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**PARENTAL NEGLECT ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT IN SHOMOLU LGA OF LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

The study investigated the parental neglect on students' academic performance and psychosocial adjustment in Shomolu LGA, Lagos State. The research focused on various forms of parental neglect, including physical, psychological, social, emotional, and educational neglect. 120 Senior Secondary II students were selected using the stratified technique of random sampling. Two research instruments were employed: the Effect of Parental Neglect on Academic Performance Questionnaire (EPNAPQ) and the Achievement Test on English Language (ATEL), both of which demonstrated a reliability coefficient of 0.73 during the pilot study. Descriptive statistics and an independent t-test were used to analyze the data and test the four formulated hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. The findings revealed a significant relationship between parental neglect and students' academic performance, classroom involvement, study habits, and social adjustment. The study's results underscore the importance of parental care and attention in promoting students' overall well-being and academic success. It was recommended that parents prioritize their children's needs, provide adequate care and support, and avoid neglect and abuse, which can have long-lasting negative effects on a child's social and psychological adjustment.

**Keywords:** Academic performance, Classroom involvement, Parent-neglect, Study habits, Social adjustment

## **Introduction**

The parental involvement in the growth and development of a child is unequivocal. Parents play a dynamic role in determining their children's cognitive, social, physical, and emotional growth, leaving a lasting impact on their lives. Every child has the right to receive care and support, and neglect can hinder their holistic development. Parental neglect, characterized by the failure to provide basic necessities like food, clothing, shelter, and education, is a pervasive form of child maltreatment (Kemboi, 2024). This neglect can have severe consequences on a child's personality development and cognitive restructuring. Emotional and educational neglect, in particular, account for approximately 25% of child maltreatment cases. Children who experience parental neglect often exhibit behavioral problems, including aggression, antisocial behavior, disobedience, and hyperactivity (Fabes, 2018). Parents need to prioritize their children's needs and provide a nurturing environment to support their overall development.

There are various forms of parental neglect such as physical, psychological, social, emotional neglect, health neglect and educational neglect. Although, Parental neglect is a complex issue with multiple contributing factors, rather than a single cause. According to Gakusi (2015), parents are often the primary source of neglect for their children, with some parents disregarding their children's fundamental needs. This neglect can have severe and long-lasting consequences for the child's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, especially when it comes to their essential right to an education, may exhibit traits such as loneliness, low self-esteem, drug use, indifference, tension, stress, anxiety, impatience, and antisocial behaviour (Heady, 2016).

Children's education begins at home, it is the parents' duty to provide them with a quality education (Alokan & Bimbola, 2023). Parents at home provide their children with the physiological needs, that is, the basic needs of life, such as clothing, food, shelter, health and education. They provide

them with the necessary school materials such as school fees, uniforms, textbooks and stationeries; supervise their children's schoolwork at home; motivate them to learn skills and attitude by reinforcement and rewards. Child abuse, which refers to the unjust treatment of a child, can significantly disrupt their development, even within their own home. This maltreatment can take many forms, including physical battering and deprivation of basic needs, both at home and in school, ultimately affecting their academic performance (Alokan & Bimbola, 2023). The consequences of child abuse can be far-reaching, influencing various aspects of a child's life, including their emotional, social, and cognitive development.

Academic performance, particularly for senior secondary school students, has been closely linked to a number of factors. For example, the majority of students in Nigerian senior secondary schools face daily academic difficulties while dealing with severe emotional strains brought on by a long commute, a subpar school environment, and having teachers who lack motivation. In addition, parents' uncooperative behaviour resulting from their increased workload and inability to provide for the family could lead to poor academic performance (Alokan & Bimbola, 2023).

Academic performance is a measure of a student's achievement in their academic endeavors, reflecting the extent to which they have accomplished their learning objectives (Adepoju, 2015). Grades are a widely accepted indicator of academic performance, representing a student's scores in various subjects and overall academic tenure. In most educational institutions, academic performance is the primary metric for evaluating student success. A student's academic performance is deemed successful when they meet or exceed the standards set by the institution or external examination bodies, such as government or independent agencies.

Academic performance is a crucial indicator of effective schooling, often used interchangeably with academic achievement or attainment. It encompasses the evaluation of students'

accomplishments in various tasks, courses, or assignments. The concerning trend of poor academic performance among secondary school students has sparked interest among the general public and key stakeholders, prompting efforts to identify the underlying factors that influence students' performance at this critical educational level (Adepoju, 2015). Understanding these factors is essential to addressing the issue and improving academic outcomes.

To address the challenge of poor academic performance, governments, communities, and stakeholders are investing heavily in education, providing essential infrastructure which including human capital and physical infrastructure. These efforts aim to increase enrollment and attendance rates in schools nationwide, aligning with the objectives of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education initiative (Akyeampong, 2024). Research highlights that neglected children, particularly in Africa and Asia which are among the most underprivileged groups in terms of academic success (Giardino, 2016; Berridge, 2017). Studies have consistently shown that abused, maltreated, or neglected children tend to perform poorly academically, with lower cognitive scores and school achievement compared to their non-abused peers (Vondra, Barnett, & Cicchetti, 2017). Abusive and neglectful parenting can have severe effects on children, including lower self-esteem and reduced motivation to succeed academically (Lowenthal, 2018). Additionally, childhood trauma has been associated with various developmental challenges, such as language difficulties, impaired cognitive function, and attention disorders (Chalk, Gibbons, & Scarupa, 2018). Notably, neglected children often fare worse academically than physically abused children, with poor scores and frequent grade retention (Karavasilis, Doyle, & Markiewicz, 2018).

As parents are the ones who nurture and raise children which in return, amount to well-behaved children, who are well adjusted to their immediate environment. Parents influence children especially the relationships they develop with people around them which enhance their academic

Parental neglect appears to exacerbate students' struggles, significantly impacting their academic performance. Neglected children often experience poverty and low socio-economic status, which can have a detrimental effect on their education (Heady, 2016). This situation may be particularly prevalent in Nigeria, where poverty rates are high, leading to inadequate supply of fundamental necessities like clothing, housing, and educational resources (Kemboi, 2024). The consequences of childhood neglect can be far-reaching, affecting individuals' academic trajectories and overall well-being. Students facing neglect may be more likely to drop out of school to engage in income-generating activities, compromising their academic pursuits (Heady, 2016). As a result, these students often experience low school attendance, as they prioritize survival over education. This cycle of neglect and poverty can have long-lasting effects on individuals and society as a whole.

Parental neglect can significantly impact a child's academic performance, leading to challenges such as absenteeism, low school engagement, inadequate educational funding, poor family background, and eventual dropout or abandonment of education. Furthermore, neglected children may be more susceptible to negative social influences, including smoking, alcoholism, and delinquent behavior, which can further compromise their academic success. This poses a substantial threat to parents, governments, and stakeholders invested in the education and well-being of school children. Research by Swarnali and Aditi (2016) investigated the effects of parenting patterns on adolescents' study habits, surveying 620 students. The findings revealed a significant correlation between wise parenting and the development of positive study habits in children. Specifically, parents who set realistic expectations and model responsible behaviour play a crucial role in fostering effective study habits in their children. By being mindful of their own principles and actions, parents can create a supportive environment that encourages their children to develop good study habits.

Despite the significance of involvement of parent on children's academic achievement, there is a notable gap in research on parental neglect and its impact on academic performance within the

specific context of Shomolu LGA, Lagos. The scarcity of information on this subject hinders the development of informed policies and interventions to address this issue. The research intend to examine the effects of parental neglect on students' academic performance and psychosocial adjustment in Shomolu LGA, Lagos, providing valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders to develop targeted strategies to mitigate the consequences of parental neglect.

### **Hypotheses**

The study raised the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between parental neglect and students' academic performance in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.
2. There is no significant effect of parental neglect on student' classroom involvement in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.
3. There is no significant effect of parental neglect on students' study habit in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.
4. There is no significant effect of parental neglect on students' social adjustment in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.

### **Methodology**

This research utilized a descriptive survey methodology, which is well-suited for collecting data on participants' experiences and opinions regarding the research problem. This approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the situation or population, enabling the identification of potential solutions to address the issues under investigation. The population comprised all senior secondary school students in Shomolu LGA of Lagos State, providing a specific and well-defined context for the research. By using this design, the study aimed to gather valuable insights into the effects of parental neglect on students' academic performance and psychosocial adjustment.

According to Lagos State ministry of education annual census 2018/2019 report, a total number one million and eighty-two thousand six hundred and thirty-four (1,082,634) students. However, SS II students were considered most appropriate for the study because they were the most stable students because they were not preparing for any external examination.

The study adopted random sampling technique to select 4 schools out of the 8 senior secondary schools in the Shomolu Local Government through hat and draw method. Then, one hundred and twenty (120) senior secondary students (SS II) were selected through the stratified random sampling technique. Two instruments were used in this study namely: “Effect of Parental Neglect on Academic Performance and Pyscho-social Adjustment Questionnaire (EPNAPQ)” and an Achievement test on English Language subject. The instrument consisted of two sections: Section A which consist of background data of participants such as gender, age, and class level. Section B designed with the purpose of testing the postulated hypotheses. Pilot study was conducted using twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire administered on the twenty students. After 2 weeks, the same instruments were administered on the same group of students. Consequently, the results of the first and second tests were collated and analyzed using PPMC Coefficient ( $r$ ) to determine the reliability coefficient and 0.73 value was obtained. The hypotheses were tested with t-test statistical method.



**Results**

**Hypotheses Testing**

Hypothesis one: *There is no significant difference between parental neglect and students' academic performance in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.*

**Table 1: Difference Between Parental Neglect and Students' Academic Performance**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	df	t-calc	t-tab
Parental Neglect	120	12.28	2.58			
Academic performance	120	14.00	3.32	118	5.67	1.98

The first table indicates the value of  $t_{(cal)}$  of independent sample t-test was calculated to be 5.67, which is significant in the light of the fact that is greater than tabulated  $t_{(tab)}$  value of 1.98 at .05 significant level given 118 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the hypothesis was not accepted. The result shows that significant difference exist between parental neglect and students' academic performance in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.

Hypothesis two: *There is no significant difference between parental neglect and students' classroom involvement in Shomolu LGA, Lagos*

**Table 2: Difference Between Parental Neglect and Students' Classroom Involvement**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-calc	t-tab
Parental neglect	120	12.28	2.58			
				118	5.82	1.98
Classroom Involvement	120	11.26	2.43			

Table 2 indicates that the value of  $t_{(cal)}$  of independent sample t-test was calculated to be 5.82, which is significant in the light of the fact that is greater than tabulated  $t_{(tab)}$  value of 1.98 at .05 significant level given 118 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected. The results revealed that significant difference exist between parental neglect and students' classroom involvement in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.

Hypothesis three: *There is no significant difference between parental neglect and students' study habit in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.*

**Table 3: Difference Between Parental Neglect and Students' Study Habit**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-calc	t-tab
Parental Neglect	120	12.28	2.58			
				118	4.51	1.98
Study Habit	120	15.21	3.01			

Table 3 indicates that the value of  $t_{(cal)}$  of independent sample t-test was calculated to be 4.51, which is significant in the light of the fact that is greater than tabulated  $t_{(tab)}$  value of 1.98 at 0.05 significant level given 118 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected. The

results revealed that significant difference exist between parental neglect and students’ study habit in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.

Hypothesis four: *There is no significant difference between parental neglect and students’ social adjustment in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.*

**Table 4: Difference Between Parental Neglect and Students’ Social Adjustment**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-calc	t-tab
Parental Neglect	120	12.28	2.58			
				118	4.26	1.98
Social Adjustment	120	14.87	2.88			

The fourth table indicates that the value of  $t_{(cal)}$  of independent sample t-test was calculated to be 4.26, which is significant in the light of the fact that is greater than tabulated  $t_{(tab)}$  value of 1.98 at .05 significant level given 118 degrees of freedom. Consequently, the hypothesis was rejected. The results revealed that significant difference exist between parental neglect and students’ social adjustment in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.

### Summary of Findings

The study's analysis yielded the following key findings:

- 1 Parental neglect is strongly linked to students' academic performance.
2. Parental neglect has a substantial impact on students' classroom involvement.
3. Students experiencing parental neglect exhibit differences in study habits.
4. Parental neglect significantly affects students' social adjustment.

## **Discussion**

The study's findings were discussed in relation to the tested hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 posited significant difference exist between parental neglect and students' academic performance in Shomolu LGA, Lagos. The results supported existing research, including Gakusi (2015), which suggested that parental neglect can have severe consequences for individuals, including challenges in academic life. Similarly, Vondra, Barnett, and Cicchetti (2017) found that neglected children tend to score lower on cognitive measures and exhibit lower school achievement compared to non-abused students. Lowenthal (2018) also highlighted the detrimental effects of abusive and neglectful parenting on children's self-esteem and motivation to succeed in school. Furthermore, Chalk, Gibbons, and Scarupa (2018) posited childhood abuse and neglect are linked to language difficulties, impaired cognitive function, and attention deficit disorders. These findings are consistent with Karavasilis, Doyle, and Markiewicz's (2018) study, which revealed that children who experience neglect or physical abuse often struggle academically, showing poor grades, low test scores, and higher rates of grade repetition, low standardized test scores, and frequent grade retention. The convergence of these findings underscores the significance of parental neglect as a predictor of academic performance.

Hypothesis 2 posited significant difference exist between parental neglect and students' classroom involvement in Shomolu LGA, Lagos. The findings supported this hypothesis, aligning with existing research. For instance, Boulter (2024) found that children affected by parental neglect tend to be more isolated in class and struggle to participate in activities. Similarly, Malinosky-Rummell and Hansen (2018) reported that neglected children performed poorly on cognitive tasks, exhibited inattention, apathy, and had difficulty concentrating in class. Furthermore, Alokun et al. (2023) discovered a significant relationship between children's involvement in their parents'

activities and their attitude towards classwork. These studies collectively suggest that parental neglect can have a profound impact on students' classroom involvement and overall academic experience. Hickey and Lindsey (2015) also reported that child abuse is linked to reduced academic competencies, which include decreased engagement in academic tasks and difficulty paying attention in class. Stiggings (2019) also opined that abused children may struggle in class due to tardiness, as they often have to juggle numerous responsibilities or challenges that make it hard for them to arrive at school on time.

Hypothesis 3 also revealed that significant difference exist between parental neglect and students' study habit in Shomolu LGA, Lagos. This was supported by Egbule (2023) who noted that insufficient parental care and love can negatively impact a student's study habits and academic performance. Higgins (2016) also asserted that a supportive home environment can foster a positive attitude towards studies, helping adolescents develop good habits like planning and completing assignments. Furthermore, Rapport, Denney, Chung and Hustace (2016) noted that when families and parents are involved in their children's education, kids tend to achieve more academically and behaviorally. Children who receive love, care, and affection from their parents are more likely to develop good study habits and form stable relationships. Similarly, Swarnali and Aditi (2016) indicated that wise and thoughtful parenting is closely linked to good study habits in children. Parents should have realistic expectations and model positive behaviours themselves to encourage good study habits in their kids.

Hypothesis 4 posited that significant differences exist between parental neglect and students' social adjustment in Shomolu LGA, Lagos. The findings were supported by existing research, including Song and Park (2023), which demonstrated that the severity of neglect and abuse by parents is positively correlated with delinquent behavior in adolescents. Similarly, Currie and Tekin (2018)

found that maltreatment nearly doubles the likelihood of children engaging in various types of crime. Research on social outcomes has also shown that children who experience parental neglect and indifference tend to struggle with peer relationships and school life, as well as parent-child relationships (Yoo & Chung, 2016). Park (2023) further explored the effects of parental maltreatment on school adjustment, finding that social withdrawal mediates this relationship in adolescents. These findings are consistent with Howarth's (2017) report that neglected children often experience social isolation, hopelessness, and poor social adjustment due to their inability to trust others to meet their basic needs. The convergence of these findings highlights the significant impact of parental neglect on children's social adjustment.

### **Conclusion**

The study focused on parental neglect on students' academic performance and psychosocial adjustment in Shomolu LGA of Lagos State, Nigeria. It was established through the findings of this study that parental neglect to a large extent, determines the level and rate of students' academic performance and psychosocial adjustment. The findings from this study posited that, there is no significant effect of parental neglect on students' academic performance in Shomolu LGA, Lagos; there is no significant difference between parental neglect and students' classroom involvement in Shomolu LGA, Lagos, There is no significant difference between parental neglect and students' study habit in Shomolu LGA, Lagos and there is no significant difference between parental neglect and students' social adjustment in Shomolu LGA, Lagos.

### **Recommendations**

1. Parents should not neglect and abuse their children. They should rather ensure that they are well treated and taken care of adequately. This is because parental neglect has negative impact on social and psychological adjustment of such child.

2. Children should ensure that they obey their parents and make sure that they are not delinquent and disobedient to the laid down authority of their parents and the school. Rather they should remain good children in order to avoid abuse and neglect.
3. The teachers should not in any way abuse or neglect the child placed in their care. They should ensure that children are properly treated so that they would learn well and adjust well with their peers in the community where they are found.
4. Government and NGOs should organize different sensitization programmes for Nigerian citizens on the dangers associated with child abuse.

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