

Socio-Economic Status, Truancy, Learning Styles, Peer Pressure and Gender as Correlates of Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance in Taraba State University Jalingo, Nigeria

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doi:10.56397/JARE.2023.05.03

Abstract

The study investigated socio-economic status, truancy, learning styles, peer pressure and gender as correlates of undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University (TSU), Jalingo, Nigeria. The study adopted correlational research design. The sample of this study was made up 150 undergraduate students of faculty of Education TSU was selected using multistage sampling techniques. The instruments used for data collection were socio-economic status, truancy, learning styles, peer pressure and gender questionnaire (STLPGQ) and CGPA of undergraduate school in faculty of education, TSU for 2018/2019 session. STLPGQ was validated by three experts in education related disciplines and one expert in measurement and evaluation. STLPGQ was trial tested which yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.89 using Cronbach Alpha. Five research questions raised in the study were answered using multiple regression analysis while the five null hypotheses formulated in the study were tested using ANOVA of regression analysis. The study revealed among other that there is no significant relationship between socio-economic status and undergraduate students academic performance in TSU, Jalingo [$F_{1, 133} = 6.331$; $p > 0.05$]. There is significant relationship between truancy and undergraduate students academic performance [$F_{1, 133} = 18.090$; $p < 0.05$]. There is no significant relationship between learning styles and undergraduate students academic performance [$F_{1, 133} = 17.009$; $p > 0.05$]. There is significant relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students academic performance [$F_{1, 133} = 19.119$; $p < 0.05$]. There is no significant relationship between gender and undergraduate students academic performance [$F_{1, 133} = 10.319$; $p > 0.05$]. It was recommended among that, educational administrators and lecturers should set up disciplinary measures to reduce truancy and peer pressure. Parents should help in proper monitoring of undergraduate student activities curb truancy and peer pressure in order to enhance academic performance of students in TSU, Jalingo.

Keywords: socio-economic status, truancy, learning styles, peer pressure and gender and undergraduate students' academic performance

1. Introduction

Education is a tool of development. It widens minds, recognizes good and bad, makes us to segregate well from terrible and uses out environment to the best of our capacity for the improvement of a person and the society at large. The most important task of the universities educational system is to prepare students to acquire knowledge and career and cognitive skills to enter the community. Therefore, identifying the factors that may influence undergraduate students' academic performance is very important. Undergraduate students' academic performance may great depend on some factors to which the students are subjected. Several factors have been documented to have significant contribution on undergraduate students' academic performance. Research conducted by Fabunmi, Brai-Abu and Adeniji, (2017) revealed that home background, learning environment, and government policies are basic issues affecting undergraduate students academic performance.

In the same vein, Francis and Segun (2020) concluded that the school environment and teacher-related factors such as teaching styles and academic qualifications were the dominant factors influencing academic performance of undergraduate student in Universities in South West, Nigeria. However, little gains have been realized. The researchers opines that there are other factors such as socio-economic status, truancy, learning styles, peer pressure and gender which may have the tendency of affecting undergraduate students' academic performance. Socio-economic status is level of wealth, power and prestige which people own. Socio-economic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income and education, and occupation.

Lareau (2013) opine that socioeconomic status is typically broken into three categories, high, middle, and low to describe the three areas a family or an individual may fall into when placing a family or individual into one of these categories any or all of the three variables income, education, and occupation can be assessed. Adeniyi and Kolawole (2015) concluded in his study that high socio-economic

status students' get higher scores while low socio-economic status students' get lower scores. In the same vein, Ali (2017) concluded that low income and little education have shown to be strong predictors of a range of physical and mental health problems due to environmental conditions may be the entire cause of that person's social predicament. Truancy refers to any intentional unauthorized or illegal absence from compulsory schooling.

Truancy is the failure of an absentee undergraduate student to obtain permission from parents and university authorities concerned. This implies that that truancy occurs if a student is absent without an excuse. There are four main truancy which includes undergraduate students being in university campus but absent in class, undergraduate students neither in university campus nor in the classroom but at home, undergraduate students who keep away from the class as a result of the course difficulty or dislike for the course lecturers and those that are neither at home nor in the university campus or classroom. The researchers noted that student who stay away from university classroom without permission will not only be left out in the learning process but they may also probably end up engaging in antisocial behaviour such as cultism, drug abuse, gangsterism, bullying, alcohol consumption, rapes, gambling and loitering with their negative consequences and experience.

It appears that truants may have poor academic performance in examinations as they may miss classes that would have improve their knowledge and understanding of the course. Truancy is one of the major antisocial discipline problems among universities undergraduate students in Nigeria. The concept and acts of indiscipline have received a lot of attention by researchers. Peck (2019) opined that the various behavioral disorders like stealing, violence, drug abuse, examination malpractice, sexual abuse and truancy have so undermined effective teaching-learning processes that some teachers have become helpless and disorganized in their task of impacting knowledge to the learners. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the relationship between truancy and undergraduate student academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo. Learning styles is different ways which students own while learning a subject.

In other words, individual learning styles are varying according to the tendency of each individual. Learning is the process of acquiring new knowledge, understanding and skills. Learning style is defined as individual's characteristic ways of processing information, feeling and behaving in the learning situation. In other words, learning style refers to learners' favoured approach to learning, which includes the process of receiving, collecting, processing, and interpreting to become knowledgeable. There are different learning styles. Katz (2021) stated that there are three most popular learning styles which includes visual, auditory, and kinesthetic. Furthermore, Katz (2021) stated that visual learners learn by seeing and use diagrams, tables, graphs, maps, posters. Auditory learners learn by listening and discussion, lectures, interviewing, hearing stories and audio tapes is appropriate for these while kinesthetic learners learn by doing and like physical activity. An appropriate learning style could help students to achieve good academic performance in any subject they learned. Therefore, this study aimed to determine the relationship between undergraduate student academic performance and learning styles preferred.

Peers play a crucial role in achieving behavioural changes among the students. Directly or indirectly, it may have influence on the social, intellectual and emotional development as well as academic performance of the students. Ajayi (2019) opine that people with the same analogous curiosity, background, age group, religious and socio-economic status forms a part of the peer group. Peer pressure thus means influence of friends on one another and inducing changes in their mental and emotion oriented behaviour. Peer pressure can be either positive or negative, it is positive when undergraduate students are pressured by their friends toward positive behaviour such as improve academic performance, increase intellectual skill, social skills, companionship and so on. It seems to be negative when undergraduate students are pressured by their peers toward negative behaviour or antisocial activities such as cultism, smoking, drug abuse, traffic accidents, drinking, road rage, risky sexual behaviour, robbery, rape and so on. Peer pressure is generally associated with episodes of undergraduate students risk taking (such as delinquency, drug abuse, sexual behaviours, and reckless driving on campus) because these

activities commonly occur in the company of peers. Thus, the study investigated if peer-pressure has any relationship with academic performance of undergraduate students in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

Gender refers to socially constructed differences between male and female. Scholars, policymakers, and practitioners have observed and seem to agree upon socially constructed differences between male and female and its significant effects in their lives. Studies by Ogbeba and Ajayi (2016), Ajayi (2019), Ajayi and Ajayi (2023), have also observed gender inequality in the classroom because of instructional design during teaching and learning process. Similarly, Spender (2020) argued that teachers tend to give different types of attention to boys and girls. According to Spender (2020), girls are praised for their appearance, good behaviour and neat work. Adebayo (2022) stated that boys talk more than girls in the classroom. It seems even associated with the values of a person. In a country such as Nigeria where patriarchy is still dominant in various aspects of life, gender differences are still clearly evident. The social status of girl child in Nigeria still appears low, a situation attributable to both the general poverty of the country and the gender-based distribution of power and resources in the family and in society. Despite vigorous efforts from the government and non-government sectors to ensure gender equality in education, there is still a serious gap between boys and girls in academic performance.

In this study, academic performance refers to the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of a student in the university. Ajayi and Ogbeba (2017) defined academic performance to mean the manner in which students deal with their studies and cope with or accomplish different assignments or examination given to them by their instructors within a period of time. In Nigeria universities the performance of students appears to be failing to meet minimum employable requirements as a large percentage of students are now graduating with third class and pass degree certificates (NUC, 2019). The researchers observed that the attitudes of students towards the learning in the universities are not encouraging and the likely reasons for this poor attitude may be due to social related problems such as socio-economic status, truancy, learning styles, peer pressure and gender which

in turn may affect students' academic performance. It is against this background that this study was conducted to establish if socio-economic status, truancy, learning styles, peer pressure and gender as correlates of undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University Jalingo, Nigeria as a study area.

2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate socio-economic status, truancy, learning styles, peer pressure and gender as correlates of undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University Jalingo, Nigeria. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to:

- 1) Investigate the relationship between socio-economic status and undergraduate students' academic performance
- 2) Investigate the relationship between truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance
- 3) Find out the relationship between learning styles and undergraduate students' academic performance
- 4) Investigate the relationship between peer-pressure and undergraduate students' academic performance
- 5) Find out the relationship between gender and academic performance of students in social studies

3. Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- 1) What is the relationship between socio-economic status and undergraduate students' academic performance?
- 2) Is there any relationship between truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance?
- 3) What is the relationship between learning styles and undergraduate students' academic performance?
- 4) What is the relationship between peer-pressure and undergraduate students' academic performance?
- 5) Is there any relationship between gender and undergraduate students' academic performance?

4. Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

- 1) The relationship between socio-economic status and undergraduate students' academic performance is not significant.
- 2) There is no significant relationship between truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance.
- 3) There is no significant relationship between learning styles and undergraduate students' academic performance.
- 4) There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students' academic performance.
- 5) There is no significant relationship between gender and undergraduate students' academic performance.

5. Research Design and Procedure

The study adopted correlational research design. The population for the study consisted of all undergraduate students in the Faculty of Education in Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. The sample for the study consisted of 133 undergraduate students. The sample of the study was made up of 300 level undergraduate students. The sample was selected using simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for data collection were Socio-Economic Status, Truancy, Learning styles, Peer-pressure and Gender Questionnaire (STLPGQ) and students Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) for 2018/2019 set. STLPGQ consists of two sections, A and B. Section 'A' focuses on the demographic variables of the respondents while section 'B' covers 30 items on socio-economic status, truancy, learning styles, peer-pressure and gender. The questionnaire was patterned on four-Likert rate of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The students CGPA and STLPGQ used was validated by three experts in education related discipline and one expert in measurement and evaluation. STLPGQ was trial tested which yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.89 using Cronbach Alpha.

The instrument was administered by the researcher with the assistance of the three trained research assistants. The respondents were given instructions on how to complete the

questionnaire. The face to face method was used in the distribution of 133 copies of the questionnaire. To avoid missing copies of the questionnaire, the questionnaires were given to the respondents and collected by the research assistants the same day. The research questions were answered using multiple regression analysis. While the null hypotheses were tested using ANOVA of regression analysis to investigate the extent to which socio-economic

status, truancy, learning styles, peer-pressure and gender account for undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University Jalingo, Nigeria.

6. Results

6.1 Research Question One

What is the relationship between socio-economic status and undergraduate students' academic performance? The answer to research question one is contained in Table 1.

Table 1. Regression Analysis of Socio-Economic Status and Students' Academic Performance

Model	N	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted Square (Adj. R ²)	R	Std. Error of the Estimate (SEE)	R ² %	Durbin-Watson
1	133	.227 ^a	.051	.050		.120416	5.1	0.782

Table 1 shows the regression analysis of the relationship between socio-economic status and undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. The result indicated that the correlation between socio-economic status and undergraduate students' academic performance is 0.227 with a coefficient of determination of 0.510. This means

that only 5.1% of the variation in academic performance of undergraduate students can be attributed to socio-economic status.

6.2 Research Question Two

Is there any relationship between truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance? The answer to research question two is contained in Table 2.

Table 2. Regression Analysis of Truancy and Students' Academic Performance

Model	N	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted Square (Adj. R ²)	R	Std. Error of the Estimate (SEE)	R ² %	Durbin-Watson
1	133	.775 ^a	.601	.596		2.52236	60.1	2.347

Table 2 shows the regression analysis of the relationship between truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance in TSU, Jalingo, Nigeria. The result indicated that the correlation between truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance in TSU is 0.775 with a coefficient of determination of 0.601. This means that 60.1% of

the variation in students' academic performance can be attributed to truancy among undergraduate students' in TSU, Jalingo Nigeria.

6.3 Research Question Three

What is the relationship between learning styles and undergraduate students' academic performance? The answer to research question three is contained in Table 3.

Table 3. Regression Analysis of Learning styles and Students' Academic Performance

Model	N	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted Square (Adj. R ²)	R	Std. Error of the Estimate (SEE)	R ² %	Durbin-Watson
1	133	.187 ^a	.035	.0032		0.334	3.5	0.3322

Table 3 shows the regression analysis of the relationship between learning styles and

academic performance of undergraduate students in Taraba State University (TSU), Jalingo, Nigeria. The result indicated that the correlation between learning styles and academic performance of undergraduate students in TSU, Jalingo is 0.187 with a coefficient of determination of 0.032. This means that only 3.5% of the variation in academic

performance can be attributed to learning styles among undergraduate students' in TSU, Jalingo Nigeria.

6.4 Research question four

What is the relationship between peer-pressure and undergraduate students' academic performance? The answer to research question four is contained in Table 4.

Table 4. Regression Analysis of Peer Pressure and Students' Academic Performance

Model	N	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted Square (Adj. R ²)	R	Std. Error of the Estimate (SEE)	R ² %	Durbin-Watson
1	133	.803 ^a	.645	.632		2.2112	64.5	2.1101

Table 4 shows the regression analysis of the relationship between peer pressure and academic performance of undergraduate students in Taraba State University (TSU), Jalingo, Nigeria. The result indicated that the correlation between peer pressure and academic performance of students in TSU is 0.803 with a coefficient of determination of 0.645. This means

that 64.5% of the variation in academic performance can be attributed to peer-pressure among undergraduate students in TSU, Jalingo.

6.5 Research Question Five

Is there any relationship between gender and undergraduate students' academic performance? The answer to research question five is contained in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression Analysis of Gender and Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance

Model	N	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted Square (Adj. R ²)	R	Std. Error of the Estimate (SEE)	R ² %	Durbin-Watson
1	133	.097 ^a	.009	.008		0.0096	0.9	0.0207

Table 5 shows the regression analysis of the relationship between gender and academic performance of undergraduate students in Taraba State University (TSU), Jalingo, Nigeria. The result indicated that the correlation between gender and academic performance in TSU is 0.097 with a coefficient of determination of 0.009. This means that only 0.9% of the variation in

academic performance can be attributed to gender among undergraduate students in TSU, Jalingo.

6.6 Hypothesis One

The relationship between socio-economic status and undergraduate students' academic performance is not significant.

Table 6. Result of Regression Analysis Relationship between Parents' Social-Economic Status and Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F.	p-value	Remark
1	Regression	526.328	1	526.328	6.331	.101	No Significant relationship
	Residual	3104.003	132	37.887			

Total 3630.331 133

- Predictors (Constant): Socio-economic status
- Dependent Variable: Undergraduate Students Academic Performance

Regression analysis result in Table 6 reveals that there is no significant relationship between parents social-economic status and academic performance of undergraduate students in TSU, Jalingo [F1, 133 = 6.331; $p > 0.05$]. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This implies that, there is no significant relationship between

parents' social-economic status and undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

6.7 Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance.

Table 7. Result of Regression Analysis Relationship between Truancy and Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F.	p-value	Remark
1	Regression	657.727	1	657.727	18.090	.000	Significant relationship
	Residual	3592.391	132	31.059			
	Total	4250.118	133				

- Predictors (Constant): Truancy
- Dependent Variable: Undergraduate Students Academic Performance

Regression analysis result in Table 7 reveals that there is significant relationship between truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance [F1, 133 = 18.090; $p < 0.05$]. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that, there is a significant relationship between

truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

6.8 Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between learning styles and undergraduate students' academic performance.

Table 8. Result of Regression Analysis Relationship between Learning styles and Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F.	p-value	Remark
1	Regression	611.132	1	611.132	17.009	.110	No Significant relationship
	Residual	4298.102	132	29.336			
	Total	4909.234	133				

- Predictors (Constant): Learning styles
- Dependent Variable: Undergraduate Students Academic Performance

Regression analysis result in Table 8 reveals that there is no significant relationship between learning styles and undergraduate academic performance of students [F1, 133 = 17.009;

$p > 0.05$]. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This implies that, there is no significant relationship between learning styles and undergraduate students' academic performance

in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

6.9 Hypothesis Four

There is no significant relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students' academic performance.

Table 9. Result of Regression Analysis Relationship between Peer Pressure and Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F.	p-value	Remark
1	Regression	711.012	1	491.092	19.119	.000	Significant relationship
	Residual	5291.112	132	23.986			
	Total	6002.124	133				

- Predictors (Constant): Peer Pressure
- Dependent Variable: Undergraduate Students Academic Performance

Regression analysis result in Table 9 reveals that there is significant relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students' academic performance [$F_{1, 133} = 19.119$; $p < 0.05$]. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that, there is significant relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students'

academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

6.10 Hypothesis Five

There is no significant relationship between gender and undergraduate students' academic performance.

Table 10. Result of Regression Analysis Relationship between Gender and Undergraduate Students' Academic Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F.	p-value	Remark
1	Regression	390.999	1	390.999	10.319	.091	No Significant relationship
	Residual	3491.122	132	11.011			
	Total	3882.121	133				

- Predictors (Constant): Gender
- Dependent Variable: Undergraduate Students Academic Performance

Regression analysis result in Table 10 reveals that there is no significant relationship between gender and academic performance of undergraduate students [$F_{1, 133} = 10.319$; $p > 0.05$]. The null hypothesis is therefore not rejected. This implies that, there is no significant relationship between gender and undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

7. Discussion of Findings

The study investigated socio-economic status, truancy, learning styles, peer pressure and gender as correlates of undergraduate students'

academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo, Nigeria. The finding of the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between social-economic status and academic performance of undergraduate students in TSU, Jalingo. The finding is in conformity with the finding of Majorbanks (2019) who revealed that socioeconomic status and family size does not have any influence on students' learning outcome. The finding of this study is in contradiction with the finding with Suleman, Aslam, Shakir, Akhtar, Hussain and Akhtar (2014) who found that children with strong socioeconomic status show better academic

performance in comparison to those with poor socioeconomic status, they showed poor and unsatisfactory academic performance. The finding of this study is against the finding of Saifi and Mehmood (2015) who revealed that parental education and occupation and facilities at home affect the students' performance.

The finding of the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between truancy and undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo. This implies that truancy contributes to undergraduate students' poor academic performance. This finding is similar with Sambe, Yandew and Avamun (2015) that truant behaviour has a significant effect on students' academic achievements in terms of performance in their terminal examination. Similarly, Robinson (2020) discovers that truancy has a direct impact on pupils' academic achievement. He claims that when parents have too many children in the household and the father's financial situation is dire, he makes the decision not to send his children to school on a regular basis. However, the finding disagreed with the finding of Crede and Kieszczynka (2010) that regular school attendance does not guarantee academic success probably because many students may show up in school without actually participate in learning activities.

The finding of the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between learning styles and undergraduate academic performance of students in Taraba State University, Jalingo. This implies that learning styles does not contribute to undergraduate students' poor academic performance. The finding in agreement with the finding of Dobson (2010) who found that there was no significant association between learning style and course scores. Karakaya, Ainscough, and Chopoorian (2017) found there was no significant difference in test scores between students with different learning style. However, Vaishnav (2013) indicated there exist a negligible correlation between visual learners and academic achievements, positive low correlation between auditory learners and academic achievements, and positive high correlation between kinesthetic learning style and academic achievements.

The finding of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students' academic performance. This implies that, there is

significant relationship between peer pressure and undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo. The finding of the study coincides with the finding of Omotere (2011) that peer group influence contributes to adolescents' performance. The finding also agreed with the finding of Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015) that peer group had strong influence on the academic performance of students in Basic Science in secondary schools. The finding showed that students who had positive peer group recorded higher academic performance while those who had negative peer group influence experienced poor academic performance in Social Studies.

These findings are similar with the studies of Owodunni (2008) that most students may have the ability and capabilities to perform well in school and achieve their ambition in life but due to peer influence. Peer pressure becomes most important in almost all aspects of lives of the tanagers, from social structure and situations to performance in the classroom situation. Some students having relationships with peers promote their academic engagement. Others join peer groups that becomes as cause of disengagement from the school and impact on academic practices. Negative peer pressure can create such problems in school such as lower school attendance and even drop grades. The finding of the study revealed that there is no significant relationship between gender and academic performance of undergraduate students. This implies that, there is no significant relationship between gender and undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

8. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that truancy and peer pressure are determinant of undergraduate students' academic performance. Furthermore, it was concluded that socio-economic status, learning styles and gender are not determinant of undergraduate students' academic performance in Taraba State University, Jalingo. This means that there will be an improvement in academic performance of students in social studies, if parents and educational administrators can set up plans and strategies to reduce or curb truancy and negative peer pressure among students in Taraba State University, Jalingo.

9. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

- 1) Universities management should set up disciplinary committee reduce or curb truancy, indiscipline and negative peer pressure among undergraduate students.
- 2) Universities should co-opted parents on how to combat truancy among undergraduate students.
- 3) Symposium should be organized for undergraduate students on the dangers of truancy and negative peer pressure.

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