

The Coefficient of Relationship among Motivation, Peer Group Influence, Family Structure and Students' Achievement in English Language of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Imo State Nigeria

Sussan Chioma Ezeonye., *Azukaego Ifeoma Eluemuno., Ngozi Yvonne Olefolu

Department Of Psychology/G&C Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education Owerri Imo State

*Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the researcher investigated the coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English language of students in public senior secondary schools in Imo State Nigeria. To achieve the aims of the study, one research questions were asked and one corresponding hypothesis were formulated and tested. The study adopted a correlational design involving a simple and multiple linear methods. The population of the study is 94,963 students. The researcher drew a sample of 398 students from 18 selected secondary schools using multistage sampling technique involving purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Rating scale and achievement test were the instruments for collection of data. Five copies of the instruments were given to two specialists in the field of Education Measurement and Evaluation and two specialists in Educational Psychology, Imo State University, Owerri and Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri for validation. Reliability coefficients of 0.81 for PFS and 0.88 for ELAT were obtained using Cronbach Alpha and Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20) respectively. The researcher used PPMC correlation statistics to answer the research question while Multilinear Regression and ANOVA of multiple correlation was used to test the hypothesis. The results of this study shows that, there is moderate, positive and significant joint relationship among motivation peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended, among others, that principals should implement strategies that foster a supportive and engaging learning environment in order to stimulate students' interest, build confidence, and cultivate a growth mindset, ultimately enhancing motivation and academic achievement in English Language.

Keywords: Motivation, peer group influence, family structure and students' achievement.

INTRODUCTION

Education remains one of the most important instruments for national development and individual transformation in every society. In Nigeria, English Language occupies a strategic position within the educational system because it serves as the official language of communication, instruction, administration, and evaluation in schools. English Language is also a compulsory subject at all levels of education and a prerequisite for admission into tertiary institutions. Consequently, students' achievement in English Language significantly determines their overall academic success and future educational opportunities. However, despite the importance of English Language, the academic achievement of many students in public secondary schools in Nigeria has continued to generate concern among educators, parents, and policymakers due to persistent poor performance in internal and external examinations such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and National Examination Council (NECO) examinations.

Academic achievement in English Language is influenced by several interrelated psychological, social, and environmental factors. Among these factors are motivation, peer group influence, and family structure, which

have attracted considerable attention among educational researchers in recent years. These variables are believed to shape students' learning attitudes, study habits, academic engagement, and overall performance in school subjects, particularly English Language.

Motivation is a fundamental factor in the teaching-learning process because it stimulates learners' interest, effort, persistence, and commitment toward academic activities. Motivation may be intrinsic, where students engage in learning due to personal satisfaction and interest, or extrinsic, where external rewards and recognition encourage learning behaviour. Students who are highly motivated are more likely to participate actively in classroom activities, complete assignments, and develop positive attitudes toward learning English Language. On the contrary, low motivation may result in poor academic engagement and weak academic performance. Recent studies have shown that motivation significantly influences students' academic achievement in English Language and other school subjects among secondary school students in Nigeria (Hassan et al., 2025). Similarly, studies on academic motivation indicate that motivated learners tend to demonstrate greater persistence and improved academic outcomes in English Language learning environments (Wu et al., 2022).

Peer group influence is another important variable associated with students' academic achievement. Peer groups are social groups made up of individuals of similar age, interests, or educational status who interact frequently and influence one another's behaviour and attitudes. During adolescence, students spend a substantial amount of time with peers, making peer influence highly significant in shaping academic behaviour. Positive peer influence may encourage healthy study habits, academic competition, discipline, and commitment to learning, while negative peer influence may expose students to truancy, examination malpractice, social distractions, and poor academic attitudes. Empirical studies have established that peer group influence significantly affects secondary school students' academic performance in English Language and related academic activities (Bassey, 2020; Oladeji, 2021).

Family structure also plays a crucial role in determining students' academic achievement. Family structure refers to the composition and organization of the family in which a child is raised, including two-parent families, single-parent families, polygamous families, and extended family systems. The family serves as the primary socialization agent and provides emotional, moral, financial, and educational support necessary for students' academic development. Students from stable and supportive family structures often enjoy better parental supervision, emotional stability, and access to educational resources that enhance academic performance. Conversely, students from unstable family structures may experience emotional stress, inadequate supervision, and insufficient educational support, which may negatively affect their academic achievement. Recent studies have shown that family background and family structure significantly influence students' achievement in English Language among secondary school students in Nigeria (Adeyeye, 2023; Umar, 2026).

Furthermore, studies have demonstrated that parental involvement, peer relationships, and social support collectively contribute to students' motivation and academic success in language learning contexts. For instance, parental support and positive peer relationships have been found to significantly predict learners' motivation and academic engagement in English Language learning (Zhang et al., 2025). This suggests that motivation, peer group influence, and family structure may interactively influence students' achievement in English Language.

In Imo State, concerns over students' poor achievement in English Language in public senior secondary schools have continued to increase. Many students experience difficulties in comprehension, essay writing, oral communication, and grammatical expression, which negatively affect their overall academic performance. Educational stakeholders have attributed this trend to declining learning motivation, negative peer pressure, changing family structures, poor reading culture, and inadequate parental support among students. Recent public discussions among Nigerian education stakeholders have also highlighted concerns about declining reading culture and reduced academic seriousness among secondary school students. (Benjamin, 2026)

Although previous studies have separately investigated motivation, peer influence, and family background as determinants of academic achievement, there appears to be limited empirical evidence examining the coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language simultaneously among public senior secondary school students in Imo State, Nigeria. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group

influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language among students in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

There seem to be an increasing public outcry of students' poor academic achievement in school system especially the secondary schools. This problem could have many causes and it has educational, social, cultural and psychological dimensions. However, the students' low academic achievement in examinations may be seen as low or weakness of the students' mark under the normal average in a study subject level as a result of a variety of reasons, including those related to the student himself or those related to psycho-social factors. In an ideal situation, students would be motivated to learn, and be positively influenced by their peer group, while also benefiting from a supportive family structure, all of which would contribute to enhanced academic achievement. This conducive environment would foster a love for learning, promote emotional well-being, and enable students to reach their full potential, leading to improved academic performance and overall success.

Academic achievement in English Language among secondary school students has continued to attract scholarly attention because English serves as the official language of instruction in Nigeria. Researchers have identified several psychosocial and environmental factors that influence students' achievement, especially motivation, peer group influence, and family structure.

Motivation is regarded as a major determinant of students' academic success because it stimulates learners' interest, persistence, and participation in classroom activities. Studies have shown that motivated students tend to perform better in English Language than less motivated students. For instance, Oladunjoye and Idowu (2022) found a significant positive relationship between students' motivation and achievement in English Language among secondary school students in Ogun State. The study concluded that motivation enhances active classroom engagement and improves academic performance. Similarly, Wariyo (2020) reported that second-language motivation significantly affected students' achievement in English Language.

Peer group influence has also been identified as an important factor affecting students' academic achievement. Peer groups can positively or negatively shape students' attitudes toward learning, study habits, and academic aspirations. Bassey (2020) revealed that peer group influence significantly affected students' academic performance in English Language in Cross River State. The study emphasized that association with academically oriented peers improves students' achievement. Likewise, Oyetade, Beckley, and Oredein (2020) found a significant relationship between peer group influence and students' motivation toward learning among secondary school students in Ibadan. In another study, Oladeji (2021) reported that peer influence significantly predicted students' academic performance in secondary schools in Oyo State.

Family structure is another important variable associated with students' academic achievement. Family structure includes the composition and organization of the home such as monogamous, polygamous, single-parent, or extended family systems. Studies indicate that stable and supportive family environments positively influence students' learning outcomes. Adeyeye (2023) found that family structure significantly influenced students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Oyo State, especially through parental support, emotional stability, and economic provision. Similarly, Anyamene and Odo (2025) reported that parenting styles and family communication patterns significantly predicted students' achievement in English Language in Enugu State. Furthermore, Umar (2026) observed that parental support and socio-economic status significantly influenced students' achievement in English Language, although family size alone showed no significant effect.

Overall, the reviewed studies indicate that motivation, peer group influence, and family structure are important correlates of students' achievement in English Language. However, many previous studies examined these variables separately. Therefore, the present study seeks to investigate the coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language among public senior secondary school students in Imo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This research question was posed to guide the study;

1. What is the coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language?

Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis were formulated and tested at a 0.05 level of significance;

H₀₁: There is no significant coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a correlational design involving multiple linear methods. The population of the study is 94,963 students in all the 296 public senior secondary schools in Imo State. The researcher drew a sample of 398 students from 18 selected secondary schools. The sample size was derived using Taro Yamane formula. Purposive and simple random sampling and proportionate sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Rating scale and achievement test are the instruments constructed by the researcher for collection of data. Rating scale and Achievement Test were the instruments constructed by the researcher for collection of data from the respondents. The first instrument was a rating scale titled "Psychosocial Factors Scale" (PFS) with 40 items used to measure the extent of students' motivation, peer group, influence, and family structure. The rating scales were weighted using the 4-point rating type scale of Very High Extent (VHE), 4 points, High Extent (HE), 3 points, Low Extent (LE), 2 points and Very Low Extent (VLE), 1 point. The rating scales are in cluster form (A-E) to elicit information from the respondents. Cluster A contains 9 items on motivation factor; Cluster B contains 8 items on peer pressure and Cluster C contains 7 items on family structure

The second instrument is an achievement test titled: English Language Achievement Test (ELAT) prepared by the researcher. The essence of the ELAT instrument was to measure students' achievement in English Language. ELAT is a structured 40 multiple choice questions with four options lettered A – D, one of which is the correct answer, each item was scored as one point. A table of specification was constructed in the allocation of questions (at the required level of cognition) with their corresponding marks. The items covered selected content areas or topics in English Language related contents of the senior secondary school curriculum.

The instruments were validated by five research specialists. Reliability coefficients of 0.81 for PFS and 0.88 for ELAT were obtained using Cronbach Alpha and Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR-20) respectively. The researcher with the aid of three trained research assistants administered the instrument and adopted on-the-spot collection which assured 100 per cent retrieval of the instruments. The researcher used Pearson Product Moment correlation matrix statistics to answer the research questions while Multiple Regression statistics of multiple correlation and ANOVA were used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

What is the coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language?

Research Question 1

Coefficient of Relationship among Motivation, Peer Group Influence, Family Structure and Students' Achievement in English Language

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Matrix Showing the Relationship among the Variables

Variables	Motivation	Peer Group Influence	Family Structure	Students' Achievement
Motivation	1.000	.462	.381	.618
Peer Group Influence	.462	1.000	.344	.531
Family Structure	.381	.344	1.000	.487
Students' Achievement	.618	.531	.487	1.000

N=398

Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result in Table 1 revealed that motivation has a strong positive relationship with students' achievement in English Language ($r = .618$). This implies that increased motivation among students tends to improve their academic achievement in English Language.

The table also showed that peer group influence has a moderate positive relationship with students' achievement ($r = .531$), indicating that positive peer interactions and associations contribute meaningfully to students' academic performance.

Similarly, family structure showed a moderate positive relationship with students' achievement in English Language ($r = .487$). This suggests that students from stable and supportive family structures are more likely to perform better academically.

Overall, the findings indicate that motivation, peer group influence, and family structure are significantly related to students' achievement in English Language.

Test of Hypothesis

Ho1:

There is no significant coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language.

Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis on the Relationship among Motivation, Peer Group Influence, Family Structure and Students' Achievement in English Language

Model Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	Sig.
Constant	12.418	2.114	—	5.874	.000
Motivation	.542	.061	.486	8.885	.000
Peer Group Influence	.317	.058	.291	5.466	.000
Family Structure	.284	.067	.223	4.239	.001

Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
.731	.534	.529	4.812

Table 3: ANOVA Table

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	10524.613	3	3508.204	151.472	.000
Residual	9128.447	394	23.169	—	—
Total	19653.060	397	—	—	—

Decision

Since the significance value (.000) is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis (Ho1) is rejected.

The result of the regression analysis showed that motivation, peer group influence, and family structure jointly have a significant relationship with students' achievement in English Language among public senior secondary school students in Imo State.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = .534$) indicates that approximately 53.4% of the variation in students' achievement in English Language can be explained by the combined influence of motivation, peer group influence, and family structure, while the remaining 46.6% may be attributed to other variables not included in the study.

The F-ratio of 151.472 with a probability value of .000 confirms that the relationship is statistically significant.

Among the predictors, motivation had the highest contribution ($\beta = .486$), followed by peer group influence ($\beta = .291$) and family structure ($\beta = .223$). This means that motivation is the strongest predictor of students' achievement in English Language.

Findings of the study

Motivation has a significant positive relationship with students' achievement in English Language. Highly motivated students usually demonstrate better academic performance.

1. Peer group influence significantly affects students' academic achievement. Positive peer association enhances learning habits and academic success, while negative peer influence reduces achievement.
2. Family structure significantly influences students' academic achievement through parental support, emotional stability, and home environment.
3. Parental involvement and socio-economic support positively contribute to students' achievement in English Language.

DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that motivation has a significant positive relationship with students' achievement in English Language. The result implies that students who are academically motivated tend to demonstrate greater commitment, persistence, concentration, and participation in learning activities, which ultimately enhance their academic achievement. Students with high motivation levels are more likely to develop

positive attitudes toward learning and perform better in English Language examinations. This finding is in agreement with Shao et al. (2024), who reported that learning motivation significantly predicts students' academic engagement and academic achievement among secondary school students. Similarly, Costa et al. (2024) found that motivation remains one of the strongest predictors of academic success across different educational levels.

The study further revealed that peer group influence significantly relates to students' achievement in English Language. This finding suggests that students are influenced by the behaviours, attitudes, and academic orientations of their peers. Students who associate with academically focused peers are more likely to engage in productive study habits, collaborative learning, and positive academic competition, thereby improving their performance. On the other hand, negative peer influence may expose students to poor academic behaviours and distractions. This finding corroborates the study of Bassey (2020), which found that peer group influence significantly affects secondary school students' academic performance in English Language. The finding also aligns with the study of Shao et al. (2024), which established that positive peer relationships enhance students' learning motivation and engagement, thereby improving academic outcomes.

The findings also showed that family structure significantly relates to students' achievement in English Language. The implication is that students from stable and supportive family backgrounds are more likely to receive adequate emotional, financial, and academic support necessary for improved educational outcomes. Family structure contributes to students' discipline, supervision, psychological wellbeing, and access to educational resources, all of which influence academic achievement. This finding agrees with Adeyeye (2023), who reported that family structure significantly influences students' academic achievement in secondary schools. Similarly, Nwanwukwu and Asiyai (2024) observed that family background and parental support significantly affect students' academic performance and learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the study revealed that motivation, peer group influence, and family structure jointly have a significant relationship with students' achievement in English Language. This indicates that psychosocial variables collectively play important roles in determining students' academic success. The implication is that students' achievement can be improved when parents, teachers, school counsellors, and educational stakeholders work together to create supportive academic and social environments that enhance students' motivation and positive peer interaction. This finding supports the position of Costa et al. (2024), who emphasized that academic achievement is multidimensional and influenced by both personal and environmental factors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study on the coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language among public senior secondary school students in Imo State, the following recommendations are made:

1. School administrators and teachers should develop strategies that will enhance students' academic motivation through encouragement, rewards, counseling services, and learner-centered instructional methods.
2. Parents should create supportive home environments that encourage effective study habits, regular supervision of academic activities, and positive communication with their children.
3. Guidance counselors should organize seminars and orientation programmes to educate students on the effects of positive and negative peer group influence on academic achievement.
4. Teachers should encourage collaborative academic activities such as group discussions, peer tutoring, and study groups that promote positive peer interaction and academic excellence.
5. Government and educational stakeholders should provide adequate learning facilities, instructional materials, and conducive school environments that can improve students' interest and achievement in English Language.

6. Parents from different family structures should be encouraged to provide equal emotional, financial, and academic support to their children irrespective of family background.
7. School counselors should identify students experiencing motivational or family-related challenges and provide necessary psychological and academic support services.
8. Educational policymakers should formulate programmes aimed at strengthening parental involvement in students' academic activities, especially in public secondary schools.

Suggestions for Further Studies

1. Similar studies should be conducted in private secondary schools to determine whether the relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and achievement differs from that of public schools.
2. Further studies should examine additional variables such as socio-economic status, school environment, self-esteem, and teacher effectiveness as predictors of students' achievement in English Language.
3. A comparative study could be carried out between urban and rural secondary schools in Imo State to determine variations in the influence of motivation, peer group influence, and family structure on achievement.
4. Future researchers may replicate the study in other states or geopolitical zones in Nigeria to enhance generalization of findings.
5. Longitudinal studies should be conducted to determine how motivation, peer influence, and family structure affect students' academic achievement over time.
6. Researchers may also investigate the influence of digital peer interaction and social media usage on students' achievement in English Language.
7. Further studies could employ experimental or mixed-method approaches to obtain deeper insights into the relationship among the study variables.
8. Similar research may be conducted at other educational levels such as primary schools and tertiary institutions to compare outcomes across levels of education.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the coefficient of relationship among motivation, peer group influence, family structure, and students' achievement in English Language among students in public senior secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that students' academic achievement in English Language is significantly influenced by both personal and environmental factors. Motivation was found to have a positive relationship with students' achievement, indicating that students who are highly motivated tend to perform better academically. Similarly, peer group influence showed a significant relationship with achievement, suggesting that association with academically oriented peers contributes positively to students' learning outcomes.

The study also established that family structure plays an important role in students' academic performance. Students from stable and supportive family backgrounds demonstrated better achievement in English Language compared to those from less supportive family settings. Furthermore, the combined influence of motivation, peer group influence, and family structure significantly predicted students' achievement in English Language.

Based on these findings, the study concludes that academic achievement in English Language cannot be determined by intellectual ability alone, but is also shaped by motivational factors, peer relationships, and family background. Therefore, improving students' academic performance requires collaborative efforts from teachers,

parents, school administrators, counsellors, and policymakers in creating supportive learning environments that enhance students' motivation, encourage positive peer associations, and strengthen family support systems.

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