



**THE INFLUENCE OF HOME BACKGROUND ON SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT OF FRESH UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.**

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**ABSTRACT:**

It is a known fact that parental educational level and marital status are important determinants of social adjustment and academic performance of fresh undergraduate students. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of parental educational level and marital status on social adjustment and academic performance of fresh undergraduate students in universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS version 20. It was recommended that parents should ensure that they use their knowledge to create a social climate that can help their wards cope with the challenges in schools. Parents should desist from the habits of divorce and stick to their couples in order to satisfy the social and emotional needs of their children.

keywords: parental educational level, marital status, social adjustment, fresh undergraduate students, Home background.

## INTRODUCTION:

Evidence has confirmed that when an individual is happy with all aspects of life in the family or home, it will produce acceptable state of adjustment in all spheres of life. Home background is a place where an individual is trained from childhood and prepared to face necessary adjustments needed in adult life. A home or family consists of the parents and children, thus parental educational level and marital status influence the care and upbringing of the children. Fresh undergraduate students are expected to make a series of adjustments to cope with their new ways of life; these adjustments range from academic assimilation to personal emotional and social adjustments.<sup>1</sup> Many of the students who dropped out of college did so in the first year.<sup>2</sup> This suggested that this process of adjustment was a significant factor in student success. Social adjustment is a process by which students become integrated into campus community, build support networks, and negotiate the new freedom afforded by college life.<sup>3</sup> The academic performance of any child cannot be separated from the home environment in which the child grew up.<sup>4</sup> Numerous studies revealed that various factors are responsible for scholastic failure of students such as a low socio-economic background, student's cognitive abilities, school related factors, environment of the home, or other family members.<sup>5</sup> Parental socio-economic characteristics to a greater extent determine student's performance in school and their adjustment to life.<sup>6</sup> Family financial resources which are associated with parental occupation and educational attainment, often imply increased learning opportunities both at home and in school. Parental marital status has great influence on social adjustment of the fresh undergraduate students. The divorce rate is on the increase globally and in Nigeria there is no difference compared to that which is happening in other parts of the world. It has been a documented fact that 45 percent of first marriages end in divorce, which means that a large number of children still feel that disheartening effects of parental divorce. Parental marital status could mean that parents are married or divorce and it could be viewed in terms of single parenting which in addition to divorce may be caused by the death of one of the spouse or single parents which involve having these children outside wedlock. A single parent upbringing could be grouped into single-parenting and co-parenting subgroups. Co-parenting is viewed as two divorced parents cooperating and sharing responsibility in the process of raising their children, which generally involves a joint – custody arrangement.<sup>7</sup> Ramaprabou<sup>8</sup> in his study on the effect of family environment on the adjustment patterns of adolescents using 70 participants from selected departments studying undergraduate programmes. The instruments used for data collection were family environment scale and Adjustment Inventory for college Students. His findings revealed that family environment has significant effect on the pattern of adjustment of students in university life. Specially, one of the variables identified as having direct effect on students was parental experiences in their marriage. Students who came from home where both parents were happily married and family members showed love and concern to them showed better adjustment than other students

from families that had contrary marriage. He concluded that acceptance and caring independence, organization and control have a very important impact on the pattern of adjustment of students. These family environmental factors listed above are commonly seen in homes with intact marriages which tending to favour social adjustment of fresh students in higher institutions. When these two groups (married and co-parenting) were compared with peers being raised by a single parent following divorce, the difference in adjustment was noted with significant difference. He concluded that parental marital status may have influence on academic adjustment and not social adjustment.

#### MATERIALS AND METHOD:

This is a descriptive statistical study on fresh undergraduate students of the two universities in Cross River State of Nigeria, using the ex post facto research design. The ex post facto effects have already occurred. The variables, such as parental educational qualifications and marital statuses, cannot be manipulated to become what it was not.

The post secondary institutions are the university of Calabar (UNICAL) and Cross River State University of Technology (CRUTECH) with its multiple campuses.

The study population was made up of all fresh undergraduates in the two universities within the state. Available record revealed that there were 7,552 fresh undergraduates (2,987 for CRUTECH and 4,565 for UNICAL) in 2017/2018 academic session. The research employed 10% of the sample population, which is a total of 457 students from UNICAL and 299 from CRUTECH. The sample for the study was made up of 756 respondents.

The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire tagged: 'the influence of parental educational level and marital status on social adjustment of fresh undergraduate students' questionnaire.' It was made up of 3 sections-A,B and C. Section A was concerned with the four demographic items bordering on two of the study sub-independent variables while Section B was made up of nine items which are concerned with one of the study's sub-independent variables on a response titled: always, most of the time, sometimes and never. Section C was made up of 5 variables on a response titled: strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree.

In order to test the reliability of the test instrument, the corrected questionnaire was given to seventy fresh undergraduate students from University of Uyo in Akwa Ibom state as away to test the reliability of the items which was the consistency of the instrument in measuring that which was expected of it. These students did not take part in the actual study. The data was collected and analyzed which showed that the instrument was reliable for the study. The Cronbach Alpha Reliability estimate was used.

Three research assistants were trained one week before going to the field for data collection. The researcher with the assistants administered the questionnaires to the respondents who met the study criteria. The first year students were duly informed and consent were obtained from them. On the completion of the questionnaires they were retrieved on the spot. The data was prepared for analysis by assigning numerical values to the various classes of responses. One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze the data.

Table 1.  
 CODING Schedule of the variables

Variable	code	column
1) Parental educational status	Father: Primary sch.	1
	Secondary sch.	2
	Tertiary sch.	3
	Mother: Primary sch.	
	secondary sch.	2
	Tertiary sch.	3
2) Parental marital status	Single	1
	Married	2
	Divorced	3

RESULT AND ANALYSIS:

The study was centered on investigating the influence of parental educational level and marital status on social adjustment of fresh undergraduate students in universities in Cross River State. The independent variables were parental educational qualification and marital status while the dependent variable was social adjustment taken from three dimensions which are psychological wellbeing, progress in initial program and academic performance as shown in table 2 below.

TABLE 2:  
 Descriptive Statistics of the variables

Variables	No.	mean	Standard Deviation
Psychological wellbeing	752	12.98	2.403
Initial programme	752	12.10	2.600
Academic programme	752	22.71	8.773

There is no significant influence of parental education on social adjustment among students. The independent variable in this hypothesis is parental education categorized as fathers' education with three subcategories such as primary, secondary and tertiary education and mothers' education with three subcategories such as primary, secondary and tertiary education while the dependent variable was social adjustment taken from three dimensions which were psychological wellbeing, progress in initial program and academic performance. To test this hypothesis, one-

way analysis of variance was used and the result as presented in Table 3 and 4 showed that for fathers education and psychological well being ( $F=.117, p>.05$ ), for fathers education and progress in initial program ( $F=.326, p>.05$ ) and for fathers education and academic performance ( $F= 3.117, p<.05$ ). Since  $p(.042)$  is less than  $p(.000)$  for only fathers education and academic performance, this implies that fathers education significantly influence social adjustment in terms of academic performance . For mothers education and psychological wellbeing ( $F=23.4 p<.05$ ), mothers education and progress in initial program ( $F=31.85, p<.05$ ) while mothers education and academic performance ( $F=.408 p>.05$ ). Since  $p(.000)$  is less than  $p(.05)$ , this implied that there was a significant influence of mothers education on social adjustment in terms of psychological wellbeing and progress in initial program. A cursory look at the result showed that fathers education only influence students' academic performance while mothers education only influence psychological well being and progress in initial program. A post hoc was carried out using Scheffes analysis and the result as presented in Table 3 showed that fathers with higher educational qualification with a mean value of ( $X=23.40$ ) tend to influence the academic performance of students than those who have primary or secondary qualification . For mothers education, the post hoc result showed that mothers with higher educational qualification as shown in the mean value of ( $X=13.79$ ) tends to influence their social adjustment patterns of their children in terms of their psychological wellbeing and progress in initial program than mothers who had primary and secondary qualifications.

Table 3  
 Population t-test result of the extent of social adjustment among undergraduate students

Social adjustment	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t-cal	p-val
Psychological well being	752	12.98	2.403	751	148.127	.000
Initial Programs	752	12.10	2.600	751	127.63	.000
Academic performance	752	22.71	8.773	751	70.98	.000

Table 4  
 Descriptive statistics of father's education and social adjustment

Social adjustment	Fathers education	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Psychological well being	Primary	398	12.81	2.307
	Secondary	127	13.26	2.453
	Tertiary	227	13.11	2.524
	Total	752	12.98	2.403
Initial Programs	Primary	398	12.07	2.597
	Secondary	127	11.87	2.923
	Tertiary	227	12.29	2.404
	Total	752	12.10	2.600
Academic performance	Primary	398	22.65	9.757
	Secondary	127	23.43	8.264
	Tertiary	227	22.40	7.076
	Total	752	22.71	8.773

Table 5

One- way analysis of variance (ANOVA) result of the influence of parental education and social adjustment

Fathers' education	Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Psychological well being	Between Groups	24.6	2	12.4	2.150	.117
	Within Groups	4310.9	749	5.8		
	Total	4335.7	751			
Initial Programmes	Between Groups	15.2	2	7.6	1.123	.326
	Within Groups	5061.1	749	6.757		
	Total	5076.3	751			
Academic performance	Between Groups	480.4	2	240.2	3.117	.012
	Within Groups	57713.9	749	77.1		
	Total	57803.2	751			

  

Mother's education	Source of variation	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Psychological well being	Between Groups	255.1	2	127.5	23.410	.000
	Within Groups	4080.6	749	5.4		
	Total	4335.7	751			
Initial Programs	Between Groups	397.9	2	198.9	31.855	.000
	Within Groups	4678.4	749	6.2		
	Total	5076.4	751			
Academic performance	Between Groups	62.9	2	31.4	.408	.665
	Within Groups	57740.3	749	77.1		
	Total	57803.2	751			

Table 6  
 Scheffes post hoc analysis of the influence of parental education and social adjustment

Dependent Variable	(I) Fathers' Education	(J) Fathers' Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Academic performance	Primary	Secondary	-.780	.895	.684
		Tertiary	.252	.730	.942
	Secondary	Primary	.780	.895	.684
		Tertiary	1.032	.973	.570
	Tertiary	Primary	-.252*	.730	.001
		Secondary	-1.032*	.973	.000
Social adjustment	(I) Mothers' education	(J) Mothers' education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Psychological well being	Primary Education	Secondary Educ	-.659*	.201	.005
		Tertiary Education	-1.470*	.215	.000
	Secondary Edu	Primary Education	.659*	.201	.005
		Tertiary Education	-.812*	.213	.001
	Tertiary Education	Primary Education	1.470*	.215	.000
		Secondary Edu	.812*	.213	.001
Initial Programmes	Primary Education	Secondary Educ	-1.439*	.216	.000
		Tertiary Education	-1.620*	.230	.000
	Secondary Edu	Primary Education	1.439*	.216	.000
		Tertiary Education	-.181	.228	.730
	Tertiary Education	Primary Education	1.620*	.230	.000
		Secondary Education	.181	.228	.730



There is no significant influence of parental marital status on social adjustment among fresh graduates. The independent variable in this hypothesis is parental marital status categorized as single, married and divorced while the dependent variable is social adjustment taken from three dimensions which are psychological wellbeing, progress in initial programme and academic performance. To test this hypothesis, one way analysis of variance was used and the result as presented in Table 7 & 8. The result in Table 7 showed that for marital status and psychological wellbeing ( $F=7.740$ ,  $p<.05$ ), for marital status and progress in initial programme ( $F=22.88$   $p<.05$ ) and for marital status and academic performance ( $F=14.529$ ,  $p<.05$ ). A cursory look at the table shows that  $p(.000)$  is less than  $p(.05)$  for the three dimension measured. This implies that there is a significant influence of parental marital status on social adjustment in terms of psychological wellbeing, progress in initial programme and academic performance. A post hoc analysis was carried out using Scheffes analysis and the result showed that students whose are living with their parents that are living together tend to adjust better than those whose parents are either single or divorced. This is shown in the mean differences as in Table 8

Table 7 Sheffe Post hoc analysis of the influence of parental education on social adjustment.

Dependent Variable	(I) Fathers Education	(J) Fathers Education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Academic performance	Primary	Secondary	-.780	.895	.684
		Tertiary	.252	.730	.942
	Secondary	Primary	.780	.895	.684
		Tertiary	1.032	.973	.570
	Tertiary	Primary	-.252*	.730	.001
		Secondary	-1.032*	.973	.000
Social adjustment	(I) Mothers education	(J) Mothers education	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Psychological well being	Primary Education	Secondary Educ	-.659*	.201	.005
		Tertiary Education	-1.470*	.215	.000
	Secondary Edu	Primary Education	.659*	.201	.005
		Tertiary Education	-.812*	.213	.001
	Tertiary Education	Primary Education	1.470*	.215	.000
		Secondary Edu	.812*	.213	.001
Initial Programmes	Primary Education	Secondary Educ	-1.439*	.216	.000
		Tertiary Education	-1.620*	.230	.000
	Secondary Edu	Primary Education	1.439*	.216	.000
		Tertiary Education	-.181	.228	.730
	Tertiary Education	Primary Education	1.620*	.230	.000
		Secondary Educ	.181	.228	.730

Table 8 Scheffe Post hoc analysis on the influence of parental marital status on social adjustment

Dependent Variable	(I) Marital Status	(J) Marital Status	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Psychological well being	Single	Married	.639*	.210	.010
		Divorced	.725*	.215	.004
	Married	Single	-.639*	.210	.010
		Divorced	.086	.245	.940
	Divorced	Single	-.725*	.215	.004
		Married	-.086	.245	.940
Initial Programmes	Single	Married	1.209*	.223	.000
		Divorced	1.285*	.228	.000
	Married	Single	-1.209*	.223	.000
		Divorced	.075	.260	.959
	Divorced	Single	-1.285*	.228	.000
		Married	-.075	.260	.959
Academic performance	Single	Married	3.830*	.761	.000
		Divorced	-.105	.778	.991
	Married	Single	-3.830*	.761	.000
		Divorced	-3.935*	.887	.000
	Divorced	Single	.105	.778	.991
		Married	3.935*	.887	.000

It was assumed that there was no significant influence of parental education on social adjustment. This implies that parental education significantly influence undergraduate social adjustment and academic performance. The result further revealed that fathers education influence only the academic performance aspect while mothers education influence psychological adjustment and progress in initial program. The reason for this result could be due to the fact that men have no soft touch to pamper children the way mothers do but could be responsibly in proving the academic needs of the child. Thus, their level of education may help them understand the child needs to buy reading arterials, provided the necessary environment that will help him/her to pass very well but when it comes to providing the environment that can make them socially adjusted, it may be difficult. For the mothers, this tender care could help the child to psychological develop adjustment capacity which they have been exposed to at home by the mother.

The findings of the study was in line with that of Chen <sup>8</sup> that carried out a study on the effects of family background, students' abilities and achievement in rural China. He found that parental education is a key determinant of students' academic achievement, but the roles of father's education and mother's education differ across child gender and levels of ability. For example, father's education had significantly positive effect on academic achievements for both boys and girls, while mother's education only matters for girls. The effect of father's education matters for lower ability children, while mother's education matters for higher ability children.

Similarly, the findings were in line with that Ramaprabou <sup>2</sup> whose study was on the effect of family environment on the adjustment patterns of adolescents using 70 participants from selected departments studying undergraduate programs. The instruments used for data collection were family environment scale and Adjustment Inventory for college students. His findings revealed that family environment has significant effect on the pattern of adjustment of students in university life. Specifically, one of the variables identified as having direct effect on students was parental experiences in their marriage. Students who came from homes where both parents were happily married and family members showed love and concern to them showed better adjustment than other students from families that had contrary marriage.

It was assumed that there was no significant influence of parental marital level on social adjustment. This assumption was rejected. This implies that parental marital status significantly

influence of parental education on social adjustment. The result further showed that children from homes where parents were married tend to adjust better than those from homes where there mother or father was single or they were divorced. The reason for this positive adjustment could be due to the fact the students who were born in homes where the parents were together ie married, the treatment, concern and care that they received might differ completely compared to those from single home. The parents might be there at all times to respond to their needs contrary to single parents where parents might be put struggling for daily bread thus leaving the emotional and social needs of the child unmet. Most times, the traits the child inculcates was born out of the relationship they observed from the father and others living together. Where the child was exposed to only one parent, most of the love, affections and concerns that were exhibited by parents which children learnt very fast and lived with even as they live the home may be lacking. Where that occurred, the child was at the risk of becoming socially maladjusted as they tend to sometimes lose confidence in every body

The findings of the study were in line with that of Egunsola<sup>8</sup> that carried out a study on the influence of parental marital status on academic achievement where 900 students were used. The instrument used for the study was 12 items questionnaire. The results showed that parental marital status ( $r= 0.79$ ) was highly significant on students' academic performance. The findings were also in line with that of another study carried out to examine the influence of family structure on first year college adjustment by Parrish.<sup>9</sup> 82 freshmen participated in the study. The criteria for participation were based on prescreening questionnaire that examined age, parental marital status and accommodation arrangement within the college. Student Adaptation to College questionnaire, College adjustment test, and socio-demographic variables related to campus involvement, family background, parental contact and academic history were used. The students were divided into those with married parents (N=39), co-parenting (N=21), and single parenting (N=22). The results showed limited significant difference among various groups and the

researcher recommended more study on this issue. Accordingly, it was assumed that the few number of students used for the study might have led to the inconclusive result obtained.

#### CONCLUSION:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of parental education and marital status on social adjustment among fresh undergraduates in Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that parental education and marital status significantly influence social adjustment as well as their academic performance among fresh undergraduates in universities. The researchers have suggested that parents should desist from the habits of divorce and stick to their wives/husbands in order to satisfy the social and emotional needs of their children. And that parents should ensure that they use their knowledge of education to create a social climate that can help the students cope with the challenges in school.

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