 26% agreed with the assertion that, parents academic qualification influence the academic achievement of their children. On the other hand, 367 responses representing 18% disagreed, 342 responses with 17% strongly with the statement that, parents' level of academic qualification influences the academic achievement of their children. However, from the data above, we can conclude that, parents' academic qualification has a great influence on their children's academic achievement.

Analysis of the Hypotheses.

Chi-square contingency table analysis is employed in testing the hypotheses authenticity

Null Hypothesis one. (Ho): There is no significant relationship between parents' academic qualification and secondary school students' achievement in economics.

Using items 1 to 8 to test hypothesis one.

Table 2, Responses on the relationship between parents' academic qualification and secondary school students achievement in economics.

S/N	SA			A			D			SD			TOTAL
	Fo	Fe	(X ²)	Fo	Fe	X ²	Fo	Fe	X ²	Fo	Fe	X ²	
1.	129	100.88	(7.84)	51	65.38	(3.16)	34	44.75	(2.58)	36	39.0	(0.23)	250
2.	123	100.88	(4.85)	47	65.38	(5.17)	45	44.75	(0.00)	35	39.0	(0.41)	250
3.	99	100.88	(0.04)	65	65.38	(0.00)	46	44.75	(0.03)	40	39.0	(0.03)	250
4.	120	100.88	(3.62)	80	65.38	(0.01)	30	44.75	(0.50)	20	39.0	(9.26)	250
5.	100	100.88	(0.01)	60	65.38	(0.44)	50	44.75	(0.62)	40	39.0	(0.41)	250

6.	88, 100.88,(1.64)	71, 65.38,(0.48)	43, 44.75,(0.07)	48,39.0,(2.08)	250
7.	69, 100.88,(10.07)	91, 65.38,(10.04)	40, 44.75,(0.50)	50,39.0,(3.10)	250
8.	79, 100.88,(4.77)	58, 65.38,(0.83)	70, 44.75,(14.25)	43,39.0,(0.41)	250
	807	523	367	342	2000

This Hypothesis is tested at 5% level of significant

Since the result reveals that, the value of chi-square calculated (90.71) is greater than the value of chi-square tabulated(32.67), we reject the null hypothesis H_0 , thereby, concluding that, there is significant relationship between parents' academic qualification and secondary school students' achievement in economics. Sequence on the academic achievement of their children in secondary school.

ResearchQuestion Two: To what extent does the school system influence the academic achievement of secondary school students?

Table 3 indicates the responses on how the school system influences the academic achievement of secondary school students.

S/N	ITEMS	RESPONSES			
		SA	A	D	SD
		F	FFF		
9.	The physical environment, school buildings and the ground are key factors affecting the academic achievement of secondary school students	114	58	44	34
10	Disciplinary policies in a school system enhance academic achievement of students	113	65	50	22
11	Teacher's training and welfare affects students' achievement positively	95	85	35	35
12	Effective and efficient administration in a school system enhances academic achievement of students	65	95	40	50
13	Students achieved better when they take part in making decisions that affect them directly in the school system	35	120	60	35
14	Lack of library and teaching media affects students' academic achievement negatively	60	70	70	50
15	Inadequate qualified economics teachers is a Setback to students' academic achievement	54	101	60	35
16	Congestion due to inadequate classroom and other facilities affects secondary school students negatively	98	52	54	46
Total		634(32%),646(32%),413(21%),307(15%)			

Table 2 shows that, 634 responses with 32% strongly agreed, 646 responses representing 32% agreed with the statement that, school system has influence on the

academic achievement of secondary school student in Economics. Contrarily, 413 responses representing 21% disagreed and 307 responses with 15% strongly disagreed with the statement that, the school system has influence on secondary school students' academic achievement in Economics.

Null Hypothesis Two: There is no relationship between the school system and the achievement of secondary school students in economics.

Using items 9 to 16 to test the above stated hypothesis. Using Chi-square (X^2).

Table 4: Responses on the relationship between the school system and the achievement of secondary school students in Economics.

S/N	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
Fo	Fe (X ²)	Fo Fe X ²	Fo Fe X ²	Fo Fe X ²	
9.	114, 79.25, (15.24)	58, 80.75, (6.41)	44, 51.63, (1.13)	34, 38.38, (0.50)	250
10.	113, 79.25, (14.37)	65, 80.75, (3.07)	50, 51.63, (0.05)	22, 38.38, (6.99)	250
11.	95, 79.25, (3.13)	85, 80.75, (0.22)	35, 51.63, (5.36)	35, 38.38, (0.30)	250
12.	65, 79.25, (2.56)	95, 80.75, (2.51)	40, 51.63, (2.63)	50, 38.38, (3.52)	250
13.	35, 79.25, (24.71)	120, 80.75, (19.08)	60, 51.63, (1.36)	35, 38.38, (0.30)	250
14.	60, 79.25, (4.68)	70, 80.75, (1.43)	70, 51.63, (6.54)	50, 38.38, (3.52)	250
15.	54, 79.25, (8.04)	101, 80.73, (5.08)	60, 51.63, (1.36)	35, 38.38, (0.30)	250
16.	98, 79.25, (4.44)	52, 80.75, (10.24)	54, 51.63, (0.11)	46, 38.38, (1.51)	250
Total	634	646	413	307	2,000

This Hypothesis is tested at 5% level of significant

The result reveals that, the value of Chi-square calculated (160.69) is greater than the value of Chi-square tabulated (32.67). Therefore, the decision will that, we reject the Ho. Thereby, conclude that, there is a significant relationship between the school system and the achievement of secondary school students in economics

Discussion of findings

The analysis made so far was based on the data collected from the sampled population of respondents from 10 selected secondary schools in Pankshin Local Government Area. The data was collected, presented, and analyzed in order to answer the research questions earlier raised. The findings of the study are discussed in line with the research questions and hypotheses raised in the study.

With regard to research question one, the analysis reveals that 65% of the respondents agreed that parents' level of academic qualification has a significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students. This finding also is in agreement

with Ezeudu and Ejikeme (2019), who found that, parents with higher educational levels are more likely to emphasize academic achievement and engage in activities that support their children's academic processes. This is because parents would be in a good position to be the second teacher to their children, and even guide and counsel them on the best way to perform well in academic. And again, children of educated parents are likely to have access to all the necessary materials of learning which in turn provide them with better opportunity as well as motivation to achieve more while in school. In contrast, only 35% of the respondents disagreed that parents' level of academic qualification does not influence their children's academic achievement.

Hypothesis one also reveals that Chi-square X^2_{cal} (90.71) is greater than X^2_{tab} (32.67) which means that, there is a significant relationship between parents' academic qualification and secondary school students' academic achievement. This finding is in agreement with Johnson, Musa and Okeke (2021), position that, where parental Socioeconomic factors like income and educational qualification significantly predicted achievement gaps. According to them, parents' level of education is the most important variable affecting their children's academic success.

Research question two has been answered also by the result of this study which depicted that 64% of the respondents agreed that the school system has a significant relationship with the academic achievement of students. It was revealed that, a well-organized school system with an effective and efficient administration can help enhance the achievement of students positively. This revelation moves in line with the position of Javornik and Klemenčič Mirazchiyski (2023), identifies several school system factors—such as effective leadership, collaborative climate, and administrative support—that consistently predict improved academic performance.

The school system provides training, resources, technical assistance to students. These services provided by the school are key elements in promoting students' academic achievement. School system is broadly characterized by its facilities, classrooms, school-based health support and disciplinary policies and practices. It sets the stage for external factors that affect students. Therefore, a good school system sets a pace for higher academic achievement while poorly organized schools affect students' achievement negatively. In contrast, only 36% disagreed that parents' level of academic qualification does not influence their children's level of academic achievement.

Hypothesis two also shows that X^2_{cal} (160.69) is greater than X^2_{tab} (32.67) which implies that, there is a significant relationship between the school system and the academic achievement of students. This goes with the position of Eniola & Oredein (2025), reveals a direct link between classroom management practices and students' academic achievement in Economics. Their study in Nigerian secondary schools observed that classrooms characterized by moderate to poor order, disruptions, and ineffective instructional pacing corresponded with low student performance in Economics examinations. They concluded that effective classroom management can significantly improve students' engagement and understanding of Economics content, leading to better academic outcomes. Not every school is for every child. Not every method of instruction works for every child. Some children need a structured environment while some need a creative free environment. All these and other factors within the school system have a strong influence on the academic achievement of

students, especially, at the secondary school level. Consequently, from these findings, it is obvious that, students' background has a significant impact upon their academic achievement.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that secondary school students' backgrounds, particularly parental education and school systems, significantly influence Economics achievement in Pankshin LGA. Both hypotheses were rejected, confirming strong relationships through chi-square analysis. These findings align with the document's descriptive data and literature. Parental academic qualifications positively impact students' Economics performance, as educated parents provide guidance, motivation, and learning resources at home. School systems, including administration, facilities, teacher training, and disciplinary policies, play a critical role in enhancing or hindering achievement. Overall, students from supportive backgrounds (home and school) outperform others, explaining performance variations in the area.

Recommendations

1. For Parents and Guardians, they should Prioritize their own education or skill-building to better support children's learning, such as monitoring homework and providing Economics textbooks. Invest in home learning materials regardless of income level to bridge gaps for less-educated families.
2. For Schools and Administrators, they should improve infrastructure like classrooms, libraries, and teaching aids to reduce congestion and boost engagement, enhance teacher training and welfare, alongside effective classroom management, to foster better Economics instruction.

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