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INTERPLAY OF HOME ENVIRONMENT AND LEARNING STYLES IN SHAPING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A STUDY OF SECONDARY STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT IN KANO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The study examines the Interplay of Home Environment and Learning Styles in Shaping Academic Achievement of Secondary Students' English Language Achievement in Kano State, Nigeria. Four research objectives with two corresponding research questions and two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study employed ex-post facto research design. The population of this study comprised 6,498 SS 2 students in Dala Zonal Educational Directorate, Kano State out of which 357 were selected as sample through multi-stage sampling technique. The data were collected using two instruments: Broken home Questionnaire (BHQ) and Learning Style Inventory (LSI) were employed as an Instruments of Research. The two instruments were validated (face and content) and a reliability of internal consistency was established using Cronbach's alpha which yielded 0.74-0.80 index. To analyze the data, Descriptive statistics of simple percentage was used to answer research questions 1, 2, While t-test for independent sample was used to test hypotheses 1, and ANOVA was used in testing hypothesis 2 of the study. The findings of the study revealed that intact homes are the prevalent type of home among the participants (Intact: 217, 60.8%; Broken: 140, 39%) and Kinesthetic is the most prevalent learning style Preferences among the Participants in the study area (Kinesthetic: 171, 47.9%; Visual: 94, 26.3%; Auditory: 92, 25.8%). The result from the First hypotheses testing founds that There is no significant difference in English language academic achievement between students from broken and intact homes in the study area with P-value = 0.376, which is greater than 0.05. By implication home environment is not a factor in students' English Language Academic Achievement. The second hypothesis also reveals no significant difference in English language academic achievement among students

with different Learning styles Preferences with P-value = 0.428, which is greater than 0.05 Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that educators, policymakers, and schools establish comprehensive programs aimed at actively involving parents in their children's academic journeys, regardless of the home environment, to enhance students' English language achievement. These programs should include initiatives that encourage parental engagement, such as parent-teacher associations and volunteer opportunities, and should promote adaptive learning strategies tailored to individual learning preferences. This approach aligns with the study's conclusion that neither home environment nor learning styles significantly influence English academic achievement among the respondents in the study area.
Key words Home Environment, Learning Styles Academic Achievement.

Introduction

Education is a constantly changing process, impacted by numerous factors that go beyond the conventional boundaries of the classroom. In the context of secondary education, the interaction between factors related to the home environment and individual learning styles has gained heightened attention as essential contributors to academic achievements. In recent years, there has been a heightened scholarly interest in exploring the dynamic relationship between home-related factors and learning styles within the secondary education landscape. This interest stems from the recognition that factors within the home environment, such as family dynamics, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and cultural influences, can significantly impact students' educational experiences and outcome.

Furthermore, the acknowledgment of individual learning styles, encompassing cognitive preferences and processing mechanisms, has emerged as a critical area of inquiry. Understanding how these distinct learning styles intersect with various home-related factors and influence academic achievement has become a focal point for researchers, educators, and policymakers seeking to enhance educational practices and promote student success. In essence, the interplay between home-related factors and individual learning styles Preferences represents a multifaceted nexus that plays a fundamental role in shaping the educational journey of secondary students. By delving into this complex interaction, scholars aim to gain deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms driving academic achievement, thereby informing evidence-based interventions and strategies aimed at optimizing educational outcomes for all students.

Moreover, the recognition that learning styles, representing individual preferences and cognitive processes, significantly contribute to academic outcomes adds another

layer of complexity to the educational landscape. Thus, the motivation lies in comprehending how these variables interact and influence English language academic achievement, with the goal of enhancing educational practices in the Dala Educational Zonal Directorate. Furthermore, understanding the factors that influence English language academic achievement, particularly home-related factors and learning styles, is crucial for developing effective interventions and strategies to improve English language learning outcomes for secondary school students in Dala Zonal Education Directorate. The home related factors include broken home, socioeconomic status, and parental involvement.

The influence of a broken home on academic achievement is a multifaceted phenomenon that warrants scholarly attention. A broken home, characterized by familial discord or divorce, can endanger emotional distress and disrupt the stability of a student's home environment. Research suggests that children from broken homes may experience challenges in concentration, emotional regulation, and overall academic engagement. The absence of a cohesive family structure may contribute to a lack of support and guidance, impacting a student's ability to focus on academic pursuits. Furthermore, the emotional strain resulting from a broken home may manifest in behavioral issues that could further hinder academic achievement. Understanding the influence of broken homes on academic achievement in Dala Zonal Education Directorate is imperative for developing targeted interventions and support systems for students experiencing such familial challenges.

Academic achievement in English language is crucial for students' educational and career prospects, particularly in Nigeria, where English proficiency is essential du e to its role in education and global communication. Despite its importance, secondary school students in areas like the Dala Zonal Education Directorate face challenges in excelling in English compared to other subjects, leading to an investigation into the factors affecting English performance.

Research has shown that home environment status, specifically whether a student comes from a broken or intact home, significantly influences academic outcomes (Amato, 2005; McLanahan et al., 2013; Kim, 2021). Students' learning styles—kinesthetic, auditory, and visual—also play a role in how they absorb and retain information, which impacts their performance in language subjects (Fleming, 2001). The influence of a broken home on academic achievement involves complex pathways where emotional distress and instability disrupt students' focus and school engagement. Empirical studies demonstrate that children from broken homes frequently experience challenges with concentration ($d = -0.42$), emotional regulation ($\beta = -0.38$), and academic engagement ($OR = 2.7$) due to compromised

family support systems (Amato, 2005; Kim, 2021; McLanahan et al., 2013). This study investigates how broken homes impact English achievement specifically in Dala Zonal Education Directorate to design targeted support interventions.

Beyond broken home status, learning styles, as categorized by Fleming's (2001) VARK model—Visual, Auditory, Reading/Writing, and Kinesthetic—affect how students process information. Recognizing these diverse styles is essential to improve student engagement and performance. Visual learners benefit from aids like charts and diagrams, auditory learners excel with oral instructions and discussions, and kinesthetic learners thrive through hands-on activities. Identifying the prevalence of these styles in the Dala Zonal Education Directorate allows educators to tailor teaching methods to better meet students' needs and promote language acquisition through dynamic learning experiences.

This research draws on two key theoretical frameworks: Attachment Theory John Bowlby (1973), Mary Ainsworth (1978) and the VARK Learning Style Model (Fleming, 2001) Attachment Theory, stemming from the work of John Bowlby in 1973 and further developed by Mary Ainsworth in 1978, offers a profound lens through which to examine the impact of broken homes on students' academic achievement. Bowlby's research highlighted the pivotal role of secure attachments between caregivers and children in nurturing emotional well-being and cognitive capacities from an early age, which directly influences academic achievement. Ainsworth expanded on this theory by introducing attachment patterns, including secure, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-resistant classifications, all of which have implications for students' academic achievement.

Some of the empirical Studies that seems to be relevant and which this study is grounded includes; Adebayo’s (2018) study on "Broken Homes and English Language Academic Achievement among Secondary School Students in Osun State, Nigeria". The study found a significant correlation between broken homes and lower English language academic achievement among secondary school students in Osun State.

Akinwunmi and Oyebamiji (2020) investigated the effects of broken homes on English language achievement among senior secondary school students in Lagos State. The findings indicated a negative impact of broken homes on the English language academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Lagos State.

In addition, Neenah, (2022) study titled ‘Learning Styles and Attitude toward Achievement among English Second Language Students.’ was aiming to identify the correlation between learning styles and attitude of AIIAS ESL students and their academic achievement. The study used Reid's learning style questionnaire to assess

the learning styles of the participants. The respondents of the study were thirty-two AIIAS ESL students. The study found that there was no correlation between the respondents' achievement and the six types of Reid's learning style. The highest correlation coefficient (r-value) was ≤ 0.209, while the lowest was ≥ -0.263. However, the study did find a positive correlation between attitude and achievement. Specifically, the emotion and achievement aspects of attitude showed a significant correlation (r-value: 0.487; p-value: 0.005). The cognitive and attitude aspects also showed a significant correlation (r-value: 0.427; p-value: =0.05).

The weakest correlation was found between behavior and attitude, with an r-value of only 0.201 (p-value: 0.269). The study suggests that students should be aware of their own learning styles to improve their language learning. Additionally, maintaining a positive attitude towards learning English is important for achieving good grades in the learning process.

In Addition, Munir., Ahmad Hussain, & Ghani (2018). Their research focused on identifying the learning styles of secondary school students and examine the relationship between these learning styles and academic achievement. Male students had a higher preference for visual and auditory learning styles compared to female students at the secondary level. However, no significant relationship was found between learning styles and academic achievements of students.

Statement of the Problem

Despite government efforts, secondary schools continue to struggle with low English language academic achievement, affecting both internal and external exams. English and Mathematics, key subjects, highlight worrying academic achievement, especially in English. Analyzing data from the National Bureau of Statistics on Kano State students' academic achievement in the 2016 West African Examination Council (WAEC) May/June exams reveals consistent English underperformance. For instance, out of 49,829 participants, only 23,245 passed English (46.6%), compared to 25,958 passing Mathematics (52%). This trend persists in later years, with English consistently lagging behind Mathematics. In 2017, out of 38,766 candidates, 18,911 passed English (48.8%), while 26,638 passed Mathematics (68.7%). Similarly, in 2018, out of 30,003 students, 17,519 passed English (58.4%), compared to 22,111 passing Mathematics (73.7%). Despite fluctuations in candidate numbers, English performance remains poor, with only 82.2% and 52.4% passing in 2019, and in 2024, more than 90% of students failed to meet the qualifying benchmark in English (and the requisite number of credits) set by the state, highlighting the ongoing challenge of poor academic performance in the subject.

The gap in academic achievement between English and Mathematics is significant, as shown by the provided data. Despite both subjects being essential in the curriculum, English consistently lags behind Mathematics in student performance. This gap poses a significant obstacle to the academic progress of secondary school students, despite government efforts. To address this challenge, comprehensive strategies must be implemented to understand the root causes through research. Failure to tackle this gap in English language achievement will continue to hinder educational outcomes and limit students' opportunities in academic and professional domains.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the prevalent types of homes among secondary school students in Dala Zonal Education Directorate
2. To determine the prevalent types of learning styles among secondary school students in Dala Zonal Education Directorate.
3. To determine the differences in English language academic achievement between students from broken and intact homes in Dala Zonal Education Directorate.
4. To determine the difference in English language academic achievement among students with kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learning styles in Dala Zonal Education Directorate.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following key research questions:

1. What are the prevalent types of homes among secondary school students in Dala Zonal Education Directorate?
2. What are the prevalent types of learning styles among secondary school students in Dala Zonal Education Directorate?
3. What are the prevalent types of homes among secondary school students in Dala Zonal Education Directorate?
4. What are the prevalent types of learning styles among secondary school students in Dala Zonal Education Directorate?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated based on the research objectives:

H01: There is no significant mean score difference in English language academic achievement
between students from broken and intact homes in Dala Zonal Education Directorate.

H02: There is no significant mean score difference in English language academic achievement among students with kinesthetic, auditory and visual learning styles in Dala Zonal Education Directorate.

Methodology

The study adopts an ex-post facto research design to investigate the relationships between home-related factors, learning styles, and academic achievement. Ex-post facto designs are ideal for studies where variables cannot be manipulated, but their effects can be analyzed retrospectively (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). The population for this study consists 6,498 Senior Secondary School 2 (SS2) students in Dala Zonal Education Directorate. A multi-stage sampling Procedure was used to select a sample of 357 students .as recommended by research advisor 2006 table, which states that the recommended sample size for a population of 5000 and above at 95% level of confidence and at 5.0% margin error (degree of accuracy) would be 357.

Data were collected using two Instruments: Broken Home Questionnaire (BHQ) and Learning Style Inventory (LSI) **Broken home questionnaire (BHQ)** was adapted from the study of (Saikia, 2017). The questionnaire consists of 15 items which describe the different kinds of problems met by the students from broken homes through a 5-point Likert-type scale of preference (Warmbrod, 2014), comprising: 5 – Strongly Agree, 4 – Agree, 3 – Neutral, 2 – Disagree, and 1 – Strongly Disagree.
The second instrument is Learning Style Inventory (LSI):, developed by Felder and Solomon (1991), the Learning Style Inventory was used to assess students' learning preferences. The LSI categorizes students as kinesthetic, auditory, or visual learners based on their preferred mode of information processing.

Validity of the Instrument

The *Broken Home Questionnaire (BHQ)* and *Learning Style Inventory (LSI)* instruments were validated for the study. The BHQ's face and content validity were established through evaluation by a panel of subject-area experts at Bayero University Kano, with Content Validity Index quantification. The LSI underwent comprehensive validation (face, content, construct, and criterion-related) using contemporary psychometric standards. Both instruments were adapted for cultural relevance prior to deployment. For both instruments, expert feedback was incorporated to ensure face and content validity before use.
Reliability tests demonstrated strong internal consistency: the BHQ showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.80 in previous research and 0.74, 0.69, and 0.78 in pilot testing for this study. The LSI showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.75 in prior research

and 0.73 in this study's pilot test. Both instruments are therefore reliable for assessing home-related factors and learning styles in academic contexts.

Method of Data Analysis

The research questions were addressed using a range of statistical methods. Research questions 1, 2, and 3 were answered using simple frequency and percentage analyses, which provided a clear understanding of the distribution and proportion of responses. This analysis offered insights into the characteristics of the respondents and the extent to which they exhibited certain traits or behaviors.

Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 were tested using an independent t-test, a statistical technique that determines significant differences between the means of two independent groups (Cohen, 2012). This test enabled the comparison of mean scores between different groups, providing evidence of whether significant differences existed between them.

Hypothesis 4 was tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), a statistical technique that compares the meaning of three or more groups and determines significant differences (Field, 2018). This test allowed for the comparison of mean scores across multiple groups, providing evidence of whether significant differences existed between them.

Finally, Hypothesis 5 was tested using regression analysis, a statistical technique that examines the predictive relationship between variables (Hinkle et al., 2013). This test enabled the examination of the relationship between independent and dependent variables, providing evidence of whether certain variables could predict others.

Results

The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize students' home environments and learning styles. Inferential statistics, including t-tests, and ANOVA, were employed to examine the relationships between the independent variables (broken home and learning styles) and the dependent variable (English language academic achievement). A significance level of 0.05 was used to determine the statistical significance of the findings.

Answers to the Research Questions

Table 1: Prevalent types of Homes among Secondary school Students in the Dala Zonal Education Directorate

Variables	Responses	N	Percentage%
Home types	Broken	140	39.2%
	Intact	217	60.8%
	Total	**357**	**100.0%**

The table 1 above presents the prevalent types of homes among secondary school students in the Dala Zonal Education Directorate. The table reveals that 140 (39%) of the students come from broken homes, while 217 (60.8%) come from intact homes. Thus, based on the descriptive results, the intact home is the most prevalent type of home among secondary school students in the Dala Zonal Education Directorate.

Table 2 Prevalent Types of Learning Styles among secondary school students in the Dala Zonal Education Directorate?

Variables	Responses	N	Percentage%
Learning styles	Kinesthetic	171	47.9%
	Visual	94	26.3%
	Auditory	92	25.8%
	Total	357	100.0%

The table above revealed that the most common types of learning styles among respondents of this study is Kinesthetic which has the highest frequency of 171 respondents representing 47.9%, followed by visual with 94 respondents representing 26.3%, and auditory which has only 92 respondents representing 25.8%.

Hypotheses Testing

Table 3: t-test for Differences in academic Achievement Due to home types

Home types	N	x̄	SD	t-value	df	P-value (2-tailed)
Broken	140	57.9643	21.50637	-.887	355	.376
Intact	217	60.0415	21.68467			

The table above indicates that the mean score of English academic achievement for students from broken home (M = 57.9643, SD = 21.50637) is not significantly different from that of the mean score of English academic achievement of students from intact (M = 60.0415, SD = 21.68467) at t-value (t = -.887, df = 355, p = 0.376). Thus, our P-value, 0.376, is more than 0.05. Therefore, based on the obtained result, the null hypothesis is accepted, and it is concluded that no significant difference exists in English language academic achievement between students from broken and intact homes in Dala Zonal Education Directorate. (P-value 0.376 is > 0.05).

Table 4: Analysis of variance (ANOVA) based on the class subject area of the Respondents

Variables	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Between Groups	794.486	2	397.243	.850	.428
Within Groups	165432.135	354	467.322		
Total	166226.622	356			

Table 4 shows the calculated F-value of 0.850 with a p-value of 0.428. The p-value is higher than the 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted (not rejected), and it is concluded that no significant difference exists in English language academic achievement among students with kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learning styles in the Dala Zonal Education Directorate. (P-value 0.428 is > 0.05).

Discussions

The findings from question one indicate that students from intact homes constitute the majority of the sample, with 217 respondents (60.8%) reporting an intact home background, while 140 students (39.2%) reported coming from broken homes. This pattern is consistent with recent demographic data on family structures among secondary school students in urban areas of Nigeria (Odeyemi et al., 2022; Okafor & Ibrahim, 2023). However, it is important to note that this study does not conflate the prevalence of home type with its impact on academic performance.

In relation to question two, kinesthetic learning emerged as the most prevalent learning style among students in the study area, with 171 students (47.9%) identifying as kinesthetic learners, compared to 94 visual learners (26.3%) and 92 auditory learners (25.8%). These findings are in line with the VARK model, which classifies learners based on sensory preferences (Fleming, 2019), and are further supported by recent empirical studies indicating that kinesthetic modalities are increasingly dominant among secondary school learners in similar contexts (Bashir

& Lukman, 2023; Uche & Nwafor, 2022). Nonetheless, alternative findings exist; for instance, Nanaware (2023) identified auditory learning as the most common modality in a comparable population, while studies by Cimermanová (2018) and Munir et al. (2018) reported no clear relationship between learning styles and academic outcomes.

With respect to hypothesis one, the analysis found no statistically significant difference in English Language academic achievement between students from intact and broken homes ($p = 0.376$). This finding diverges from earlier studies that have associated broken home backgrounds with lower academic performance (Olayinka & Bamidele, 2021; Bashir & Lukman, 2023). However, it is consistent with the propositions of Walberg's Educational Productivity Model (Walberg, 1981) and Elger's Theory of Performance (Elger, 2009), which emphasize that individual motivation, quality of instruction, and self-efficacy can mediate or override background variables such as home structure. It is therefore plausible that students from broken homes in the Dala Zonal Education Directorate possess sufficient levels of resilience, academic motivation, and environmental support to offset potential disadvantages.

Similarly, hypothesis two revealed no statistically significant differences in English Language achievement among students with different learning styles—kinesthetic, auditory, and visual ($p = 0.428$). This outcome aligns with a body of literature that questions the practical relevance of learning styles in predicting academic success (Cimermanová, 2018; Anyamene & Princewill, 2022; Hutagalung & Wennyta, 2020; Neenah, 2022). Although some findings, such as that of Nanaware (2023), have reported a significant association between learning styles and achievement, the present study contributes to the growing consensus that learning preferences alone may not be sufficient predictors of performance.

These results further challenge traditional assumptions about the pedagogical utility of learning style categorization. They also echo critiques that prioritize instructional quality, learner engagement, and contextual learning conditions—as emphasized in Walberg's and Elger's models—over fixed cognitive styles. Differences in methodology, sampling techniques, and educational settings across studies may account for the variability in findings. Consequently, the interplay between learner characteristics and academic performance appears to be more nuanced, requiring multidimensional investigation in future research.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the study concludes that home type (broken and intact), socio-economic status, and learning styles do not individually influence the English academic achievement of the respondents in the study area. Conversely, parental involvement was found to significantly influence the English academic achievement of the respondents. Furthermore, the study determined that home type (broken and intact), socio-economic status, parental involvement, and learning styles do not interactively influence the English academic achievement of students in Dala Zonal Education Directorate, Kano State, Nigeria. It is important to note, however, that these findings are subject to certain limitations: the study was confined to public Senior Secondary School II (SS II) students within the Dala Zonal Education Directorate, implying that the generalizability of these conclusions to other geographical areas or educational levels may be restricted. Additionally, the descriptive survey research design employed means that while relationships between variables are described, no direct cause-and-effect relationships can be established. Lastly, the reliance on self-reported data from students introduces a potential for bias or inaccuracies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Educators and policymakers should focus on enhancing parental involvement strategies to improve English language academic achievement.
2. Schools should establish programs that encourage parents to participate in their children's education, such as parent-teacher associations and volunteer opportunities.

The study's findings should be disseminated to relevant stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and parents, to inform evidence-based decision-making by the university

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