

## **Family Background and Educational Attainment of Students in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Issues surrounding family has been a major focus of researchers in recent time. Parenting is a serious and tasking responsibility and the socio-economic status of a family to a large extent affects children's aspirations. This study focused on students enrolled in secondary schools and tertiary institutions of learning. It assessed the relationship between family background and educational attainment of students in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria, with specific emphasis on how parents' level of education, socio-economic status, and family size, affects the educational attainment of their children. The study is anchored on the social development theory and theory of human motivation. The study employed descriptive survey design and multi-stage sampling technique to reach the respondents. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to reach the respondents and primary data was collected through survey method, with questionnaires as instrument. Data collected was processed and analyzed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 27). The study found that there is both positive and negative relationship between family background and educational attainment of students. Parents' educational level plays an important role in motivating children to learn, assisting them with school assignments, and guiding them in meeting academic requirements. The study recommends improvement in parental educational level, increase in access to quality education for low-income families and encouragement of family planning education as ways of improving family background and educational attainment of students in the society.*

**Key Words:** *Family Background, Educational Attainment, Students, Responsibility*

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

The family is the bedrock of the society. Past and public debates of the role of the family in modern societies have been prevalent in different countries. Families have changed in structure globally since the 1960s till date. Most prominently, the overall size of families has declined, following a general decrease in total fertility levels across virtually every nation. Kapella and Christiane (2010), in their studies, observed that the idea of one standard nuclear family model was being replaced by a variety of different alternative family structures and lifestyles.

Education activities are geared towards ensuring that students achieve mastery of educational objectives. It is the best legacy a nation can give to her citizens especially the youths. This is because education is very important in the development of any nation or community. Education is

the process of transmitting what is worthwhile to members of the society. It thus, embraces all those experiences of the individual through which knowledge is acquired and intellect enlightened (Muola, 2010). Every parent wants his or her child to do well in their academics, imbibe acceptable norms, value, and attitude of the society. No parent is happy to see his or her child live contrary to the norms of the society. It goes on from one generation to another generation. In this context, it is the process of socializing the child to grow up as fulfilled members of the society through informal and formal process.

Muola (2010) highlighted education as a basic right and need which is significant in the accomplishment of the second goal of the Millennium Development Goals. This is because good education guarantees skilled and dynamic citizens. Family backgrounds have been of great importance in shaping the performance of children in schools worldwide. This is because; academic performance is usually as a result of motivation that children get from the people they interact with in their initial stages of life. A study conducted in the U.S.A by Imel (2021) revealed that years of schooling completed and educational achievement of students, varied widely by family backgrounds.

Student's academic performance and educational attainment is to a large extent determined by family background than those he/she interacts with on daily basis will go a long way to influencing the performance of the students positively or negatively. Ogbugo-Ololube (2016) stated that children with highly educated parents do fairly well in schools than those with less educated parents. Good academic performance is essential to get promoted to the next level in school and the turning point of lives of the student is when they get into secondary level of schooling. From that stage the students get to perform well in academics, in order to get enrolled into tertiary education. Students with good grades would have fewer hindrances while applying for job, compared to their counterparts with poor grades, as the first criteria which the employers seek is the grades. Students who have poor academic record would find it difficult to cope in a competitive society.

Research in Europe, America, England, Poland, Mexico, and China, shows that children from a stable family background do better in school than those from unstable family backgrounds (Egalite, 2016). Also, Barasa (2016) concurred with this when he said that the family was the bedrock of a child's ability to succeed in his academic work. The changing structure from the traditional family structure comprising parents and their children to other forms of family structures that provide an alternative dependence system may have an influence on the academic performance of children, who depend on their family for academic, emotional, and material support. Okunniyi (2014) reported that growing up in a single-parent or reconstituted family or living with a divorced parent has been shown to be a significant risk leading to school maladjustment and achievement problem. The effects may vary with the age of the child, needs and availability of economic resources.

Parental occupation is also an important family background variable. The occupation of one's parents may determine to a large extent one's chance to attain quality education. This view corroborates the findings of Ngere, Elijah and Tjkoko (2017) whose findings reveal that parental occupation would affect the number of resources they can deploy towards the education of their wards and children. Ezeji (2011) noted that parents like their children to take to their occupation, like parents who are lawyers, doctors, musicians among others. Uwaoma (2016) asserted that most

vocational pupils were children whose parents were farmers or craftsmen. In Nigeria most children whose parents cannot afford to pay for high cost of formal education enroll into apprenticeship programs such as carpentry, brick laying, petty trading and others.

Children from poor families are at greater risk of entering kindergarten schools unprepared, unlike their peers from rich families (Okwulanya, 2013) posited that. Bell (2002) observed that some parents may prefer to have small family size because they have faith good academic performance would provide a stable future for them. Pupils from low socio-economic status families may not be motivated to do well in school and may not be knowledgeable about techniques of being successful in school. High socio-economic status parents who have benefited in a variety of ways from education serves as effective and enthusiastic advocate of schooling (Carlson, 2013). In line with this Okwulanya (2013) and Eamon (2015) are of the view that motivation from educated parents strengthens the academic aspiration and language development in their children to perform better in their academic work. This shows that the background that a child comes from can significantly influence his/her development. This study found out the relationship between family background and educational attainment of students in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Practically, findings from this study present a discovery of the dynamics of family background as one of the factors that influences the academic performance students. Based on the findings of the study, proper decisions can be made by stakeholders. This cuts across students, teachers, parent, school administrators, the government etc. Also, findings from this study provide empirical information in identifying and explaining the various family background variables on students' academic achievement and educational attainment.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem, questions, objectives and hypotheses**

The responsibility of training a child first lies in the hand of the parents. This statement agrees with the common assertion of sociologist that education taught from home can be an instrument of cultural change. It is still relevant in this discuss. Therefore, it is not out of place to imagine that parental socio-economic background can have possible effects on the academic achievement of children in school (Alio, 2010). The view of Lisa (2023) supports the above statement that whatsoever affects the development environment of children would possibly affect their education or disposition to it. It therefore is plausible to assert that parental status is one of such variables.

The socio-economic status of a family is capable of affecting the behaviour of their children and determines their aspiration. Families with high socio-economic status, do more in preparing their children for school because they typically have access to wide range of providing their young children with high quality childcare, books and encourage children in various learning activities at home. They also have easy access to information regarding their children's health as well as social, emotional, and cognitive development (Ojo & Yilma 2010).

Parents' educational attainment is indicated by three highest levels of schooling which the students' mother completed: primary, secondary, and tertiary. These categories are defined on the basis of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). It posits that children brought up in less favourable conditions obtain less education despite the large financial returns to schooling for an extensive review (Uwaoma, 2016).

Steinberg (2012) evaluated various contributions on parents' background; he supports the view that financial constraints significantly affect educational attainment. Positive attitude to school will probably be encouraged by those parents who themselves attained a high level of western

education. While the father is away, it is expected that the mother takes care of the children at home and as such, the children are closer with their mother (Chevailier, Harmon, Sullivan & Walker, 2015). The educated mother, knowing the importance of education should as much as possible generate in the child interest and curiosity for education at an early age.

The general overview of the parent-student dynamics is that the parental educational levels influence their children's academic achievement. Past research has shown clearly that parental possession of a college degree leads to higher incomes, higher educational attainment, and a choice of more selective colleges for their children. As cited by Gooding (2021), many researchers do imply that there is a relationship between parenting and the academic achievement of their children. After getting the clear picture of the long effects of students not doing well in the schools, parent have to be diligent to keep watch, provide, motivate, and help their children to attain high level of academic performance. The role of parent is really huge not only on educating their children but also grooming them to be better human beings.

Porumbu and Necsoi (2013) and Oba-Adenuga (2019) in their studies, discovered some factors that determine students' academic performance. They identified personal and socio-economic background, internal state (intelligence, state of health, motivation, anxiety, etc.) and their environment (availability of a suitable learning environment, adequacy of educational infrastructure like textbooks and well-equipped laboratories) as the possible variables that could determine academic performance. Uwaoma (2016) argued that home environment factors were more important factors which determined students' academic performance. Hence, it attracted the interest and concern of teachers, counsellors, psychologists, researchers, and school administrators in Nigeria (Single-Rushton & McLanahan, 2014).

From the literature above, it is evident that the family a child comes from can significantly affect the development of the child in general and educational attainment in particular. However, a dearth exists in the literature because it is unclear as to which of the variables in family background affects educational attainment of students, especially in Lafia L.G.A. where this study is conducted. It is against this backdrop, that this study assessed family background and educational attainment of students in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

The study was guided by the following questions: How does parents' level of education affect the educational attainment of their children in Lafia L.G.A.? What is the relationship between the socio-economic status of parents and the educational attainment of their children in Lafia L.G.A.? How does family size influence children's educational attainment in Lafia L.G.A.? Generally, this study assessed the relationship between family background and educational attainment of students in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Specifically, it: to found out how parents' level of education affects the educational attainment of their children, identified the relationship between the socio-economic status of parents and the educational attainment of their children and determined the influence of family size on the educational attainment of children in Lafia L.G.A.

## **2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

### **2.1 Social development theory**

Social development theory was propounded by Russian Psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), who lived during Russian Revolution. Vygotsky's work was largely unknown to the West until it was published in 1962. Social Development Theory argues that social interaction precedes

development; consciousness and cognition is end product of socialization and social behaviour. Vygotsky's theory is one of the foundations of constructivism. It asserts three major themes.

- i. Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. In contrast to Jean Piaget's understanding of child development (in which development necessarily precedes learning), Vygotsky felt social learning precedes development. He state: "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological)."
- ii. The more knowledgeable other (MKO): The MKO refers to anyone who has a better understanding or an ability level than the learner, with respect to a particular task, process, or concept. The MKO is normally thought of as being a teacher, coach, or older adult, but the MKO could also be peers, a younger person, or even computers.
- iii. The zone of proximal development (ZPD): The ZPD is the distance between a student's ability to perform a task under adult guidance and/or with peer collaboration and the student's ability solving the problem independently. According to Vygotsky, learning occurred in this zone.

Vygotsky focused on the connections between people and the socio-cultural context in which they act and interact in shared experiences (Crawford, 2000). According to Vygotsky, human use tools that develop from, a culture, such as speech and writing, to mediate their social environments. Initially children develop this tool s to serve solely as social functions, ways to communicates. Initially children develop these tools to serve solely as social functions, way to communicate needs. Vygotsky believed that then internalization of these tools led to higher thinking skills.

Many schools have traditionally held a transmissionist or instructionist model in which a teacher or lecturer 'transmits' information to students. In contrast, Vygotsky's theory promotes learning contexts in which students play an active role in learning. Roles of the teachers and students are therefore shifted, as a teacher collaborate with his or her students in order to help facilitate meaning construction in students. Learning therefore becomes a reciprocal experience for the students and teacher.

Vygotsky laid emphasis on the concept of culture and human development. The concept of culture and education is inseparable. He opined that as learning progresses, the child's own language comes to serve as her primary tool of intellectual adaptation. Eventually, children can use internal language to direct their own behaviour. Vygotsky's internalization refers to the process of learning-and thereby internalizing a rich body of knowledge and tools to thoughts that first exist outside the child. This happens primarily through language.

A difference exists between what a child can do on his/her own and what the child can do with help. He calls this difference the zone of proximal development. Since much of what a child learns comes from the culture around him/her and much of the child's problem solving is mediated through an adult's help, it is wrong to focus on a child in isolation. Culture and social agents, such as parents and more competent peers, contribute significantly to a child's intellectual development, hence the adoption of the theory.

A students academic performance is to a large extent influenced by a consciousness and cognition of his/her family background, which determines if the child would study hard and make good grades or be nonchalant towards his/her studies.



### 2.1.2 Theory of human motivation

Abraham Maslow, a psychologist developed the theory of human motivation, now known as Maslow's hierarchy of needs in 1947. Maslow noted that some human needs were more powerful than others. He divided those needs into five general categories, from most urgent to most advance: physiological, safety, belonging/love, esteem, and self-actualization. Maslow first published his theory in the 1940s and it became a widely accepted notion in the field of psychology and anthropology. Maslow was a professor at Brandeis University from 1951 until 1969; his major texts included *University* from 1951 until 1969; his major texts included *motivation and Personality* (1954) and *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962). Maslow consequently extended the idea to include his observations of human's innate curiosity. Over the years, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory remains relevant. It posits where the lower order needs (physiological and safety needs) may be linked to organizational culture. Every new organization passes through this lower order stage in which they struggle with their basic survival needs.

At the third level of the Maslow's hierarchy, social needs would correspond to the formation of organized roles within the organization into distinct units, depicting the human resource management function which resonates according to the tone set by environmental culture. The positive interaction of human beings, learning and learning factors would result in relaxed, creative and friendly classroom setting which is devoid of tension, teachers' sole authority and students' subservience which is capable of truncating the teaching-learning processes. Abraham Maslow believed that man is inherently good and argued that individuals possess a constantly growing drives that have great potential. The needs hierarchy system, devised by Maslow (1954), is a commonly used scheme for classifying human motives. It involves five categories of motives arranged with lower-level needs on the bottom, which must be satisfied first, before the higher level needs come into play (Wallace, Goldstein & Nathan 1987). The five general levels of needs as described by Crawford (2000) are shown in the following hierarchical order.

- i. Physiological needs: Food water, sex, and shelter
- ii. Safety needs: Protection against danger, threat, and deprivation. Behaviour which arouse uncertainty with respect to continue employment or which reflects favouritism or discrimination. Unpredictable administration of policies is powerful motivators of the safety needs in the employment relationship at every level (Crawford, 2000).
- iii. Social needs: Giving and receiving of love, friendship, affection, belonging, association, and acceptance. (If the first two levels are fairly well absence of friends).
- iv. Ego needs: Need for achievement (n Ach), adequacy, strength, and freedom. The essence this is the need for autonomy or independence. Status, recognition, appreciation, and prestige. In essence this is the need for self-esteem or self-worth.
- v. Self-actualization needs: the need to realize one's potentialities for continued self-development and the desire to become more and more of what one is and what one is capable of becoming. (The conditions of modern industrial life afford only limited opportunity for the self-actualizing need to find expression) (Majoribank, 2016).

Two major postulates can be derived from Maslow's need hierarchy. A satisfied need is not a motivator of behaviour. To the extent that lower order needs becomes satisfied, the next higher-order level of needs becomes the most pre-potent determinant of behaviour (Maduewisi, 2019). The extent that jobs incorporate elements that satisfy some higher order human needs determines their potential for motivating workers (Imel, 2022). A person's level of aspiration is closely related to the hierarchy of needs. The ultimate need category described by Maslow was that of self-

actualization. This belief served as the basis for the assumption of McGregor's theory Y viewpoint on motivation which was based on self-direction, self-control, motivation, and maturity. The family background of a student can either motivate him/her to perform either well or poor academically.

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive survey design. The choice of this survey design is because it affords the researcher opportunity to select respondents from a target population. This is a process of selecting a sample from the population using some techniques of sampling. It is interested in some characteristics of the population but relied on carefully selected sample from the population for intensive study of the characteristics of the population. The study utilized quantitative methods to gather data. Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula was used to determine the sample size for the study and multi-stage sampling technique was used to reach the target respondents in the study, questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The data collected was processed and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 from which conclusions and recommendations were made based on findings from the study.

This study was conducted in Lafia Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. Lafia, also known as *Lafian bare-bari*, is the capital city of Nasarawa State, central Nigeria. Founded by Muhammadu Dunama in late 17th century on the site of a Koro (Migili) village. Lafia is populated mainly by the Eggon, Alago, Kanuri, Aho and Koro. It also has large populations of Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Mwaghavul settlers amongst other tribes. This is due to the hospitable nature of the indigenes, which has made the city a miniature Nigeria.

Lafia is an agrarian society with the farmers taking full advantage of the fertile, well-drained arable land suitable for the cultivation of cassava, yams, millet, sorghum, rice, citrus fruits, palm kernel, vegetables and livestock, thus contributing to socio-economic development of Nasarawa State. Though large scale mechanized farming, is not practiced by these peasant farmers, there is a bright future for investors of agro-based processing industries as they are assured of basic raw materials. Modern Lafia aside from being an administrative and educational centre, it is also a collecting point for sesame seeds, soybeans, and is a trading centre for yams, sorghum, millet, and cotton. Besides farming, cotton weaving and dyeing are traditionally important activities of the town's inhabitants. Livestock farming is also a prominent activity especially amongst the Fulani herdsmen. Administratively, although there is a democratic structure of governance at the Local Government Level, there is also a structure of governance at the various community levels. At the communities, there are family heads, traditional title holders, the clan heads, village heads and other title holders that help in administering the communities. The two royal families of Ari and Dallah Dunama of the Kanuri people (Bare-Bari) are the ruling houses of the Lafia Emirate. The current Emir is Sidi Bage, from the Dallah Dunama royal family. He succeeded the longest reigning Emir, HRH Isa Mustapha Agwai I (1976–2019).

Educationally, Lafia is home to the Federal University of Lafia, Nasarawa State University, Faculty of Agriculture Lafia Campus, Isa Mustapha Agwai I Polytechnic, Lafia, School of Nursing and Midwifery, School of Health Technology Lafia, College of Agriculture Lafia, and a study centre of the National Open University of Nigeria. It has a large number of primary and secondary schools. The St Williams Cathedral, situated along Jos Road, is the

headquarters of the Lafia diocese and still under construction. Generally, the people are sociable, receptive and hospitable. The Local Government has 13 political wards as follows: Adogi, Agyaraguntofa, Arikyia, Ashigie, Assakio, Bakin Rajiya, Chiroma, Gayamu, Keffin/Wambai, Makama, Shabu/Kwandere, Wakwa and Zanwa.

The population of Lafia Local Government Area according to the 2006 population census was 330,712. Using a geometric model, it was projected to 520,923 in 2023. Out of this figure, 231,266 are Males while 289,657 are Females. Majority of this population is found in the urban settlements of Lafia Local Government Area. The universe or population of the study comprise of all the different categories of the people found in the Local Government Area. It however ranged from all adult males and females from 18 years and above, because it is assumed that they can make informed decisions and are knowledgeable about the subject matter. Both sexes were involved in the study. This group is of interest to the researcher because they are adults who can provide adequate and reliable information about the subject matter under study.

The Yamane's (1967) sample size determination technique was used to determine the sample for the study. It states that for a population greater than 100, 000, a sample size of 204 should be selected at  $\pm 0.07\%$  level of significance. The population of Lafia is put at 520,923 using geometric projection 2020. Thus, the sample size was 520,923 at  $\pm 7\%$  level of precision.

Thus, see the formula below

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = Total population

(e)<sup>2</sup> = Margin of error (0.07)

1 = Unity (a constant)

Where:

N = 520,923

(e)<sup>2</sup> = 0.07%

n = ?

Therefore

$$n = \frac{520,923}{1 + 520,923(0.07)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{520,923}{1 + 520,923 \times 0.0049}$$

$$n = \frac{520,923}{520,924 \times 0.0049}$$

$$n = \frac{520,923}{2552.5}$$

$$n = 204.123$$

$$\approx 204$$

Our sample size is 204.

In order to achieve empirical data, multi-stage sampling technique which includes a combination of random sampling technique, proportionate sampling technique and systematic sampling technique was used in the selection of sample from the target population. The study area is made up of thirteen (13) political wards. Six (6) wards were selected out of the thirteen (13) wards. The basis of the selection of the six (6) wards is to be able to contain the size of the population that the study can handle within the period of the research. The names of all the wards were written in a



piece of paper squeezed and dropped in a basket, the papers were mixed together and six (6) papers were randomly picked. The selected papers were then opened to reveal the selected wards. The randomly selected wards represented the study area. Proportionate sampling technique was used to select sample from the 6 different political wards that were used in the study. Since the sample size for the study is 204, sample size from each ward was drawn proportionally.

Since each selected political wards has different population size, the number of respondents from each political ward determine thus:

S/N	Political wards	Population	Size	Total
1.	Shabu/Kwandere	41,349	$\frac{41,349 \times 204}{217,0451}$	39
2.	Gayam	29,632	$\frac{29,632 \times 204}{217,0451}$	28
3.	Chiroma	49,160	$\frac{49,160 \times 204}{217,0451}$	46
4.	Keffin/Wambai	37,401	$\frac{37,401 \times 204}{217,0451}$	35
5.	Bakin Rajiya	23,897	$\frac{23,897 \times 204}{217,0451}$	23
6.	Agyaragun tofa	35,606	$\frac{35,606 \times 204}{217,0451}$	33
<b>Total</b>		<b>217,045</b>		<b>204</b>

**Source: Researcher's computation, 2024**

Based on the proportion, 39 respondents were drawn from Shabu/Kwandere ward, 28 respondents from Gayam, 46 respondents from Chiroma, 35 respondents from Keffin/Wambai, 23 respondents from Bakin Rajiya and 33 respondents from AgyaragunTofa political ward, thus making a total of 204 respondents. Systematic sampling technique was used to reach the respondents; here, numbers from 1-5 were allocated to buildings in the selected wards and every household that falls as the second was selected and studied. This gesture was done to give every household the opportunity to participate in the study, thus warding off bias.

Data for this study was generated using primary and secondary sources. The primary source included the use of questionnaire. The reason for adopting the primary source of data collection method for this study was due to the non-availability of reliable and usable data on the phenomenon under study in the area of study. The questionnaires were self-administered to subjects in the areas sampled for the study. The questionnaire was divided into sections; the first section focused on the socio-demographic characteristic of the respondent, such as name, sex, age etc. while the remaining sections addressed specific objectives of the study. Furthermore, secondary sources of data for this study was obtained from journals, textbooks, seminar papers, national population reports, theses, projects, internet materials and international sources which were all used strictly for literatures and discussions.

Face and content validity was used in this study. Responses from the questionnaire was edited and coded into a code sheet. The coding was done to facilitate data analysis and interpretation and the response was transferred into the computer and the statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) version 27. Relevant quotes that captured the ideas expressed in each question were identified in the line with the objectives of study from which conclusions and recommendations were made in line with findings from the study. A test-re-test procedure was conducted for reliability test. The initial test was carried out in two communities which are located in Lafia, but not included in the real study. The re-test was done two weeks after the first test using 20 respondents. The data collected during the first and the one collected during the second test were subjected to Pearson product moment correlation statistics for comparison. A score of 0.5 was considered high enough for acceptable reliability coefficient.

This study was conducted in line with the tenets of scientific research as the researchers guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality of all respondents. The researchers ensured that nobody was harmed during the course of the study; objectivity, honesty, respect and being meticulous were also observed in the course of this study. Informed consent was gotten from the respondents and the instrument for data collection was carefully administered to avoid unauthorized access to information contained therein.

## 4.0 RESULTS

This chapter covers the presentation, discussion and analysis of data collected from the fieldwork exercise. These are prepared in line with the research questions and objectives. In the process of data collection, two hundred and four (204) copies of questionnaire were administered, but only 195 were returned representing 94.1% return rate. Thus, the analysis and result is based on the 195 returned questionnaires.

### 4.1. Data Presentation

#### 4.1.1. Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

**Table 4.1.1: Distribution showing socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	95	48.7
Female	100	51.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age Range</b>		
15-24	47	24.1
25-34	61	31.3
35-44	39	20.0
45-54	29	14.9
55>	19	9.7
<b>Total-</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	71	36.4
Married	89	45.6
Divorced	11	5.6
Separated	9	4.6

Widowed	15	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	71	36.4
Islam	113	57.9
Traditional	11	5.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Level of Education</b>		
Tertiary	61	31.3
Secondary	79	40.5
Primary	37	19.0
No formal education	18	9.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Occupation</b>		
Farming	51	26.2
Business	59	30.3
Civil servant	47	24.1
Unemployed	23	11.8
Others	15	7.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Source: Fieldwork, 2024**

The above distribution offers a snapshot of the socio-demographic characteristics of the study respondents in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The respondents' were of different age groups, with the majority (31.3%) being in the 25-34 years range. Age group 15-24 years accounted for 24.1%, while those aged 35-44 years represented 20.0%. Respondents aged 45-54 years made up 14.9%, and the smallest group, those aged 55 and above, constituted 9.7%. The gender distribution indicates that 51.3%, representing majority, were female and 48.7% were male respondents. This suggests that more females participated in the study than their male counterparts. In terms of marital status, 45.6% of respondents were married. Single respondents made up 36.4% of the distribution, while separated, divorced, and widowed got the least responses among respondents with 4.6%, 5.6%, and 7.7%, respectively.

Islam and Christianity are the dominant religion in the areas and among respondents, as practiced by 57.9% and 36.4% of respondents respectively. However, 5.6% of the respondents practiced traditional religions. Educational level varied among respondents, with 40.5% having completed secondary education. Tertiary education was attained by 31.3% of respondents, highlighting a considerable amount of educated population. However, 19.0% had only primary education, and 9.2% had no formal education. The respondents engaged in a different kind of occupations. The majority were into business (30.3%), followed by farming (26.2%). Civil servants made up 24.1% of the respondents. A smaller percentage (11.8%) was unemployed, and 7.7% were involved in other occupations.

#### 4.1.2. Parents' level of education and educational attainment of their children

The section covers the first objective of the study, which highlights parents' level of education and educational attainment of their children. Table (4.1.2.) below shows the summary of the data from the fieldwork:

**Table 4.1.2 Ratings for parents' level of education and educational attainment of their children**

S/N o	Items	%Rating		
		Yes	No	Not sure
1.	Does parents' level of education motivate their children to learn in school?	137 (70.3%)	35 (17.9%)	23 (11.8%)
2.	Are parents with high literacy level always conscious and know when to assist their children with their assignments?	121 (62.1%)	51 (26.2%)	23 (11.8%)
3.	Do parents who reduce the house chores of their children help the children to enhance their performance in school?	103 (52.8%)	69 (35.4%)	23 (11.8%)
4.	Does a child from well-educated home scores higher than a less privileged child?	113 (57.9%)	53 (27.2%)	53 (27.2%)
5.	Do parents with higher level of education have higher opportunity to invest in children's education?	141 (72.3%)	37 (19.0%)	17 (8.7%)
6.	Does parents' level of education allow them to share their academic experiences with their children?	131 (67.2%)	39 (20.0%)	25 (12.8%)
7.	Does parents' level of education allow them to guide their children on how to study for examinations?	117 (60.0%)	49 (25.1%)	29 (14.9%)
8.	Does parents' level of education allow them to guide their children on how to meet their academic requirements?	123 (63.1%)	51 (26.2%)	51 (26.2%)
9.	Does parents' level of education allow them to guide their children on how to select the courses and subjects to study?	119 (61.0%)	53 (27.2%)	53 (27.2%)

**Source: Fieldwork, 2024**

From the distribution above, a significant majority of respondents (70.3%) believe that parents' level of education motivates their children to learn in school. However, 17.9% of respondents disagrees, while 11.8% are uncertain, showing that while the majority see a strong link, some either

don't see the connection or are unsure about it. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that 62.1% of respondents agree that parents with a high literacy level are conscious of when to assist their children with assignments. However, 26.2% do not agree, which may suggest that some literate parents may not always engage with their children's schoolwork. Also, majority of respondents (52.8%) think that reducing house chores helps children perform better in school. But 35.4% were not in agreement to the view. The data further reveals that 57.9% of respondents believe that children from well-educated homes score higher academically than those from less privileged backgrounds. Yet, 27.2% disagree to the view, while 14.9% were not certain.

The result revealed that a significant 72.3% of respondents agree that parents with higher education levels have more opportunities to invest in their children's education. This strong majority suggests a common belief that educated parents have willing to provide their children with the best education they can afford. The analyses also show that 67.2% of respondents believe that educated parents are likely to share their academic experiences with their children. Conversely, 20.0% disagree, which could suggest that not all educated parents actively engage in sharing their experiences. Majority (60.0%) of respondents think that parents' educational level enables them to guide their children on how to study for exams. Still, 25.1% disagree, which might suggest that some parents, despite being educated, may not be familiar with current educational practices. 63.1% of respondents believe that parents' education allows them to guide their children on meeting academic requirements. This suggests that many see educated parents as being better equipped to help their children navigate school demands. On the other hand, 26.2% disagree, possibly indicating that some parents may struggle with this role regardless of their education level. The distribution also indicates that 61.0% of respondents agree that educated parents can guide their children on course and subject selection. Meanwhile, 27.2% disagree, possibly indicating that some parents might not engage in this aspect of their children's education, whereas 11.8% of the respondents were not sure regarding this view.

#### 4.1.3. Socio-economic status of parents and the educational attainment of their children

This section highlights ratings for the study's second objective, which seeks to assess socio-economic status of parents and the educational attainment of their children. Table 4.1.3 shows summary of analyzed data.

**Table 4.1.3: Ratings for socio-economic status of parents and the educational attainment of their children**

S/N	Items	%Rating		
		Yes	No	Not sure
1	Does the income level of parents determine the schools that their children attend?	143 (73.3%)	37 (19.0%)	15 (7.7%)
2	Does the religious belief of parents determine the schools and education that their children attend/receive?	119 (61.0%)	57 (29.2%)	19 (9.7%)
3	Do families who can scarcely provide for the basic needs of the family with shelters	127 (65.1%)	45 (23.1%)	45 (23.1%)



	and clothing hardly motivate the academic excellence of their children?			
4	Do families with high socio-economic status have more success in preparing their children for school than families with low socio-economic status?	135 (69.2%)	41 (21.0%)	41 (21.0%)
5	Does the income level of parents determine the quality of education that their children receive?	149 (76.4%)	31 (15.9%)	15 (7.7%)
6	Do parents in poor families face major challenges when it comes to providing optimal care and education for their children?	153 (78.5%)	27 (13.8%)	15 (7.7%)
7	Do poor families have inadequate or limited access to community resources that promote and support children's development and school readiness?	137 (70.3%)	37 (19.0%)	21 (10.8%)
8	Do parents' levels of exposure affect the reading culture of their children?	131 (67.2%)	43 (22.1%)	21 (10.8%)
9	Does the kind of work parents do determine the time they have to spend in helping their children with homework?	141 (72.3%)	37 (19.0%)	17 (8.7%)

**Source: Fieldwork, 2024**

The distribution above indicates that a significant majority (73.3%) of respondents believe that the income level of parents determines the schools their children attend. This suggests that parents who have more economic resources are likely to provide better quality education for their children. Yet, 19.0% disagree with this view. A majority (61.0%) of respondents think that the religious beliefs of parents influence the schools and education their children receive. This indicates that religious values are significant factor in educational decisions for many families. However, 29.2% do not see this connection and 9.7% are unsure. The distribution showed that majority (65.1%) of respondents agree that families struggling to meet basic needs like shelter and clothing are less likely to motivate their children towards academic excellence. Conversely, 23.1% disagree, which might suggest that some families, despite financial struggles groom academically excellent children. The data shows that 69.2% of respondents believe families with high socio-economic status have more success in preparing their children for school compared to families with lower socio-economic status. However, 21.0% of respondents disagree to that view.

The results also showed that 76.4% of respondents agree that the income level of parents determines the quality of education, their children receive. This suggests that wealthier families can afford better education such as private school or extra tutoring. Furthermore, majority (78.5%) of respondents believe that parents in poor families face significant challenges in providing optimal care and education for their children. It is also revealed that 70.3% of respondents agree that poor families have inadequate or limited access to community resources that support children's development and school readiness. This indicates a widespread belief that economic disadvantage limits access to essential services and programs that could benefit children's education. On the

other hand, 19.0% of respondents disagree to the view. A majority (67.2%) of respondents believe that parents' level of exposure affects the reading culture of their children. This suggests that more exposed or educated parents may inculcate better reading habits in their children. However, 22.1% of respondents disagreed with this view. Lastly, the table indicates that 72.3% of respondents agree that the type of work parents do affects the time they have to help their children with homework. This shows that parents with more demanding jobs may not be too involved in their children's academic activities, which could affect their children's academic success.

#### 4.1.4 Influence of family size on the educational attainment of children

This section captures ratings for the study's third objective, which seeks to find out the influence of family size on educational attainment of children. Table 4.1.4 shows summary of analyzed data.

**Table 4.1.4: Ratings on influence of family size on educational attainment of children**

S/N	Items	%Rating		
		Yes	Not sure	No
1	Do families with many children find it difficult to cater for the academic needs of their children?	143 (73.3%)	37 (19.0%)	15 (7.7%)
2	Does smaller family size lead to high academic achievement among children?	127 (65.1%)	51 (26.2%)	17 (8.7%)
3	Are students with fewer siblings likely to receive more parental attention?	137 (70.3%)	39 (20.0%)	19 (9.7%)
4	Are students with fewer siblings likely to have support from their parents that leads to better school performance	133 (68.2%)	41 (21.0%)	21 (10.8%)
5	Do children from nuclear families perform better in school than children from the compound or polygamous families	119 (61.0%)	55 (28.2%)	21 (10.8%)
6	Do children from polygamous have the tendency to be social deviants due to lack of adequate supervision and care?	129 (66.2%)	47 (24.1%)	19 (9.7%)
7	Are children from broken homes likely to become social deviants due to lack of adequate supervision and care?	135 (69.2%)	43 (22.1%)	17 (8.7%)
8	Are students with fewer siblings likely to receive more parental attention?	137 (70.3%)	39 (20.0%)	19 (9.7%)
9	Are students with fewer siblings likely to have more access to resources than children from large families?	19 (9.7%)	37 (19.0%)	19 (9.7%)

**Source: Fieldwork, 2024**

The data analysis revealed that a significant majority (73.3%) of respondents believe that families with many children find it difficult to cater for their children's academic needs. This suggests that

larger family sizes may consume more resources, hence making it challenging for parents to support each child's educational requirements properly and adequately, although, 19% are not in agreement with the view. The distribution further indicated that 65.1% of respondents agreed that smaller family sizes lead to higher academic achievement among children. However, 26.2% did not share this view. The majority of respondents (70.3%) believed that students with fewer siblings are likely to receive more parental attention. Meanwhile, 20% disagreed, suggesting that some families, regardless of size may equally give attention to their children. A significant majority (68.2%) of respondents think that students with fewer siblings are likely to have support from their parents that leads to better school performance. This aligns with the belief that fewer siblings give room for more exclusive support, which can lead into better academic outcomes. However, 21.0% did not agree with this view.

The data shows that 61.0% of respondents believe children from nuclear families perform better in school than those from compound or polygamous families. But 28.2% of respondents disagreed with this view. A majority 66.2% of respondents believe that children from polygamous families are more likely to become social deviants due to a lack of adequate supervision and care. Conversely, 24.1% disagreed, which might indicate that not all children in polygamous families experience such challenges. Similarly, respondents (69.2%) believe that children from broken homes are likely to become social deviants due to a lack of adequate supervision and care, whereas 22.1% did not share this view. The data buttresses that 70.3% of respondents believe students with fewer siblings are likely to receive more parental attention. Finally, 71.3% of respondents believe that students with fewer siblings are likely to have more access to resources than children from larger families. On the other hand, 19.0% disagreed, maybe indicating that some large families can still manage to provide sufficient resources.

## **4.2. Discussion of Findings**

This section discusses the major findings from the study in line with the study specific objectives in order to find out the areas of agreement and disagreement with other related findings reviewed in the literature.

### **4.2.1. Parents' level of education and educational attainment of their children**

The study's finding reveals affirmation among respondents that parents' education level plays a significant role in motivating children to learn in school. This aligns with the assertion by Ezewu (2011) that parents' academic attainment has a direct impact on their children's schooling, often motivating them towards better educational outcomes. Ezewu further notes that parents with higher levels of education are likely to prepare their children for prestigious vocations. The study also found that parents with high literacy levels are more aware of when to assist their children with assignments. This finding is supported by Gooding (2021), who emphasized that literate parents are often more conscious of their children's educational needs, including reducing house chores to enhance school performance. This study also suggests that literacy alone may not guarantee parental involvement, a point also noted by Heckhausen (2010), who stated that while educated parents generally value education, their involvement can vary based on other factors, such as work demands or personal priorities.

Furthermore, the study found that children from well-educated homes perform better academically than those from less privileged backgrounds. This is consistent with Ogbugo-Ololube's (2016)

research, which found that children from well-educated homes tend to score higher on tests of intellectual curiosity, which correlates positively with academic grades. Teecee (2010) also supports this finding, noting that students whose parents have tertiary education perform significantly better in science, reading, and mathematics than those whose parents have only basic schooling. The study also indicates that parents with higher education levels have more opportunities to invest in their children's education. This aligns with the literature, as parents with higher education levels typically occupy better-paying jobs, enabling them to invest more in their children's education. Avwata, Onyama, and Omorka (2011) highlighted that such parents are more likely to provide a conducive learning environment, which promotes academic success.

The study also found that educated parents are likely to share their academic experiences with their children. However, this was not applicable to all. This could be due to varying levels of comfort or interest in discussing academic matters, as highlighted by Uwaoma (2016), who found that while parental education is linked to specific achievement behaviour, its impact can be mediated by the home environment and other factors. Moreover, the study found that educated parents can guide their children on meeting academic requirements, aligns with the research of Ezeji (2011), who noted that parental education is the single strongest correlate of children's success in school. Additionally, the study finds that educated parents can guide their children on course and subject selection. This is supported by the literature, which suggests that educated parents are more likely to be involved in their children's educational decisions, using their knowledge and experience to help their children make informed choices and decisions.

#### **4.2.2 Socio-economic status of parents and educational attainment of their children**

The study reveals a significant relationship between socio-economic status (SES) of parents and children's educational attainment. For instance, the study found that income levels determine the schools their children are enrolled, showing that financial resources are important in accessing better quality education. This finding aligns with Olaitan (2018), who posited that socio-economic status, determined by factors such as parents' educational level, occupation, and income, directly influences the type of school and standard of training children receive. Wealthier families can afford private schools and additional resources like extra tutoring, which contribute to better academic outcomes for their children. The study also indicates that parents' religious beliefs influence the schools and education their children receive. This suggests that for many families, religious values are very important factor in making decisions related to education, like the kind of schools they attend and what they can learn.

Further, the study highlighted that families struggling to meet basic needs are less likely to motivate their children towards academic excellence. This finding is consistent with Francis (2017), who argued that lower-income families, though aware of the importance of education, often lack the resources to support their children's academic pursuits. Financial stress can shift the focus from education to immediate survival needs, leading to poorer academic outcomes. The literature also supports the notion that socio-economic status influences children's aspirations and academic behaviour, with high SES families often having more success in preparing their children for school due to better access to educational resources and conducive learning environment (Ojo & Yilma, 2010).

The study also found that families with high socio-economic status have more success in preparing their children for school compared to families with lower SES. This is corroborated by the findings of Ojo & Yilma (2010), who emphasized that high SES families can provide their children with high-quality childcare, educational books, and stimulating learning activities, all of which contribute to better school preparedness. In contrast, low SES families may struggle with these provisions, impacting their children's readiness for school and overall academic achievement. The study also reveals that the income level of parents determines the quality of education their children receive. This reinforces the idea that wealthier families can afford to invest in private education, extra tutoring, and other educational resources that enhance learning outcomes. According to Olaitan (2018), this financial advantage allows children from high SES backgrounds to attend better schools and receive a higher standard of education, which in turn improves their academic performance (Olaitan, 2018).

Additionally, the study revealed that parents in poor families face significant challenges in providing optimal care and education for their children. This finding is supported by research from Ojo & Yilma (2010), who noted that when basic necessities are lacking, education materials and books are often considered luxuries, rather than necessities. Poor families also tend to have limited access to community resources that support children's development and school readiness, further exacerbating educational disadvantages. The study also suggests that poor families have inadequate or limited access to community resources that support children's development. This belief is consistent with the findings of Ojo & Yilma (2010), who pointed out that economic disadvantage often restricts access to programs and services that could benefit children's education, putting them at a greater risk of being unprepared for school compared to their peers from wealthier families.

Furthermore, the study indicates that parents' level of exposure affects the reading culture of their children. This was previously posited by Francis (2017), that parents with higher levels of education often create a home environment rich in books and encourage reading as a daily habit, which can significantly improve children's literacy and academic performance (Francis, 2017). Finally, the study finds that the type of work parents do affects the time they have to help their children with homework. This suggests that parents with demanding jobs may be less involved in their children's academic activities, which could negatively impact their children's school performance. This finding is aligned with the idea that parents' occupation, as a component of SES, not only influences the resources available for education but also the time and energy parents can devote to supporting their children's learning (Olaitan, 2018).

#### **4.2.3 Family size and educational attainment of children**

The findings of the study that larger family sizes make it difficult for parents to cater for their children's academic needs. This perspective suggests that with more children, the available resources both financial and emotional become spread thin, making it challenging to adequately support each child's educational requirements. This finding is corroborated by Egalite (2016) who opined that family size is a crucial factor in the socialization process, with larger families often struggling to meet both the physical and emotional needs of their children, particularly in times of economic hardship.



Furthermore, the study revealed that smaller family sizes lead to higher academic achievement among children. This view is supported by Majoribank (2016), who argued that students with fewer siblings receive more parental attention and support, which positively influences their academic performance. The smaller the family size, the more likely it is that parents can provide individualized support and resources to each child, leading to better educational outcomes. The study also reveals that students with fewer siblings are likely to receive more parental attention. This finding aligns with the argument made by Maduewisi (2019), who emphasized that the family environment plays a crucial role in shaping a child's intellectual development. In smaller families, parents are more likely to have the time and resources to focus on each child's needs, which can result in better academic performance. This is further maintained by Eamon (2015), who found that children from smaller families generally have better access to educational resources and parental support, which enhances their school performance.

Additionally, findings showed that students with fewer siblings are likely to have more parental support that leads to better school performance. This is consistent with findings of Majoribank (2016) who highlight the advantages of being in a smaller family, where children are more likely to receive the emotional and academic support they need from their parents. It is suggested that in smaller families, parents can invest more time and energy in each child's education, which often translates into better academic outcomes (Majoribank, 2016). The study's findings also show that children from nuclear families perform better in school than those from compound or polygamous families. Ajala and Iyiola (2019) support this view, noting that children from nuclear families often have more time for their studies and less interference from extended family responsibilities, which are common in polygamous settings. In nuclear families, the focus is more on the immediate family unit, allowing for a more stable and supportive environment conducive to academic success.

However, the study also reveals that children from polygamous families are more likely to become social deviants due to a lack of adequate supervision and care. This finding is consistent with the literature, which suggests that children in polygamous families may be at a higher risk of behavioral issues due to the complexities of such family structures. In polygamous families, the division of parental attention and resources among many children can lead to neglect, which in turn can result in social deviance (Ajala & Iyiola, 2019). Similarly, it was revealed that children from broken homes are likely to become social deviants due to a lack of adequate supervision, further highlighting the importance of stable family structures in child development. Moreover, the study establish that students with fewer siblings are likely to have more access to resources than children from larger families. This finding is aligned with Eamon (2015) and Majoribanks (2016) both argue that fewer siblings allow parents to concentrate their resources on each child, which often results in better educational outcomes. The study's findings also touch on the effects of birth order within the family. Domina (2015) highlights that firstborn child, especially in middle-class or wealthy families often receive more attention and resources from their parents, which can positively impact their academic performance.

## **5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Summary of findings**

This study examined family background and educational attainment of children in Lafia Local Government Area, Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study found that parents' educational level plays important roles in motivating children to learn, assisting them with school assignments, and

guiding them in meeting academic requirements. Children from well-educated homes tend to perform better academically, and educated parents are more likely to invest in their children's education, providing a conducive learning environment.

The findings indicate that socio-economic status (SES) is crucial in determining the quality of education children receive. Higher-income families can afford better educational opportunities, such as private schooling and tutoring, which enhance academic outcomes. Conversely, lower-income families often struggle to support their children's education, leading to challenges in academic achievement. The study shows that smaller family sizes are associated with higher academic achievement, as children receive more parental attention and resources. In contrast, larger families may face difficulties in adequately supporting each child's educational needs. Additionally, children from polygamous or broken homes are more likely to experience social challenges due to a lack of supervision and care.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

In conclusion, parental education, socio-economic status, and family size have both positive and negative effects on the educational attainment of their children. Higher levels of parental education and socio-economic status are positively correlated with better academic outcomes, as they enable parents to provide the necessary resources, guidance, and support for their children's education. Smaller family sizes allow for more focused parental attention and resource allocation, which contribute to higher academic achievement. Conversely, larger families and those with complex structures, such as polygamous or broken homes, struggle to meet the educational needs of all children, potentially leading to social and academic challenges.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommend:

- i. an improvement in parental education programs, offering adult learning opportunities that empower parents to better support their children's education. Schools should also foster greater parental involvement by engaging parents through workshops and regular communication, regardless of their educational background.
- ii. addressing the socio-economic disparities that affect children's education is essential. This can be achieved by increasing access to quality education for low-income families through subsidies, scholarships, and financial aid. Enhancing community resources, such as libraries and after-school programs, particularly in disadvantaged areas, will provide critical support to children who may lack educational materials at home.
- iii. the need for family planning education to help parents make informed decisions about family size, ensuring they can adequately support their children's academic needs. For large families, targeted support such as access to educational resources, counseling, and parental guidance programs should be provided to help them manage the challenges associated with larger family sizes. Special attention should be given to children from polygamous or broken homes by offering additional academic support, mentorship, and counseling services to ensure they receive the care and supervision necessary for academic and social success.

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