

INFLUENCE OF DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES AND CLASS ATTENDANCE ON ENGLISH ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN UPPER BASIC SCHOOLS IN OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA

Pengaruh Tanggungjawab Domestik dan Kehadiran Kelas Kepada Prestasi Akademik Bahasa Inggeris di Sekolah Rendah Atas di Ogbomoso, Nigeria.

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Abstrak

Pelajar mewakili hubungan penting antara generasi masa kini dan akan datang dan merupakan sumber kebanggaan bagi ibu bapa. Semasa zaman kanak-kanak, peringkat formatif dalam kehidupan, kanak-kanak biasanya tidak dilengkapi untuk membuat keputusan utama dan dijangka kekal di bawah pengawasan orang dewasa. Walau bagaimanapun, disebabkan kesusahan ekonomi, ramai ibu bapa di Nigeria memberikan anak-anak tanggungjawab domestik yang penting. Tugas domestik sebegitu, apabila berlebihan, boleh menyebabkan pelajar kehilangan pengalaman zaman kanak-kanak yang bermakna, mengganggu kehadiran sekolah biasa, dan menyebabkan ketegangan fizikal, emosi dan kognitif. Kajian ini menyiasat pengaruh tanggungjawab domestik dan kehadiran kelas terhadap prestasi akademik pelajar dalam Bahasa Inggeris di peringkat sekolah asas atas di Ogbomoso, Nigeria. Kajian ini membezakan antara penyertaan umum isi rumah dan kerja rumah yang membebaskan yang memberi kesan negatif kepada pembelajaran. Penemuan bertujuan untuk memaklumkan ibu bapa, pendidik dan penggubal dasar tentang sejauh mana tanggungjawab domestik dan kehadiran sekolah yang tidak teratur mempengaruhi pencapaian pelajar dalam bahasa Inggeris, untuk meningkatkan hasil pendidikan melalui sokongan yang lebih baik di rumah dan sekolah.

Kata kunci: kanak-kanak, aktiviti domestik, kehadiran kelas, prestasi akademik

Abstract

'Students represent the vital link between present and future generations and are a source of pride for parents. During childhood, a formative stage in life, children are typically not equipped to make major decisions and are expected to remain under adult supervision. However, due to economic hardship, many parents in Nigeria assign children significant domestic responsibilities. Such domestic tasks, when excessive, may deprive students of meaningful childhood experiences, disrupt regular school attendance, and cause physical, emotional, and cognitive strain. This study investigates the influence of domestic responsibilities and class attendance on students' academic performance in English Language at the upper basic school level in Ogbomoso, Nigeria. The study distinguishes between general household participation and burdensome domestic work that negatively

impacts learning. Findings aim to inform parents, educators, and policymakers on the extent to which domestic responsibilities and irregular school attendance affect students' achievement in English, to improve educational outcomes through better support at home and school.

Keywords: child, domestic activities, class attendance, academic performance

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Domestic responsibilities among school-aged children remain a persistent global concern, particularly in regions where socioeconomic pressures and cultural norms encourage early participation in household or income-generating activities. Although the concept is widely discussed, definitions of "domestic activities" vary across contexts. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2012) describes domestic activities as forms of work that deprive children of their potential and dignity, hinder their physical and mental development, and interfere with schooling. Similarly, Edmonds (2017) notes that such activities may include street hawking, extensive farm work, childcare, food preparation, water or firewood collection, and other labour-intensive household tasks.

In many rural and semi-urban areas, including parts of Nigeria, students' involvement in domestic activities remains widespread. When such tasks are excessive or hazardous, they conflict with children's fundamental right to education by limiting school attendance, causing lateness, or forcing students to balance academic responsibilities with demanding labour. Whether a task qualifies as domestic labour depends on the child's age, the intensity and duration of the work, and the socioeconomic context.

Domestic activities may be paid or unpaid. Orazem and Gunnarsson (2014) distinguish between paid domestic work, performed under formal or informal employment agreements, and unpaid domestic work, which may contribute either to household production (work included in the System of National Accounts) or to non-market domestic tasks carried out within the home. Students often engage in these activities because they are essential to family survival, particularly in low-income households where children's earnings or labour contributions may account for a significant proportion of household income.

Cultural expectations also influence students' participation in domestic work. In some communities, children are expected to learn family trades, contribute to household upkeep, or prepare for adult roles through early work experience. While such traditions may be socially valued, they become problematic when they impede access to quality education or cause absenteeism.

In Ogbomosho, Nigeria, the researcher observed that a considerable number of upper basic school students engage in paid domestic activities, such as bakery work or seasonal farm labour. These commitments often lead to lateness or absenteeism, which subsequently affects academic performance, particularly in core subjects like English Language.

Economic constraints further exacerbate this challenge. Despite free tuition, families still bear the cost of uniforms, books, food, and transportation. For many, these expenses reduce school attendance and increase reliance on children's labour. Previous studies show that higher returns to education improve school attendance (Ray, 2013), whereas declines in household income negatively affect enrolment and attendance (Rasati & Rossi, 2010).

Class attendance is a key indicator of academic engagement and is routinely monitored in schools through attendance registers. Poor attendance has been linked to low academic performance. In Ogbomosho, administrative records from the

2021/2022 school year indicate widespread irregular attendance among upper basic students, raising concerns about learning outcomes and performance in English Language.

Two major perspectives dominate discussions on students' involvement in domestic activities. The abolitionist school argues that all children aged 5–14 have a right to education, and any out-of-school child should be considered at risk of entering domestic labour (Danladi, 2016; Patrinos & Psacharopoulos, 2017). The reformist school, however, suggests that, given persistent socioeconomic realities such as poverty and unemployment, domestic labour cannot be eradicated immediately. Instead, they advocate a gradual approach, prohibiting hazardous labour while regulating non-hazardous work (Lavison & Moe, 2018).

Empirical evidence consistently identifies poverty as the principal driver of children's involvement in domestic work (ILO, 2025; Harsh, 2011; UNICEF, 2018; Edmonds, 2017). In Ogbomoso, many students miss school or drop out to support family livelihoods, especially in households facing financial hardship.

Academic performance, particularly in English Language, is influenced by students' attendance, study habits, and home environments. Studies show that regular attendance enhances knowledge acquisition (Wyer, 2016), while absenteeism, whether due to distance, transportation barriers, or household responsibilities, undermines performance (Dachi & Garret, 2014). Parental education and income, student motivation, learning skills, peer influence, and teacher quality also shape attendance and academic outcomes. Given the observed decline in English academic performance in upper basic schools in Ogbomoso, this study investigates how domestic responsibilities and class attendance jointly influence students' achievement. The goal is to provide evidence-based insights that can inform strategies for improving academic performance and reducing the negative effects of excessive domestic work.

This study sought answers to the following questions:

- a) What is the level of students' involvement in domestic activities?
- b) What is the level of students' class attendance to school?
- c) What is the level of students' academic performance in Ogbomoso?

Hypotheses

- a) Ho1. There is no significant relationship between class attendance and the academic performance of students.
- b) Ho2. There is no significant relationship between students' involvement in domestic activities and academic performance of students.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review examines the theoretical and empirical foundations of domestic responsibilities, class attendance, and academic performance among upper basic school students. The review is organised into four major subsections: (1) Conceptual Framework, (2) Domestic Responsibilities and Education, (3) Class Attendance and Academic Performance, and (4) Socioeconomic Influences. Each subsection synthesises existing scholarship and highlights gaps that inform the present study.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

The study is anchored on human capital theory and ecological systems theory. Human capital theory, as advanced by Becker (1993), posits that investment in

education enhances individuals' productivity and future earnings. When students engage heavily in domestic labour, the time and energy required for schooling decline, reducing opportunities to acquire human capital.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) provides further insight by recognising that students' development is shaped by interactions across multiple systems, including the household, school, and broader socioeconomic environment. Domestic labour, cultural expectations, and poverty represent microsystem and mesosystem influences that directly affect students' educational experiences.

Additionally, the ILO framework on child labour (ILO, 2025) distinguishes between acceptable forms of light household work and harmful labour that interferes with schooling. This distinction is essential for interpreting students' roles in domestic activities in developing contexts.

2.2 Domestic Responsibilities and Education

Research consistently shows that domestic responsibilities can hinder children's educational participation, especially when such tasks are excessive or time-consuming. Edmonds (2017) emphasises that domestic labour, including childcare, water collection, food preparation, and market activities, reduces students' time for homework, study, and rest.

Orazem and Gunnarsson (2014) categorise domestic labour into paid and unpaid forms, noting that both can negatively affect schooling when they exceed age-appropriate limits. Paid work, in particular, often takes place outside the home, increasing the likelihood of absenteeism and lateness.

In the African context, studies by Harsh (2011) demonstrate that children's domestic labour is rooted in cultural norms and economic survival strategies. While light household tasks may promote responsibility and skill development, scholars such as Patrinos (2017) argue that excessive labour undermines cognitive development and limits opportunities for academic success.

Empirical studies in Nigeria (e.g., Danladi 2016; Njoku & Odo, 2025) reveal that domestic responsibilities frequently interfere with school attendance, especially in rural or low-income households. Students may be required to assist with trading, farming, or caring for siblings before attending school, contributing to chronic lateness or absenteeism.

Class attendance is widely recognised as a strong predictor of academic achievement. According to Wyer (2016), consistent class participation increases students' exposure to instructional time, feedback, and learning resources. Absenteeism, conversely, creates learning gaps that accumulate over time. Studies by Oyedemi (2024) and Okorie and Eze (2024) show that even moderate absenteeism correlates with lower performance in language and mathematics. In contexts where domestic responsibilities are common, absenteeism may be systematic, resulting in severe academic underperformance.

In Nigeria, Olabintan (2019) notes that students who attend school regularly perform better because they are more engaged and better prepared for examinations. Similarly, Dachi and Garret (2014) identify distance from school, transportation barriers, and domestic labour demands as major contributors to absenteeism in public schools. English Language performance is particularly sensitive to irregular attendance because language acquisition requires continuous practice, exposure, and interaction (Okorie & Eze, 2024). Missing lessons disrupts reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and grammar mastery, leading to lower achievement.

Socioeconomic status (SES) plays a central role in determining whether students balance schooling with domestic tasks. The ILO (2025) identifies poverty as

the strongest predictor of child labour globally. Poor households may depend on children's labour to support daily survival, reducing the priority placed on education.

Ray (2013) finds that higher expected returns to schooling increase class attendance and reduce labour participation among children. Conversely, Rasati and Rossi (2010) report that declining household income decreases enrolment and increases students' involvement in work.

Parental education also shapes engagement with schooling. According to Njoku & Odo (2025), parents with higher educational attainment are more likely to value regular attendance and limit children's labour contributions. However, in low-literacy households, children are often viewed as contributors to the family economy.

Cultural expectations further compound the issue. Ojo & Adebayo (2025) note that in many communities, girls are expected to assist with domestic chores more than boys, which increases their risk of absenteeism and poorer academic performance. In parts of Nigeria, traditional norms encourage children to learn family trades from a young age, sometimes at the expense of formal education (Saha, 2020). Transport, school proximity, peer influence, and teacher quality also influence attendance. When schools are far from home or transport costs are high, students are more likely to stay home or engage in work activities (Dachi & Garret, 2014).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive research design of the correlational type. Correlational research is appropriate for examining the relationships between two or more variables concurrently, enabling the researcher to determine the strength and direction of these relationships. In this study, correlation was used to explore how domestic responsibilities and class attendance influence English academic performance among upper basic students in Ogbomoso Metropolis.

The population for this study consisted of all Upper Basic 9 students in Ogbomoso Metropolis, encompassing 31 schools (16 in Ogbomoso South and 15 in Ogbomoso North) with a total of 3,176 students (Teaching Service Commission, TESCOM, 2022). Basic 9 students were selected because they are most commonly involved in paid domestic activities. A multi-stage sampling technique was used. First, a proportionate sampling method selected 16 schools (approximately 8 from each Local Government Area). Then, 22 students were selected from each school using convenience sampling, resulting in a total sample of 352 respondents. This approach ensures proportional representation while accommodating practical considerations for student participation.

Three instruments were used for data collection: Students' Involvement in Domestic Activities Questionnaire (SIDAQ): Adapted from Isah (2013), this questionnaire comprised three sections. Section A captured demographic information. Section B included 15 items on students' involvement in domestic activities, scored on a two-point Likert scale (Yes = 2, No = 1) because the statements were negatively worded. Students' Registration Number and Class Attendance (SRNCL): A pro-forma designed by the researcher to record students' daily morning class attendance during the 2022/2023 academic year. Students' Registration Number and English Language Cumulative Score (SRNELCS): A pro-forma designed to collect students' English Language academic performance for the 2022/2023 academic year.

To ensure content validity, all instruments were reviewed by the researcher's supervisor and experts in test construction from the Department of Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final

versions. Reliability of the SIDAQ instrument was determined using a pilot study in two schools outside the selected sample. A test-retest method with a three-week interval was applied, and reliability was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.71, indicating acceptable reliability.

4.0 RESULTS

Three research questions were raised for the study, and two hypotheses were developed.

1. **Research Question 1: What is the level of students' involvement in domestic activities?**

In order to answer research question one, the students' involvement in domestic activities, which ranged from 0 – 15 by the instrument, was categorised into three categories: 0 – 4 representing low, 5 – 9 representing moderate, and 9 – 15 representing high. The table shows that students engage in domestic activities were highest at the moderate level, which was 65.7% of the entire students' engagement. Therefore, the level of students' involvement in domestic activities in Ogbomoso was moderate.

Table 2: Level of Domestic Activities of Students

Level	Frequency	Percent
Low	84	24.0
Moderate	230	65.7
High	36	10.3
Total	350	100.0

2. **Research Question 2: What is the level of students' class attendance to school?**

To answer research question two, the students' class attendance was categorised into three categories, by the collected records, which ranged from 12 – 124. Class attendance ranges from 12 – 49, representing low, 50 – 87, representing moderate and 88 – 124, representing high. The table shows that students' class attendance was highest at the high level, which is 77.4% of the total students' attendance. Therefore, the level of students' class attendance in Ogbomoso was high.

Table 3: Level of Students' Class Attendance

Level	Frequency	Percent
Low	13	3.9
Moderate	66	19.1
High	271	77.4
Total	350	100.0

3. **Research Question 3: What is the level of students' academic performance in Ogbomoso?**

Students' academic performance, as collected from the sampled schools, was classified into three groups, with 9 as the minimum and 96 as the maximum. The score range from 9 – 38 is categorised as low, 39 – 67 is categorised as moderate, and 68 – 96 is the highest. The table shows that the majority of the students performed moderately. Therefore, the level of students' academic performance in Ogbomoso is moderate.

Table 4: Level of Students' Academic Performance

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	77	22.2
Moderate	261	74.4
High	12	3.6
Total	350	100.0

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

1. Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between students' involvement in domestic activities and class attendance of students.

Table 5 shows the correlation between Domestic Activities and Class Attendance among students in Ogbomoso. It reveals that there is a negative and low relationship ($r = .197$, $p < \alpha = .000$) between Domestic Activities and Class Attendance. Therefore, a significant relationship exists between Domestic Activities and Class Attendance among students in Ogbomoso.

Table 5: Relationship between Domestic Activities and Class Attendance

	N	Mean	SD	R	Sig	Inference
Domestic Engagement	350	5.9400	2.17022			
				-.197	.000	S
Attendance	350	101.00	23.942			

$P < 0.05$

2. Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between students' involvement in domestic activities and the academic performance of students.

Table 5 shows the correlation between Domestic Activities and students' academic performance in Ogbomoso. It reveals a low relationship ($r = .63$, $p > \alpha = .241$) between Domestic Activities and Performance. Therefore, there is no significant relationship between Domestic Activities and students' academic performance in Ogbomoso.

Table 6: Relationship between Domestic Activities and Students' Performance

	N	Mean	SD	R	Sig	Inference
Domestic Engagement	350	5.9400	2.17022			
				.63	.241	NS
Performance	350	49.02	14.214			

$P > 0.05$

5.0 DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into the interplay between students' domestic responsibilities, class attendance, and academic performance in Ogbomoso metropolis.

The first research question revealed that students' involvement in domestic activities was predominantly at a moderate level (65.7%). This indicates that while students contribute substantially to household and income-generating tasks, these responsibilities are not extreme for most students. This aligns with previous studies (Edmonds, 2017; Orazem & Gunnarsson, 2014), which suggest that moderate domestic engagement can coexist with schooling without severely disrupting educational participation.

The second research question showed that class attendance among the sampled students was high (77.4%). Despite moderate engagement in domestic

activities, students were generally able to attend school regularly. This finding is consistent with Dachi and Alagbala (2021) and Wyer (2016), who observed that school attendance can remain high when students' domestic responsibilities are manageable or culturally integrated into daily routines. The high attendance suggests that students and families may prioritize schooling while balancing household duties.

Regarding academic performance, the third research question found that the majority of students achieved moderate scores in English Language (74.4%). This level of performance may reflect the combined influence of high attendance and moderate domestic engagement, suggesting that while domestic responsibilities do not drastically hinder school participation, they may limit additional time for study or focused academic practice (Oyedemi, 2024).

Hypothesis testing further elucidates these relationships. A significant negative correlation ($r = -.197$, $p < .05$) was found between domestic activities and class attendance. This suggests that as domestic responsibilities increase, attendance slightly decreases, although the effect is low. This finding supports ecological perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) that household obligations can influence students' engagement in educational settings.

Conversely, the correlation between domestic activities and academic performance was low and non-significant ($r = .063$, $p > .05$). This indicates that, within the observed levels of domestic engagement, students' academic achievement in English Language was not substantially affected. Cultural factors in Nigeria may explain this result, as children are often socialized to participate in household work without neglecting school responsibilities. This aligns with Danladi (2016), who note that in many African contexts, moderate domestic work is integrated into children's daily routines without significantly undermining academic outcomes. Therefore, the study highlights that moderate involvement in domestic activities does not necessarily impair class attendance or academic performance, but increases in domestic labour could negatively influence school engagement. Educational policies and interventions should aim to support students in balancing household responsibilities with their educational obligations, while recognizing cultural practices and socioeconomic realities.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study investigated the influence of domestic responsibilities and class attendance on the English academic performance of upper basic students in Ogbomoso Metropolis, Nigeria. The findings indicate that students' involvement in domestic activities is moderate, while class attendance is high, and academic performance in English Language is mostly moderate. There is a significant negative correlation between domestic activities and class attendance, suggesting that increased domestic responsibilities can slightly reduce school attendance. However, domestic activities were not significantly related to academic performance, indicating that moderate engagement in household tasks does not necessarily hinder students' learning outcomes. Cultural practices in Nigeria, which encourage children to balance household responsibilities with schooling, may contribute to this outcome. Overall, the study underscores the importance of supporting students in managing household duties without compromising their educational participation.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made regarding students' involvement in domestic activities.

Parents and community leaders should be educated on the potential impact of excessive domestic responsibilities on students' school attendance. Awareness campaigns can encourage families to balance children's household duties with schooling. Schools should develop programs to monitor students' attendance and academic performance, identifying those at risk due to domestic obligations. Remedial or after-school support could help mitigate potential academic gaps. Also, educational authorities should formulate policies that limit the amount of household work expected from students, especially in critical learning periods. Policies could include guidelines on safe levels of domestic engagement for school-aged children. Since cultural norms play a role in children's domestic participation, counseling and educational programs should respect cultural practices while promoting school attendance and learning. Encouraging families to integrate learning with daily activities may enhance both skills and academic performance. Additionally, Future studies should examine longitudinal effects of domestic responsibilities on academic performance across multiple subjects and explore interventions that successfully balance cultural expectations with educational needs.

8.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors state that there is no conflict of interest to report.

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10.0 AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Dr. Okafor Ifeoma P. is the main author of the article; she contributed immensely. Dr. Abdullahi Nimota Jibola Kadir is the corresponding author who contributed immensely to revising the article for suitable publication. Fijabi Aishat O. contribution is in the area of Literature review, while Dr. Yayi Timothy Opeyemi also contributes to the provision of discussion

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