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**PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON SOCIAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE STUDENTS  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN POLICE CHILDRENS SCHOOL IN RIVERS STATE**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined the perception of school teachers on social factors and academic performance among students of Police Children Schools in Rivers State. The study adopted the descriptive design. A sample of 175 teachers were sampled in the Schools (via Police Children School 1, Police Children School 2, and Police Comprehensive Secondary School), using a 42 item validated instrument titled "Teachers Perception of Social Factors and Students Academic Performance Inventory " (TPSFSAPI) to elicit data. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions (with a criterion mean cut off of 2.5), while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that: school teachers' perception of: family ( $F_{12, 148}=8.054, p<05$ ), socioeconomic status ( $F_{12, 148}=4.942, p<05$ ), culture ( $F_{12, 148}=4.206, p<05$ ), peer pressure ( $F_{12, 148}=6.747, p<05$ ), and school climate ( $F_{12, 148}=1.975, p<05$ ) influenced students' academic performance. The study recommended among others that: the family endeavours to train, discipline, and empower their children/wards' with necessary skills that will shape their learning experiences, and increase their academic performance. Alongside, teachers are to set machinery in motion that will enable them help students improve their reading culture, and academic performance, rather than gaining prowess in violence that disrupts their schooling.*

**Introduction**

Education in every country is viewed as the best legacy any government can afford its citizens; as it is the pivot to creating human capital which leads to national development. It is viewed as social responsibility that is offered to the citizens of a country all over the world. It is a very important aspect of life that is geared towards building an individual who in turn becomes productive to the society at large.

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School as an agent of socialization is managed by school administrators and teachers, they are responsible for the implementation of educational programs, this is done with the aim of providing students with the opportunity to develop, articulate and explore their three domains of learning via: cognitive, psychomotor and affective, the exploration of these domains are aimed at encouraging academic performance and resourcefulness, this in turn comes to play in the formation of Police children schools in Nigeria, with the objectives of raising children of Police Officers notwithstanding their financial status and continuous transfers of their parents. The national educational sector relies on the dedication of all in the society for its effective functioning, as such all the stake holders involved in the functioning of the school comprising of the learners, parents, guardians, staff, school administrators community heads, religious heads, etc. must all come together and embrace innovations in the administration of an effective and efficient educational system.

Teachers play the most important roles in facilitating the process of teaching and learning which also entails determining the quality of education service delivery, they are the supporting pillars and the force towards the realization of every nation's educational goals and objectives. This therefore follows that the perceptions of teachers concerning academic performance is very pertinent and can be viewed as a tool of academic achievement. Teacher's perception entails the thoughts or mental images that a teacher has about students, these perceptions are shaped by their background knowledge and life experiences individually and with the students, these experiences might involve their family history, tradition, education, work, culture, or community, etc.

Social factors according to Daminabo (2016) refer to the network of relationships among individuals that are found within our environment which affect the learning process of the learner positively or negatively within the society. These social factors emanate as a result of social interaction within and outside the boundaries of the school system that tend to inhibit or enhance the educational advancement of the child, pupils or students in the classroom environment.

In the same vein O' Brennan, Bradshaw and Furlong (2014) opine that social factors relate to the facts and experiences that influence individuals, personality, attitudes and lifestyle. Social factors are also seen as an intellectual tool that is generally attributed to contribute to the success of enhanced mental reasoning, learning and education of students.

According to Bloom and Owens (2011) defined social factors as things that affect the lifestyle, religion, family, beliefs, etc. of people which are also liable to changes overtime. For the purpose of this study, social factors will specifically focus on family factors, socioeconomic factors, cultural factors, peer pressure factors and school climate. Furthermore, they argued that acquiring intellectual tools of the culture increases learners or students' articulation, memory, attention and the capacity to make associations based on contiguity and result to the increased level of socialization; which is one of the most important tasks to an educational system.

In other words, socio-cultural theories argue that individuals cannot be considered in isolation from their social and historical context and therefore it is necessary to look at what shapes the developments occurring at a given time in the society (Kaufman, Guerra and Platt, 2006). Olaleye and Oluremi (2013) assert that two principal agencies of socialization are the

family and school and they are powerful instruments in shaping children's learning experiences and school performances. However, the influence of these agencies is constrained by the wider social systems or factors (like gender, age, culture, state, etc.) which are embedded in the individuals (i.e. administrators, teachers and students) in the education environment. Consequently, there is great diversity in cultural backgrounds, social conditions, family arrangements and school organization/climate which are constantly or periodically subjected or prone to modifications.

In the context of this study, teachers are conceptualized as the link between the students' and academic performance and those who collaborate and determine schooling outcomes. While social factors are considered as the techniques, skills, strategies or measures which teachers and administrators perceive to be possessed by students who ought to benefit from classroom instructions and the entire educational processes. It is important to state that it is when students accept, inculcate and internalize these reforms and social change process, that facilitation towards their acquisition of learning experiences and skills will be achieved. It has to be applied to enhance the interaction, coexistence and socialization that potently support the system. It therefore increases teachers and students' interest, practices and creates school climate that encourages learning and knowledge which aids student performance. This implies that certain aspects of school programmes and systems, such as positive school climate, may require a redesign to make accommodations for effective collaboration.

This is important considering the fact there are a lot of factors that affect and offsets the student based on gender, age, religion, etc., and which can trigger personal crisis that eventually results in loss of interest in schooling, truancy, disillusionment, school withdrawal and poor academic performance. It is in that vein that a study of this is considered imperative to determine the perception of teachers on social factors that influence students' academic performance with special focus on police children schools in Rivers state

### **Concept of Teacher Perception**

Amale (2010) defined a teacher as "a person who is specially trained in knowledge, skills, attitude and values, in a formal institution to teach or impact same to learners in the most acceptable ways". He viewed the teacher as a person of two worlds; firstly as a subject specialist, one with genuine professional interest in the learning and teaching of his subject and as an educator with the skill of teaching his subject. In another view, Akpochofo in Peretomode (1992) defined a teacher as someone who has gone through a level of professional training and is both certified and actually teaching in an institution.

The role of teachers in the development of any nation and most especially in the building up of future leaders and intellectuals is simply immeasurable. They are the actual human resources that directly interact with the students in the schools, as well as the point of action between the parents and the school community. According to Ibadin (2010), a teacher plays an indispensable role in the process of teaching and learning, as such the teacher is the change agent that harnesses other resources for production. In explaining the roles of a teacher, Havinghurst and Newgarten in Ensley (2015) explained that a teacher plays six sub roles namely; a disciplinarian, a mediator of learning, a parent substitute, a judge, a confidant and a surrogate of middle class morality.

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Teachers' perceptions are the thoughts or mental images that teachers have regarding contemporary controversial issues in the classes, which are shaped by their background knowledge and life experience. Social constructivists will argue that teachers' cultural assumptions and social beliefs have influenced their practice and, thus, the ability of their students.

The reviewed literature focused on the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and the Sociological Model. Going by these theories the teacher is a fundamental aspect of the impartation of knowledge and a tool to academic performance. In that vein the perception of the teacher on possible social factors that influence academic performance may actually be a solution to a future success.

### **Purpose of the Study**

It is the desire of this study to determine the perception of teachers' on social factors such as family, culture, peer pressure and school climate and their influence on students' academic performance in Police children schools in Rivers State.

In view of the objectives of the formation of Police schools that is geared towards providing qualitative education to the children of officers and men of the police Force that are poorly paid and on constant transfer thereby disrupting the education of their wards, it becomes pertinent that from time to time an evaluation of the schools are taken to ensure that quality education is rendered with students' academic performance in view. It is also important to constantly evaluate the social factors affecting the students, taking into consideration that it has a great impact on academic performance especially with the officers of the Police force classified under the low and medium class earners. The study is therefore hinged on determining the perception of school teachers on social factors that influence students' academic performance in Police Children schools in Rivers State.

The purpose of the study in specific terms is to:

1. Determine how the perception of teachers on family factors influences students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.
2. Determine how the perception of teachers on socio-economic factors influences students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions will guide the study.

1. How does perception of teachers on family influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State?
2. How does the perception of school teachers on socioeconomic status influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.04 level of significance;

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference of School teachers' perception of family on students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.

There is no significant difference of School teachers'- perception of socioeconomic status on students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Design**

The study adopted the descriptive research design. The target population of study comprised of Port Harcourt Local Government Area. The population of the study was made up of 210 teachers in the three Police children schools in Port Harcourt. Primary source of data was mainly from the responses of the respondents (i.e. teachers) through the research instrument administered to them. On the other hand, the secondary data source was obtained from information contained in textbooks, journals, documents/publications, internet materials, newspapers, and magazines etc. A sample of 175 respondents participated in the study. The sampling was in two-folds. In the first phase, purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of all the three (3) Police Schools (via Police Children School 1, Police Children School 2, and Police Comprehensive Secondary School) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Secondly and finally, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in the selection of respondents or teachers' from each of the Police Children Schools in Rivers State. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled "Teachers Perception of Social Factors and Students Academic Performance Inventory" (TPSFSAPI). The content validity of the study was carried out by the TPSFSAPI instrument.

The Cronbach Alpha ( $r_a$ ) method was used to ascertain or determine the reliability internal consistency of the TPSFSAPI instrument.

Out of the 175 copies of the TPSFSAPI instrument administered to the respondents or teachers, only 161 copies (representing 92% return rate) were validly retrieved and used for the analysis. Reliability test, the Cronbach Alpha method was used to obtain the reliability coefficients of 0.758 for the TPSFSAPI instrument, which necessitated the use of the instrument for the study.

The collected data was coded based on the adopted 4-point rating scale of SA = 4 points, A = 3 points, D = 2 points and SD = 1 point for the TPSFSAPI instrument) and analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions (with a criterion mean cutoff of 2.5), while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

**Research Question 1:** How does perception of teachers on family influence Students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State?

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the ways School Teachers Perceive Family can Influence Students' Academic Performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.**

S/N	The way school teachers perceive family can influence students' academic performance include:	Mean	SD	Decision
1	The family shapes children/students' learning experiences	3.11	.96	Agree
2	Provides the materials, books, etc. that increases students interest in schooling	2.99	.78	Agree
3	Monitors students' school work or assignment and assist where possible	2.98	.94	Agree
4	Possess the necessary skills and resources for assisting students learn and perform in their school work	3.01	.76	Agree
5	Students trained by single parent family often lack the training, resources and discipline essential for their schooling success	2.78	.77	Agree
6	Students from both parents' family often have the training, resources and discipline needed for school performance	3.01	.88	Agree
7	Today's family is failing in providing the training, resources and discipline that enhance students' school performance	3.03	.68	<b>Agree</b>
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.99</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Agree = >2.50 while Disagree = < 2.50**

Table 1 shows the mean rating and standard deviation on the ways school teachers perceive family can influence students' academic performance in Police Schools in Rivers State.

It further shows that the ways school teachers perceive family can influence students' academic performance in Police Schools in Rivers State includes: the family shapes children/students' learning experiences with a mean of 3.11 in item 1 and today's family are failing in providing the training, resources and discipline that enhance students' school performance with a mean of 3.03 in item 7, possess the necessary skills and resources for assisting students learn and perform in their school work in item 4, and students from both parents' family often have the training, resources and discipline needed for school performance in item 6 each with a mean of 3.01, provides the materials, books, etc. that increases students interest in schooling with a mean of 2.99 in item 2, monitors students' school work or assignment and assist where possible with a mean of 2.98 in item 3, while the least was students trained by single parent family often lack the training, resources and discipline essential for their schooling success with a mean of 2.78 in item 5. Furthermore, the grand mean score of 2.99 therefore, indicates that school teachers perceive that the family can influence students' academic performance in Police Schools in Rivers State.

**Research Question 2:** How does the perception of school teachers on socio economic status influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State?

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation on the ways School Teachers Perceive Socioeconomic Status can Influence Students' Academic Performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.**

S/N	The way school teachers perceive socioeconomic status can influence students' academic performance include:	Mean	SD	Decision
8	Students from rich homes are provided with materials, books, etc. that increases their school interest	3.23	.71	Agree
9	Students from average homes sometimes are provided with materials, books, etc. that increases students school interest	3.39	.73	Agree
10	Students from poor homes always lack materials, books, etc. that should increase students school interest	2.99	.87	Agree
11	The socioeconomic status of the family shapes students' learning experiences	3.11	.90	Agree
12	The socioeconomic status of the family determines the school performance of students'	2.51	1.11	Agree
13	The socioeconomic status of the family determines the student possession of high moral standard and discipline	3.06	.86	Agree
14	The socioeconomic status of the family leads to students engagement in indiscipline and social vices	3.14	.76	Agree
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>3.06</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>Agree</b>

**Agree = >2.50 while Disagree = < 2.50.**

Table 2 shows the mean rating and standard deviation on the ways school teachers perceive socioeconomic status can influence students' academic performance in Police Schools in Rivers State. It further shows that the ways school teachers perceive socioeconomic status can influence students' academic performance in Police Schools in Rivers State includes: students from average homes sometimes are provided with materials, books, etc. that increases students school interest with a mean of 3.39 in item 9, students from rich homes are provided with materials, books, etc. that increases their school interest with a mean of 3.23 in item 8, the socioeconomic status of the family leads to students engagement in indiscipline and social vices with a mean of 3.14 in item 14, the socioeconomic status of the family shapes students' learning experiences with a mean of 3.11 in item 11, the socioeconomic status of the family determines the student possession of high moral standard and discipline with a mean of 3.06 in item 13, students from poor homes always lack materials, books, etc. that should increase students school interest with a mean of 2.99 in item 10, while the least was the socioeconomic status of the family determines the school performance of students' with a mean of 2.51 in item 12. Furthermore, the grand mean score of 3.06 therefore, indicates that school teachers perceive that the socioeconomic status can influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.

### Discussion of Findings

The result in Table 1 revealed a grand mean score of 2.99 which indicated that: the family shapes children/students' learning experiences, today's family is failing in providing the training, resources and discipline that enhance students' school performance, possess the

necessary skills and resources for assisting students learn and perform in their school work, students from both parents' family often have the training, resources and discipline needed for school performance, provides the materials, books, etc. that increases students interest in schooling, monitors students' school work or assignment and assist where possible, and students trained by single parent family often lack the training, resources and discipline essential for their schooling success were the ways school teachers perceive family can influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.

The result in Table 2 revealed a high grand mean score of 3.06 which indicated that: students from average homes sometimes are provided with materials, books, etc. that increases students school interest, students from rich homes are provided with materials, books, etc. that increases their school interest, the socioeconomic status of the family leads to students engagement in indiscipline and social vices, the socioeconomic status of the family shapes students' learning experiences, the socioeconomic status of the family determines the student possession of high moral standard and discipline, students from poor homes always lack materials, books, etc. that should increase students school interest, and the socioeconomic status of the family determines the school performance of students' were the ways school teachers perceive socioeconomic status can influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.

This finding is consistent with earlier findings by Brooks *et al.* (2010) that teachers perceive that socioeconomic status influences the provision of materials, books, etc. that increases students school interest, attendance, and performance of especially students from rich or average homes or families. While the socioeconomic status of students from poor families might cause students engagement in indiscipline and social vices (like bullying, cultism, fighting, etc.) that retards their learning experiences. In view of this, Horner *et al.* (2010) stated that the socioeconomic status of the family determines the student possession of high moral standard, composure, discipline, and mental alertness especially among students from poor homes who always lack materials, books, etc. that should increase students school interest, and academic performance.

### **Summary**

The purpose of the study was to examine perception of school teachers on social factors and academic performance among students of Police Children Schools in Rivers State. To achieve this, research questions and their corresponding hypotheses were postulated to test the study. The independent variable was social factors while the dependent variable was academic performance.

Literature review was carried out under the following headings: conceptual framework, theoretical framework, review of empirical studies, and summary of literature review.

A descriptive survey design was used for the study. A sample size of 175 teachers or respondents were selected using proportional stratified random sampling technique in all the 3 Police Schools (via Police Children School 1, Police Children School 2, and Police Comprehensive Secondary Schools) in Rivers State.

A self-structured 42 item instrument titled "Teachers Perception of Social Factors and Students Academic Performance Inventory" (TPSFSAPI) was designed by the researcher for administration to the 175 teachers in Police Schools. Data obtained from the expert validated



TPSFSAPI instrument were subsequently analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions (with a criterion mean cutoff of 2.5) while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

**The Following Findings were made:**

- i. That the family shapes children/students' learning experiences, today's family is failing in providing the training, resources and discipline that enhance students' school performance, possess the necessary skills and resources for assisting students learn and perform in their school work, students from both parents' family often have the training, resources and discipline needed for school performance, provides the materials, books, etc. that increases students' interest in schooling, monitors students' school work or assignment and assist where possible, and students trained by single parent family often lack the training, resources and discipline essential for their schooling success were the ways school teachers perceive family can influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.
- ii. That students from average homes sometimes are provided with materials, books, etc. that increases students' school interest, students from rich homes are provided with materials, books, etc. that increases their school interest, the socioeconomic status of the family leads to students' engagement in indiscipline and social vices, the socioeconomic status of the family shapes students' learning experiences, the socioeconomic status of the family determines the student's possession of high moral standard and discipline, students from poor homes always lack materials, books, etc. that should increase students' school interest, and the socioeconomic status of the family determines the school performance of students' were the ways school teachers perceive socioeconomic status can influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.
- iii. That well-cultured students are always free from social vices like fighting, cultism, illegal drug use, etc. in the school, culture helps students to have positive character and discipline that enhances their learning, enables students to possess positive values, cultural values instilled in students helps them to respect their teachers and obey all school rules and regulations, poor-cultured students are always involved in social vices like fighting, cultism, illegal drug use, etc. in the school, culture instills in students high moral standards, and culture generally shapes students' learning and school performance were the ways school teachers perceive culture can influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.
- iv. That teachers punish students who are in the company of peers who are disobedient to school rules and regulations, some students influence their fellow students to engage in violence and break school rules and regulations, some students influence their fellow students to improve their reading culture, students with too many friends are always engaged in school violence, and teachers regularly monitor what students and their peers are doing in the class were the ways school teachers perceive peer pressure can influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.
- v. That positive school climate influences the extent of utilization of school and classroom resources like laboratory, workshop, etc., school climate provides the platform for molding students' character and attitude for enhanced academic performance, the school

encourages programmes or activities that improves students school interest and performance, helps to foster unity among teachers and students, schools helps to model positive interpersonal behaviour that helps students to exhibit positive conducts and values in the school, enables teachers' to care and support students learning and academic performance, and enhances cooperation among teachers and students were the ways school teachers perceive school climate can influence students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State.

### **Conclusion**

The study revealed that teachers' perception of the family, socioeconomic status, culture, peer pressure, and school climate influenced students' academic performance in Police Children Schools in Rivers State. This helped to shape children/students' (whether of high, average or low socioeconomic status) learning experiences, enhance their training, acquire positive values, character, behaviour, and high moral standards and discipline. That enables them to -effectively obey school rules and regulations, take independent decisions without being prevailed by peers, including skillfully using the resources, materials and books according to their teachers' instruction to facilitate their learning, school interest, and academic performance.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. The family should endeavour to train, discipline, and empower their children/students' with necessary skills that will shape their learning experiences, and increase their academic performance.
2. The family (i.e. parents) should provide students' with the required materials, books, resources etc. that increases students interest in schooling, and academic performance.
3. Parents irrespective of their socioeconomic status (high, average or low) should support their children's learning by providing the resources that will help them acquire high moral standards and discipline that will shape or enhance students' learning experiences.

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