

## INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION ON STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

**Igbo J.N. (Phd) & Ujonwundu P.O.**  
Department of Educational Foundations  
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

### **Abstract**

*Self-esteem is an essential component of every individual's life, which depends on the individuals' mindset. This study examined the influence of parental achievement orientation on self-esteem and academic achievement of secondary school students in Imo State. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The study utilized Ex-post-facto research design. Seven hundred and twenty-one participants from senior secondary school students in Imo State participated in the study. Parental Achievement Orientation Questionnaire (PAOQ) and Students Self Esteem Scale" (SSES) were completed by the participants. The data collected were analyzed using Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test statistics. Results revealed that: positive parental achievement orientation significantly influences participants' self-esteem and academic achievement than the negative parental achievement orientation. The outcomes of the study suggest that Parental Achievement Orientation is relevant for enhancing secondary school students' self-esteem to overcome negative mindset associated with decision making in life situations. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made: It would be relevant and helpful if further studies on parental achievement orientation on other psychological constructs be examined in secondary school and other higher institutions in Nigeria and other countries both national and internationally.*

**Keywords:** parental orientation, achievement orientation, self-esteem, achievement, academic achievement

### **Introduction**

Generally, family is a social unit consisting of one or two parents and their children. It is a cluster of people or individuals sharing a specific physical and psychological space.

Families are made up of parents, brothers, and sisters living together (Goldenbery & Goldenbery, 2004). Each generation in every family influences and is influenced by other members of the family. In this process, the family

relationship system, that is the roles assigned to members, more especially parents, influence the upbringing of children positively or negatively. The relationships between parents and children undergo peculiar transition that could affect the children's self-esteem in life, depending on the parental achievement orientation.

Parental achievement orientation is behaviour of the parents toward achievement. Akindutire and Ekundayo (2012) asserted that parental achievement orientation is the desire of parents to improve on their self awareness and performance of life goals. Parental achievement orientation may have both positive and negative influence on students' academic achievement and self-esteem. If parental achievement orientation is positive, it may result to high self-esteem and high academic achievement, but if it is negative, it may result to low self-esteem and poor academic achievement. Webster (2015) noted that parents with positive achievement orientation express happiness at time of accomplishment, they set high standards that are realistic for their children, and they think how well they have done something and look for new and better ways to improve their skills and performance. Parents with positive achievement orientation take full and complete responsibility for each of their actions, are proud individuals who acknowledge their own hard work effort and still move forward towards bigger goal, set high standards for their children and express happiness at the time of accomplishment (Kerrigan, 2013). It is believed that parents with positive achievement orientation are responsive, close to their children, and know what their children may need to study in school and at home as well.

Children that have parents with positive achievement orientation may have high self-esteem academic achievement. Davis and Magnuson (2015) state that parents pass on values, beliefs and behaviors regarding the importance of education, work relationship, and good mental health to the children. Their own personality and belief, regarding achievement orientation, is manifested toward their children. These parents with positive achievement orientation have stronger confidence in their children's academic abilities, and they also have higher expectations for their children. These parents tend to have positive mindset, which are characterized by the belief that talents and abilities are things that are developed through effort, practice and instruction, foster a more positive attitude toward practice and learning, a desire for feedback, a greater ability to deal with setbacks, and significantly better performance. They expect that their children will earn good grades, behave well in school and attend college by studying hard. These high expectations in turn motivate the children to do well both in school, national and international levels. (Eccles, 2010).

On the other hand, parents with negative achievement orientation may be preoccupied with their business, may not have good parent-child relationship, love and care for their children's education. They may send out signals that tend to lower the students self-esteem by letting them believe in "the end justifies the means syndrome" of writing examinations. Such parents do not believe in the efficacy of hard work; instead, they encourage examination malpractice. Such parents have fixed mindset, which practice has no relationship to performance or success. This condition may make the students to feel helpless and confused because they consider going to school a tedious job (Edukugho, 2007). Thus parental achievement orientation has roles to play in the academic achievement of their children. Therefore, the type of achievement orientation of parents has role to play in the development of children's learning in schools. From the above, the students' mindset about achievement in school could therefore said to be related to parental values, beliefs and behaviors regarding the importance of education (Davis. & Magnuson, 2015). These beliefs, and values passed on to the students will either make or mar their self-esteem and academic achievement. Smetana (2002) affirmed that parents with positive achievement orientation set high standard for their children and they take time to monitor their children's academic achievement. This could breed positive self-esteem and high academic achievement whereas negative parental achievement orientation may also breed negative self-esteem and poor academic achievement.

Self-esteem is the belief that people have about themselves. It includes beliefs as to whether a student can expect success or failure, how much effort should be put forth, whether failure at a task will "hurt," and whether he or she will become more capable as a result of difficult experiences (Igbo, Eze, Eskay, Onu & Omeje, 2012). Self-esteem is more likely to promote helpless responses to subsequent failures and low self-esteem (Pomerantz & Kempner, 2013). Self-esteem has to do with the individual's sense of worth, or the extent to which a person values, approves, appreciates, prizes, or likes himself or herself (Woolfolk, 2012). Muraina and Oyadeyi (2014) carried out a study on academic efficacy and self-esteem as predictors of academic achievement among school going adolescents in Nigeria. The result showed that there was significant relationship between academic efficacy and students' academic achievement. Self-esteem reflects a person's overall emotional evaluation of his or her own worth. It is a judgment of oneself. Self-esteem encompasses beliefs and emotions such as triumph, despair, pride and shame (Hewitt, 2009). Self-esteem can involve a variety of beliefs about self, such as the appraisal of one's own appearance, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors (Smith, 2004). This implies that self-esteem runs across different spheres of human

endeavour. The problem with developing countries, more especially in Nigeria, is that some parents do not believe in the efficacy of hard work; instead, they encourage examination malpractice. Weihua and Cathy (2010) observed that students with positive self-esteem tend to perform better in school and are more open to challenging situations, whereas students with negative self-esteem try to avoid exposing their unfavorable characteristics, especially in academic achievement.

Academic achievement has been one of the most important goals of the educational process, which has been of concern to parents, guardians, students and even the wider society both at national and international levels. Academic achievement is seen as the measure of the students' level of knowledge, skills and performances (Ricardo, Anja, Weidinger & Wirthweir, 2014). Academic achievement is an important parameter in measuring students learning outcome in various school disciplines (McLanahan, 2004). Melchor, Nuria and Luis-Miguel (2011) found that the mindset about achievement may be related to family value and orientation. Academic achievement is based on the degree of intellectual stimulation that the child could receive from learning situations.

From all these assertions of academic achievement, the researchers see academic achievement as a measure of success which one is able to attain as a student after learning experiences. Unfortunately, the success is not easily obtained. Following the chief examiner's report across the nation for the year 2014 to 2017 candidates representing 24.94% made credits and above in English and Mathematics in 2014. For 2015 through 2017, records showed 39.57%, 31.28%, and 38.81% respectively. The analyses of West African Examination Council (WAEC) results invariably display the academic achievement of secondary school students as poor with particular reference to Nigerian students..... The problem that necessitated the study is consistent poor achievement of students both internal and external examination as seen from their in WAEC results and reports from research studies. Okagaki and Frensh (1998) findings revealed that parental beliefs and behavior are related to students' academic achievement. By implication the effort, belief and value a student places on his academic achievement may depend on the parents' achievement orientation. To guide the study, the following purposes were used: To determine the influence of parental achievement orientation on academic achievement of secondary school students and to ascertain the influence of parental achievement orientation on self-esteem of secondary school students. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study and they include: What is the influence of parental achievement orientation on secondary school students' academic achievement? What is the influence of parental achievement orientation on secondary school students' self-esteem?

Parental achievement orientation has no significant influence on academic achievement of secondary school students.

Parental achievement orientation has no significant influence on self-esteem of secondary school students.

### **Method.**

The study adopted ex-post-facto research design. According to Ramalingam (2006) in this type of design, the researchers have no control over the independent variable under study. The study was carried out in Imo State, South East of Nigeria. The sample size of the study comprised 721 senior secondary two students (SSII) from co-educational secondary schools of SS II students were chosen for the study because they were neither preparing for external examination as SS III students are doing nor trying to adjust to senior secondary school as the SS I students are doing. The sample was drawn using multi-stage sampling technique. At the first stage, purposive sampling technique was used to select only co-educational secondary school respondents. At second stage, proportionate sampling was used to draw 17 schools from a total of 70 schools in the areas. For each school, 5 percent of the schools were randomly drawn to ensure average representativeness. At the third stage, simple random sampling, by balloting, was used to select the required schools from each stratum. This measure was applied in explaining the sample of the study. Parental Achievement Orientation Questionnaire (PAOQ), Students Self-esteem Scale (SSES) and students' annual results were used to collect data for the study. Parental Achievement Orientation Questionnaire (PAOQ) was developed by the researchers and used as identification instrument. Students Self-esteem Scale (SSES) was adapted from Rosenberg (1965) Self-esteem Scale. The instrument was used to elicit information on students' self-esteem. The students' end- of- session results (which is the cumulative of the three terms) were used to measure their academic achievement.

To determine the reliability of the instruments, the responses obtained from the respondents were subjected to Cronbach alpha method to determine the internal consistency of the instruments. The reliability coefficient of 0.91 and 0.93 were obtained for PAOQ and SSES respectively. Cronbach alpha method was considered appropriate because the instruments were polychotomously scored. The three instruments were used to collect data for the study. The research questions were answered, using mean and standard deviation while the null hypotheses were tested, using t-test statistics. A mean rating of 2.5 and above was used as benchmark to classify students into positive parental achievement orientation, while a mean rating below 2.5 was

used to classify students into negative parental achievement orientation. To achieve the classification, the mean response of each student to the 30 items of parental achievement orientation scale was first determined. This process resulted in 458 students with positive parental achievement orientation and 263 students with negative parental achievement orientation.

### Results.

**Table 1: Mean and t-test analysis of the significant influence of parental achievement orientation on self-esteem of secondary school students**

Variable	PAO	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-cal	Df	Sig	Dec
Self-esteem	Positive	458	3.27	0.44	<b>13.21</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>S</b>
	Negative	263	2.82	0.44				

**Key:** PAO=Parental Achievement Orientation, N = Number of respondents,  $\bar{x}$  = mean, SD = Standard Deviation, t-cal= t-test value, df= degree of freedom, Sig= level of Significance, Dec = Decision.

The result in Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviations of the influence of parental achievement orientation on self-esteem (positive and negative) of secondary school students. A total of 458 students had positive parental achievement orientation on self-esteem, whereas 263 students had negative parental achievement orientation on self-esteem. The result indicates that a mean of 3.27 with a standard deviation of 0.44 was for students with positive parental achievement orientation, while a mean of 2.82 with a standard deviation of 0.44 was obtained for students with negative parental achievement orientation. This means that positive parental achievement orientation influence secondary school students' self-esteem more than the negative parental achievement orientation. Result in Table 1 also showed that a t-value of 13.21 with an associated probability of 0.00 and degree of freedom of 719 was obtained. Since the associated probability of 0.00 was less than the 0.05 set as the level of significance and the criterion for taking a decision, the null hypothesis 1, which stated that parental achievement orientation has no significant influence on self-esteem of secondary school students, was rejected. Therefore, the inference drawn was that parental achievement orientation has a significant influence on self-esteem of secondary school students.

**Table 2: Mean and t-test analysis of the significant influence of parental achievement orientation on secondary school students' academic achievement**

Variable	PAO	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	t-cal	df	Sig	Dec
Achievement	Positive	458	59.78	0.84	<b>23.69</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>S</b>
	Negative	263	41.92	7.46				

**Key:** PAO=Parental Achievement Orientation, N = Number of respondents,  $\bar{x}$  = mean, SD = Standard Deviation, t-cal= t-test value, df= degree of freedom, Sig= level of Significance, Dec = Decision.

The result in Table 2 indicates the mean and standard deviations of the influence of parental achievement orientation on secondary school students' academic achievement. The result shows that a mean achievement of 59.78, with a standard deviation of 10.84, was as a result of positive parental achievement orientation, while a mean of 41.92 with a standard deviation of 7.46, was due to negative parental achievement orientation. This result shows that positive parental achievement orientation influences secondary school students' academic achievement more than the negative parental achievement orientation. Result in Table 2 also showed that a t-value of 23.69, with an associated probability of 0.00 and degree of freedom of 719 was obtained. Since the associated probability of 0.00 was less than the 0.05 set as the level of significance and the benchmark for taking a decision, the null hypothesis 2, which stated that parental achievement orientation has no significant influence on academic achievement of secondary school students, was rejected. Hence, the conclusion drawn was that parental achievement orientation has a significant influence on academic achievement of secondary school students.

### Discussion.

The findings revealed that students with positive parental achievement orientation had higher mean scores in self-esteem than those who have negative parental achievement orientation. This could be attributed to the fact that parents' involvements in their children's school activities positively, as in their active participation of their children's daily activities in school, are very influential to their children's school outcomes. The finding supports that of Muraina and Oyadeyi (2014), which found that parent-child relationship is the strongest predictor of self-esteem among adolescents of divorced families in Mashhad, Iran. The findings by Hewitt (2009) reveal that children's

motivational patterns, as well as their school achievements, are influenced by their parental achievement behavior.

The finding is confirmed by a further test of hypothesis which revealed that parental achievement orientation has a significant influence on self-esteem of secondary school students. The findings align with that of Melchor, Nuria and Luis-Miguel (2011) that parents with positive achievement orientation influence their children's school outcome through the high standard they set for their children. In the same vein, it supports the finding from Smetana (2002) which affirmed that, parents with positive achievement orientation set high standard for their children and they take time to monitor their children's academic achievement. This could lead to high self-esteem and high academic achievement whereas negative parental achievement orientation may also breed low self-esteem and poor academic achievement.

Again the finding revealed that positive parental achievement orientation influence secondary school students' academic achievement than the negative parental achievement orientation. This could be attributed to the fact that the value orientation of the family and the level of parental involvement in the child's development tend to be the most influential factor in his or her school achievement. The finding is in support with the postulation of Eccles (2010) that the confidence parents have in their children builds in children's confidence in academic abilities and makes them more likely to succeed. The findings also agreed with the findings of Pomerantz and Kempner (2013) on praise as a means through which parents convey their support for their children's academic success. The findings maintained that when children are praised for good performance, they are more likely to promote helpless responses to subsequent failures and low self-esteem. Also the findings from Smith (2004) affirm the present finding in that it revealed a positive relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievement.

The findings of the study revealed that parental achievement orientation has a significant influence on academic achievement of secondary school students. However, the findings are in contrast with the finding of no significant relationship between parental involvement on students' academic self-efficacy, engagement and intrinsic motivation by Weihua and Cathy (2010). The finding from Okagaki and Frensh (1998) support the present finding in that it revealed that parental beliefs and behavior are related to student's school achievement in school. The findings of the study have implications for education authority and curriculum developers in that it will help them to understand the aspects of home and parental factors that could help to enhance students' self-esteem and achievements. The findings will

encourage parental involvement in students' education. Through positive parental achievement orientation, students will develop high self-esteem and be able to share ideas and experiences better in life situations as they arise.

### **Conclusion.**

Generally, learning begins at birth and continues throughout life. Parents are the first physical contact that children are aware of and therefore have a strong influence on their learning outcome through their support. The study examined the influence of parental achievement orientation (positive and negative) on students' self-esteem and academic achievement. Results indicated that positive parental achievement orientation influence secondary school students' self-esteem than the negative parental achievement orientation. Also, parental achievement orientation has a significant influence on self-esteem of secondary school students. Positive parental achievement orientation influence secondary school students' academic achievement than the negative parental achievement orientation. Parental achievement orientation has a significant influence on academic achievement of secondary school students.

### **Recommendations.**

Based on the findings of the study, some recommendations were made:

- (1) Parents should be acquainted with the importance of parental achievement orientation and its influence on students through Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meeting.
- (2) The importance of parental achievement orientation should be acquainted to the students which will help them to develop the spirit of hard work and high self-esteem.
- (3) The Federal Government should emphasize on parental achievement orientation and its implication on poor achievement and low self-esteem using it to formulate decisions regarding parents' educational responsibilities towards the students.
- (4) Parents should be encouraged to help boost their children's self-esteem which will eventually enhance their academic achievement.

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