

# The Socioeconomic Status of Women and Academic Attainment of Their Children: A Study of the New Juaben Municipality in Ghana

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## Abstract

The past four decades have witnessed a significant rise in women's social and economic well-being, particularly among women with children in the home. This shift has sparked considerable academic debate regarding the consequences mothers' socioeconomic background has on the development of their children, especially their academic attainment. Surprisingly, this area of study has received little attention in the Ghanaian context. Consequently, the study set out to examine the effects of socioeconomic status (SES) of women (occupation, marital status, economic status of women and women's education) on the academic attainments of their children. To achieve these objectives, a cross-sectional survey was conducted using structured interview guide on a probability sample of 275 respondents identified through the multi-stage sampling technique. Respondents consisted of women who were 41+ years and had a child. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and a chi-square test of independence. The results of the bivariate analysis indicates that, occupation of women, education of women, marital status of women and economic status of women were all significantly related to the academic attainment of their children, at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Findings of the study suggest that, women SES affect the academic attainment of their children. Accordingly, the researcher recommends that, women groups in Ghana such as Ghanaian Women's Social Leadership Program (GWSLP), Ghana International Women's Club (GIWC) should all add their voice to emphasizing women education and for that matter, female education in their programmes taking a cue from this study.

**Keywords:** Socio-economic status, Academic attainment, Cultural capital and Family

## 1.1 Introduction

*"Society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child from the beginning the essential similarities which collective life demands"*, (Durkheim, 1961).

Education, as a social institution, is an instrument that facilitates the reproduction of social structures (Haralambos & Holborn, 2004). The education of children starts with what they learn from their parents and from what they learn in the first few years of their lives (Amato, 1987). This initial education impacts the rest of their lives, and inherently society's future. Because children learn both at home and in school, it is not surprising that family characteristic, such as socioeconomic status and parental education, are important predictors of children's school success (Hess, Holloway, Dickson, & Price, 1984; Lee & Croninger, 1994; Scott-Jones, 1984). Globally, the importance of women socio-economic status (SES) in the family is a commonplace fact. SES affects overall human functioning, including development across the life span, physical and mental health. Variance in socioeconomic status, including disparities in the distribution of wealth, income, and access to resources, affects everyone; however, women are overrepresented among those living in poverty. The New Juaben Municipality is one of the municipalities in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The municipality is rich with different cultures with most women carrying out varying occupations. There is a mixture of lettered and unlettered women in the municipality. While some of them are actively employed in the formal sector where they earn salaries, others are engaged in petty trading, farming and casual work, earning profits. Furthermore, some are single mothers and others receive husband support etc. Meanwhile, they all have children who attend common schools and competing in the same classes. How does the difference in mother characteristics affect the academic attainment of their children? Hence a redirection of the focus on both parents as exhibited by other studies to a careful study of the effect of SES of mothers on the academic attainment of their children in the selected areas. The importance of the home environment, mother's education and occupation has been emphasized many times to have some level of influence on students' academic attainment. Ichado (1998) notes that the environment in which the students come from can greatly influence his performance in school. Ajila and Olutola (2007), Nzewuwah (1995) emphasized the same opinion that the home environment has been recognized as having a relationship with the academic attainment of children.

The effects of broken homes may impact greatly on the internal organization of the family and by extension; affect a child's emotion, personality and academic achievement. Bearing in mind the role of the family in a child's

education, the failure of the family to perform its duties could hinder the child's academic achievement. Many studies cite socioeconomic status as a leading cause of differences in educational attainment of children but there are no such studies in the New Juaben Municipality particularly Adweso, Betom and Srodae. Inadequate literature based on Ghana leads to dependence on foreign literature. Indeed if women are a cornerstone of African economic development (OECD, 2003) and according to the Ghana Living Standards Survey of 2000 (GLSS 4), a female heads a family in every household in Ghana— which means that more and more women are becoming the backbone of the family as breadwinners and are working quietly and unacknowledged to keep the economy of Ghana going— then much needs to be done in the area of research/studies to establish the relationship between the SES of women and academic attainment of children in the selected areas. Despite the fact that these communities have both lettered and unlettered parents, varying occupations, different financial backgrounds, the academic attainments of these children leaves much to be desired. Could the SES of a mother have anything to do with the academic attainment of the child given the fact that more and more women are becoming the backbone of the family (GSS, 2010) in every household in Ghana? Accordingly, this study sought to address this major gap in literature in women's socio-economic status and the educational attainment of their children.

### 1.2 Research Questions

The focus of this research called for investigations into the following questions:

1. Does women's education significantly relate to the academic attainment of their children?
2. Does a woman's economic status predict the level of education attained by their children?
3. Does women's marital status determine the academic attainment of their children?
4. Does women's occupation determine the education attained by their children?

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine the effects of SES of women on the academic attainments of their children. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between women's education and academic attainment of their children.
2. Establish the relationship between occupation of women and academic attainment of their children.
3. Ascertain the relationship between economic status of women and the academic attainment of her children.
4. Determine the relationship between marital status of women and the level of education attained by their children.

### 1.4 Research Hypothesis

1. **H1:** There is significant relationship between women's education and educational attainment of children.
2. **H2:** The occupation of women is significantly related to the level of education attained by their children.
3. **H3:** Women with high economic status significantly have more children who have attained high level of education.
4. **H4:** Married women are significantly more likely than unmarried to have children with high academic attainment.

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Researchers have employed a variety of theories to explain SES of parents and its influence on child academic attainment. Notable amongst them include Credentialism and Concerted Cultivation. This research was informed by two major theories; the theory of Cultural Capital by Pierre Bourdieu, and Family System Theory.

### 2.2 Academic Attainment in Social theory

Social theory seeks to explain change in society: how it develops, what factors facilitate and inhibit it, and what results from it. Looking at foundational texts within the discipline, the researchers considered the principal ideas offered by some leading theorists and how those ideas relate to the social and intellectual contexts in which they were produced. Significantly, the researcher considered their relevance for ongoing issues people face today. Below is a careful consideration of each theory and how it relates to the objectives of this study.

### 2.3 Cultural Capital Theory

The term cultural capital refers to non-financial social assets, for example educational or intellectual, which might promote social mobility beyond economic means. It is a sociological concept that was first articulated by Pierre Bourdieu when he attempted to explain differences in educational outcomes in France during the 1960s. Pierre Bourdieu noted that education leads to social reproduction and creation of a stratified society through honoring the cultural capital of the elite class. Bourdieu's concern in relation to cultural capital was with its continual transmission and accumulation in ways that perpetuate social inequalities. Bourdieu sees the concept of cultural capital as breaking with the received wisdom that attributes academic success or failure to natural aptitudes, such

as intelligence and giftedness. Bourdieu explains school success by the amount and type of cultural capital inherited from the family background rather than by measures of individual talent or achievement. To him, ability is socially constructed and is the result of individuals having access to large amounts of cultural capital. Ability is itself the product of an investment of time and cultural capital (Ainley et al, 1995).

Generally Parents provide their children with cultural capital by transmitting the attitudes and knowledge needed to succeed in the current educational system. Children from higher socioeconomic status have an advantage over other children that give them better educational success and consequently higher status in society. Thus, this study sought to ascertain the veracity of this theory within the Ghanaian context.

## 2.4 The Family System Theory

The family system theory establishes the fact that the family is a system. As a system it is made up of different parts. All the parts play interdependent role to ensure the survival of the whole. In the case of academic attainment, the family system theory states that, the academic attainment of a child is as a result of contributions from different units within the system. Thus the father, mother, siblings and even external relations have a hand in the academic attainment of the child (Haralambos & Holborn, 2004). Accordingly, the study set out to ascertain the SES of women and its impact on the academic attainment of children.

## 3.1 Research Methods

The study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey design utilizing a structured interview guide which was used to provide answers to the research questions. The dependent variable in the study was academic attainments of children. The independent variables were mother's education, mother's occupation, marital status and economic status. The study was conducted within the New Juaben Municipality which is located in the Eastern region of Ghana. The Municipality has a total land area of 110km<sup>2</sup> with a populace of 136,768 (Population and Housing Census, 2000). For the purpose of this research, three (3) communities were purposively selected from the municipality (Adweso, Betom and Srodade). This was because, these communities were densely populated and were heterogeneous in nature and the researcher could get all the characteristics from these communities. The target population was women who were 41 years and above and were resident for at least 10 years or more and have offspring born to her and who consented to be part of the study. The reason for this age group was that, women reach their prime age from 22- 35. It was likely that women who were 41 years and above could have children aged 21 years and above and since the researcher was interested in academic attainment of all categories, the age 41 years and above was suitable. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed to obtain the sample of respondents. The study area was clustered into five zones out of which three were randomly selected. Proportionate sampling was employed to determine respective sizes from the selected areas due to unequal population sizes. The systematic sampling technique was then used to select 300 houses. The details are presented below in table 1:

**Table 3.1** Sample distribution for the various communities selected for the study

Community	N	Proportion	Final Sample
Adweso	172	28%	84
Srodade	320	52%	156
Betom	123	20%	60
<b>Total</b>	<b>615</b>		<b>300</b>

**Source: Extract from GSS (2010)**

$K^{\text{th}} \text{ term} = 2$

One respondent was selected from every second house and where there were more than one woman, the list of the women were prepared and random selection was made to select the respondent for the study giving all the women the chance to be selected for the study. A woman who had a child and was 41 years and above was selected for this research from every household. One woman who has a child and was 41 years or above was selected because; the researcher anticipated that, mothers who were 41 years and above would have children who have attained some level of education suitable for this research. Instances where certain households did not satisfy age range of mothers required for this research, respondents were sought from households that had more than one woman.

The mothers selected responded to questions on the highest level of academic attainment of their children. Out of the 300 targeted respondents, 275 were interviewed giving a response rate of 92% ( $275/300 \times 100\%$ ). Univariate analysis was undertaken to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were employed. Additionally, bivariate analysis was done to establish relationship between independent and dependent variables. The independent variables were women's economic status, occupation, marital status and women education. The dependent variable is academic attainment of children. Chi-square test of independence was employed to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. All tests were carried out at 5% (0.05) significance level.

## 4. Presentation of Results

### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The age, gender, religious affiliations, level of education and ethnicity have been presented in this study. The results showed that the age range of 41-46 constituted the majority (n=115, 42%). This was followed by those who were in the age category of 59-64 years (n=52, 19%). Mothers who were 65-years or more were the least represented in the sample (n=16, 5%). The implication of this data is that, most women fell in the active age group. It presupposes that the majority of children whose academic attainment was analyzed in this work belong to mothers in the 41-46 age groups. That is to say, their mothers were in the middle age group.

Mothers who had attained any formal education were (n= 210, 76%) whilst (n=65, 24 %) reported to have had no formal education. The data presented implies that, majority of the respondents have had some level of education. It is explicit that, the women at Adweso, Betom and Srodac have received appreciable level of formal education. To probe further, the levels of education of the respondents were sought for. Those who had acquired Primary education (n=41, 15%), J.H.S (n=79, 29%), Secondary/MSLC/O&A level (n= 57, 20%) and Tertiary (n=33, 12%). The frequency distribution of formal education revealed that, mothers who had education up to the J.H.S level were the majority. Some of them had acquired tertiary education. The implication is that, most of the women were in the position to read and write and could fairly answer the questions during the interview. The ethnic background of the respondents showed that, Akans( n= 197, 72%), Ga (n= 21, 8%), Dagomba (n= 14, 5%), Nzema(n=3,1%), Ewe (n= 25, 9%), Frafra (n=4, 1%) and Ga-Adamgbe (n=11, 4%). The results indicates that, the selected areas were predominantly dominated by Akans even though the areas were generally occupied by different ethnic groups. It was not surprising to discover that the majority of mother respondents were Akan. This is because, the Eastern region is one of the five regions dominated by the Akans in terms of population distribution. Majority of the mothers had both Christian and Islamic background. Muslims (n= 97, 35%), Christians (n= 127, 46%), Free thinkers (n= 32, 12%) and traditionalist (n= 19, 7%). This is presented in table 2 below.

**Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of respondents**

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
<b>Age range of mothers</b>		
41-46	115	42
47-52	51	19
53-58	41	15
59-64	52	19
65 and above	16	5
<b>FORMAL EDUCATION</b>		
Yes	210	76
No	65	24
<b>LEVEL OF EDUCATION</b>		
None	65	24
primary	41	15
J.H.S	79	29
Senior High/MSLC/A LEVEL	57	20
Tertiary	33	12
<b>ETHNIC BACKGROUND</b>		
Akan	197	72
Ga	21	8
Dagomba	14	5
Nzema	3	1
Ewe	25	9
Frafra	4	1
Ga-Adamgbe	11	4
<b>RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION</b>		
Muslim	97	35
Christian	127	46
Free thinker	32	12
Traditionalist	19	7

Source: Author's field survey, May 2013

### 4.2 Relationship between the SES of Mothers and the Academic Attainment of the Child

Chi-square test of independence was employed to establish relationships between SES (economic status, occupation, mother's education and marital status) of mother and academic attainment of children. The study found

a significant relationship between the SES (economic status, occupation, mother’s education and marital status) and the academic attainment of children.

#### 4.2.1 Relationship between women’s education and academic attainment of children

In order to determine if the results of the analysis support the first hypothesis, that is, the relationship between mother’s education and educational attainment of children, a Chi-square test for independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) was conducted to determine the relationship between women’s education and children academic attainment. The Chi-square test of independence (with Yates Continuity Correction) was conducted because the hypothesis involved two variables which were measured at the nominal level and also because the variables each had two response categories. The Chi-square test for independence (with Yates’ Continuity Correction) analysis results as depicted in Table 4.2 indicates a statistically significant relationship between women’s education and children’s academic attainment,  $\chi^2(1, n=275) = 32.74, p = 0.000, phi = 0.367$  and  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The *phi value* is the measure of the association between two binary variables. Therefore, based on the results of the analysis conducted, the research hypothesis predicting a significant relationship between mother’s education and academic attainment of children is supported. This means that, the proportion of women who reported to have had formal education also had children who had also attained formal education. The positive value of *phi* (+0.367) obtained affirms this direct relationship between the two variables. It can be concluded that, women’s education influences the academic attainment of their children (Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 1997).

**Table 4.2** Relationship between women’s education and academic attainment of child

Formal education of mother	Formal education of child		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	210 (76.4%)	0 (0%)	210 (76.4)
No	54 (19.6%)	11 (4.0)	65 (23.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>264 (96.0)</b>	<b>11 (4.0)</b>	<b>275 (100)</b>

$\chi^2 = 32.7$        $p\text{-value} = 0.000 (s)$        $phi = 0.367$

**Source: Author’s field survey, May 2013**

There is a significant relationship between mother’s education and educational attainment of children.

#### 4.2.2 Relationship between women’s occupation and academic attainment of children

In determining if the results of the analysis support the second hypothesis, that is, the relationship between the occupation of women and academic attainment of the children, a Chi-square test for independence was conducted to determine the relationship between the occupation of women and the level of education attained by their children. The occupation of women was categorized into two broad variables; professional and non-professional. The professional included civil servant, public servants and business executive whilst the non-professional included farmers, traders, and housewives. The Chi-square test for independence analysis results as depicted in Table 4.3 indicates a statistically significant relationship between occupation of women and academic attainment of the child.  $\chi^2(3, n=275) = 95.7, p\text{-value} = 0.000$  and  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The occupation of a woman is significantly related to the level of education attained by their children. This is represented in table 4.3.

**Table 4.3** Relationship between women’s occupation and academic attainment of child

Occupation	Highest level of formal education of children					Total
	None	Primary	J.H.S	S.H.S	Tertiary	
Professional	11 (4.0)	43 (15.6%)	22 (8.0%)	89 (32.4%)	20 (7.3%)	185(67.3%)
Non professional	0 (0.0)	9 (3.3%)	9 (3.3%)	54 (19.6%)	18 (6.3%)	90(32.7%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 (4.0)</b>	<b>52 (18.9%)</b>	<b>98 (35.6%)</b>	<b>76 (27.6%)</b>	<b>38 (13.8%)</b>	<b>275 (100%)</b>

$\chi^2(1, n=275) = 95.7$        $p\text{-value} = 0.000 (S)$        $\alpha = 0.05$ .

**Source: Author’s field survey, May 2013**

Consequently, the research hypothesis predicting a significant relationship between mother’s occupation and academic attainment of children is supported. This means that, the occupation of women was significantly related to the academic attainment of their children. This result supports the idea that, professionals who are schooled will tend to educate their children to the highest level. Mostly in the world of work, business professionals tend to earn more income than non-professionals simply because of higher qualification, expertise and experience. From the analysis, this position of professionals shows a positive effect on children’s academic attainment since it was found that the majority of professionals had their children in higher level of education. Maternal occupation generally has favorable effects on child outcomes (Vandell & Ramanan, 1992; Parcel & Menaghan, 1994; Hoffman & Youngblade, 1999).

#### 4.2.3 Relationship between women’s occupation and academic attainment of children

Three items measured this variable. The first item measured the salary/profit of the study participants while item two measured whether respondent was a homemaker or not. The third item measured participant’s possession of

the following items (motorbike/ bicycle, motorcar, computer, internet, mobile phone). The total score of these three items was taken as the measure of economic status. This was further categorized into three; low (total score of less than 5), average (total score of between five and seven) and high (a total score of between 8 and 10). To determine if the results of the analysis support the third hypothesis, that is the relationship between economic status of mothers and academic attainment of children, a Chi-square test for independence was again conducted to determine the relationship between the economic status and the level of education attained by their children. The economic status of women was categorized into three; Low, Average and High.

The Chi-square test for independence analysis results as depicted in Table 4.4 indicates a statistically significant relationship between economic status of women and academic attainment of their children,  $\chi^2(8, n=275) = 85.97$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ,  $\gamma = 0.54$  (strong relationship) and  $\alpha = 0.05$ . Consequently the results indicates that the research hypothesis predicting a significant relationship between mother's economic status and academic attainment of children is supported. This means that, the economic status of a woman has an effect on the level of education attained by their children.

**Table 4.4** Relationship between women's economic status and academic attainment of children

Economic status	The highest level of formal education of children					Total
	None	Primary	J.H.S	S.H.S	Tertiary	
Low	11 (4.0%)	6 (2.2%)	4 (1.5%)	10 (3.6%)	11 (4.0%)	42(15.3%)
Average	0 (0.0%)	6 (2.2%)	6 (2.2%)	28 (10.2%)	12 (4.3%)	52 (18.9%)
High	0 (0.0%)	40 (14.5%)	88(32.0%)	38(13.8%)	15 (5.5%)	181(65.8%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 (4.0%)</b>	<b>52 (18.9%)</b>	<b>98 (35.6%)</b>	<b>76 (27.6%)</b>	<b>38 (13.8%)</b>	<b>275 (100%)</b>

$\chi^2(8, n=275) = 85.97$   $p\text{-value} = 0.000$  (S)  $\Gamma = 0.538$   $\alpha = 0.05$

Source: Author's field survey, May 2013

Women with high economic status will significantly have more children who have attained high level of education.

#### 4.2.4 Relationship between women's marital status and academic attainment of children

To determine if the results of the analysis supports the fourth hypothesis, a Chi-square test for independence was conducted to determine the relationship between marital status of women sampled and the level of education attained by their children. The four categories of marital status of women measured (i.e. married, single, divorced/separated and courting) was collapsed into two categories (married and unmarried) as the initial analysis of the chi-square test using the four categories indicated some cells with expected counts less than 5 which violated one of the chi-square test assumptions.

The Chi-square test for independence analysis results as depicted in Table 4.5 indicates a statistically significant relationship between marital status of women and academic attainment of children,  $\chi^2(4, n=275) = 55.80$ ,  $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$  with married women having more children ( $n=18$ ) with high (tertiary) academic attainment than children ( $n=10$ ) of the unmarried.

Accordingly, based on the results of the analysis conducted, the fourth hypothesis of the study is supported. This means that, the marital status of a woman has an effect on the level of education attained by their children. The result of this chi-square test establishes that, married women tend to have children who attend higher education. This phenomenon could be attributable to many factors amongst which financial support, moral support from both parents in the marriage setting are a key factor. When partners stay together, the children derive a host of benefits of which support in their academics cannot be written off as Zill (1996) found that, students from nuclear intact families had the best academic performance, while students from alternative family types such as step parent families performed not so well.

**Table 4.5** Relationship between women's marital status and academic attainment of child

Marital status	The highest level of formal education of children					Total
	None	Primary	J.H.S	S.H.S	Tertiary	
Married	0 (0.0%)	43 (15.6%)	90 (32.7%)	49 (17.8%)	18 (10.2%)	210(76.4%)
Unmarried	11 (4.0%)	9 (3.3%)	8 (2.9%)	27 (9.8%)	10 (3.6%)	65 (23.6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11 (4.0%)</b>	<b>52 (18.9%)</b>	<b>98 (35.6%)</b>	<b>76 (27.6%)</b>	<b>38 (13.8%)</b>	<b>275 (100%)</b>

$\chi^2(4, n=275) = 55.80$   $p\text{-value} = 0.000$  (S)  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

Source: Author's field survey, May 2013

Married women would significantly be more likely than unmarried to have children with high academic attainment.

#### 4.2.5 A summary of results of the hypotheses

**Table 3.4:** Results Indicating Significance of Tested Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Significant	Not Significant
<b>H1</b> There will be a significant relationship between women's education and educational attainment of children.	0.000	-
<b>H2</b> The occupation of a woman will significantly be related to the level of education attained by their children.	0.000	-
<b>H3</b> Women with high economic status will significantly have more children who have attained high level of education.	0.000	-
<b>H4</b> Married women would significantly be more likely than unmarried to have children with high academic attainment.	0.000	-

Source: Author's field survey, May 2013

$\alpha = 0.05$

### 5. Discussion of Results

#### 5.1 Discussion of Research Objective 1

The first objective was to determine the relationship between women's education and academic attainment of their children. The results of the study revealed that, women's education influences the academic attainment of their children. The Chi-square test for independence (with Yates' Continuity Correction) analysis was used with ( $p=0.000$ ), ( $\phi = 0.367$ ). The above results raise several implications for public policy with respect to education and human services more generally.

This finding is consistent with other studies. For instance, (Swainson, as cited in Tanye, 2003) suggests that the mother's educational level has a direct influence on economic productivity and on the level of her daughter's education. In qualitative research on mothers who return to school, Kelly (1982) reports that children of these mothers showed increased interest in and commitment to their own schoolwork. In addition, positive spillovers might exist if education increased a mother's ability to help with homework, or made her more likely to read to her children. Also, Tracey and Young (2002) find that types of maternal interaction with children depend upon educational level. Mothers with high school education were more likely to correct their children's errors during oral reading, while college-educated mothers tended to ask more high-level critical thinking questions. This was the case even though there were equal numbers of above- and below-average readers in each group. Compared to earlier research, for example by Hanushek (1992), found mother's education has a significant effect on pupils test scores.

Okumu et al (2008) in a study of Socioeconomic Determinants of Primary School Dropout found that High academic attainment of a mother and father significantly reduces chances of primary school drop out for both boys and girls in rural and urban areas with the aid of a logistic model analysis. The study utilized data collected by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) in 2004 for the National Service Delivery Survey (NSDS). The household survey questionnaire collected information on social-economic variables of households in relation to service delivery based on four regions of Uganda, namely Northern, Eastern, Central and Western Uganda using stratified sampling. The sample size was 17,681 household, covering all the regions of the country.

For a mother, this phenomenon could be attributed to the fact that educated mothers reduce the time spent doing household chores while increasing the time spend with their children than their uneducated counterparts. Also educated mothers are more effective in helping their children in academic work. In doing so, they are also able to monitor and supervise their children's academic progress.

#### 5.2 Discussion of Research Objective 2

The second objective of the study was to establish the relationship between occupation of women and academic attainment of their children. The occupation of women was categorized into two broad variables; professional and non-professional. The professional included civil servant, public servants, business executive whilst the non-professional included farmers, traders and housewives. The results of the study showed that, there was a significant relationship between occupation of women and academic attainment of their children with ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ). This finding affirms the study conducted by Onzima (2011) who focused on both parents. The researcher used Tables, charts and Pearson's correlation to describe and analyze quantitative data while qualitative data was analyzed on the basis of themes. 92 candidates, the head teacher and one class teacher were interviewed. Onzima used purposive sampling to select the class. The results showed that there was a positive correlation between the parents' occupation with pupil's educational performance. Parents' occupation was significant at (0.757).

The researcher concluded that parent's low socioeconomic status impacted negatively on pupils' performance, through denying the children access to resources which are readily available to children from higher socioeconomic status. However, the sample Onzima used was small making it possible for possible errors. The use of purposive sampling could also be fraught with problems as there was not equal chance given for selection and may represent

a partial picture of the responses.

Also, Coleman (1988) argues that the most significant negative effect of increasing female labor force participation is on the cognitive achievement of children of employed women. Ruhm (2004) provides empirical support for this proposition. A second set of studies finds that maternal employment neither affects the quality of the mother-child relationship, nor the academic achievement of children measured in test scores (Muller, 1995; Golberg, Greenberger, Nagel, 1996; Parcel, Nickoll, Dufur, 2000, McGroder et al., 2005). Still other scholars suggest that maternal employment generally has favorable effects on child outcomes (Vandell & Ramanan, 1992; Parcel & Menaghan, 1994; Hoffman & Youngblade, 1999).

### 5.3 Discussion of Research Objective 3

The third objective was to determine the relationship between economic status of women and the academic attainment of her children. A Chi-square test for independence was conducted to determine the relationship between the economic status and the level of education attained by their children. The economic status of women was categorized into three; Low, Average and High. The results indicated that, the relationship between economic status of women and the academic attainment of the child was statistically significant with ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ), ( $\gamma = 0.54$ ) (strong relationship).

The findings confirm the findings of other studies in the literature review. For example, Bliss (2004) is of the view that many students from low socioeconomic homes respond incomprehensively to classroom teaching because their home environment has not exposed them to the kinds of materials used in schools. If home environment is not intellectually stimulating, some students find it difficult to cope in school and may eventually dropout of school.

Health (1990) asserts that irrespective of national equality of opportunity, children of parents in higher socioeconomic status tend to achieve greater academically than children of parents from lower socioeconomic-status.

### 5.4 Discussion of Research Objective 4

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the relationship between marital status of women and the level of education attained by their children. A Chi-square test for independence was conducted to determine the relationship between marital status of women sampled and the level of education attained by their children. The four categories of marital status of women measured (i.e. married, single, divorced and courting) was collapsed into two categories (married and unmarried) as the initial analysis of the chi-square test using the four categories indicated some cells with expected counts less than 5 which violated one of the chi-square test assumptions. The results of the study revealed statistically significant relationship between marital status of women and academic attainment of children with ( $p\text{-value} = 0.000$ ). This corroborates results of some studies conducted by other researchers. For example, in a study by Alika and Ejona (2012), the relationship between broken homes and academic achievement of students were investigated. The statistical method used in analyzing the data was the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient ( $r$ ). Reliable and validated questionnaires which were designed to elicit information on the hypotheses of study were used. Six senior secondary schools were randomly selected for the study. One hundred and fifty respondents from single parent homes were used for the study. Twenty-five respondents were randomly selected from six schools. Results showed a significant relationship between broken homes and academic achievement of students.

### 6.1 Conclusion

Although there is a vast literature on the relationship between family socioeconomic status and the academic attainment of children, greater attention have not been given to the SES (marital status, occupation, economic status and education) of women and how they affect the academic outcomes of the child/children independent of other factors in the context of Africa and Ghana where the contribution of women are grandiose. This is not to divorce other factors that contribute to the academic attainment of children from the SES of women but to come out with an empirical finding on how women influence the academic attainment of their children. Many studies have looked at performance in the classroom and the mediating effects from the school environment, peers and quality teachers, but these studies sought to establish how the socioeconomic status of women tend to influence the academic attainment of their children. The results of the study established that, women education, occupation, economic status and marital status were of significant relationship with the academic attainment of children.

### 7.1 Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are hereby proffered. The main policy prescriptions of this study are that;

1. The findings of the study have revealed that, women who are married tend to have children who have attained high academic attainment. The researcher recommends that, the Social Work Agencies in Ghana should organize



periodic programs for couples aimed at curbing divorce knowing very well that intact families offer numerous benefits to children in their schooling.

2. This study also shows that, women are mostly instrumental in the academic attainment of children. The mother's education is influential to some extent on the children's academic attainment. The researcher recommends that, women groups in Ghana such as Ghanaian Women's Social Leadership Program (GWSLP), Ghana International Women's Club (GIWC) should all add their voice to the growing campaign for women education and for that matter, female education .

3. It was also established from the study that, occupations of women was significantly related to child academic attainment. Women are to be encouraged despite their occupations to give their support to their children in terms of schooling.

4. The study also revealed that, economic status of women had a significant relationship to the academic attainment of the children. Government should therefore pay particular attention to women and how they could be resuscitated financially through the numerous women groups in Ghana, though the high economic status of some women did not really mean that they automatically had children with high academic attainment.

### **Declaration**

We agree to the terms and conditions guiding publications in your journal.

### **List of Abbreviations**

<b>ACS</b>	-	American Census Survey
<b>SES</b>	-	Socioeconomic Status
<b>ES</b>	-	Economic Status
<b>GIWC</b>	-	Ghana International Women's Club
<b>GWSLP</b>	-	Ghanaian Women's Social Leadership Program
<b>GLSS</b>	-	Ghana Living Standard Survey
<b>GSS</b>	-	Ghana Statistical Services
<b>GNECC</b>	-	Ghana National Education Campaign Coalition
<b>HREOC</b>	-	Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission
<b>MOWAC</b>	-	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs
<b>OECD</b>	-	Organization for Economic Co - operation and Development
<b>SESAACI</b>	-	Socioeconomic Status of Women and Academic Attainment of Children Inventory
<b>SMTDP</b>	-	Sector Medium Term Development Plan
<b>UN</b>	-	United Nations
<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	-	Chi-square

### **Ethical Concerns**

The study protocols were reviewed and cleared by the institutional review board - Committee on Human Research, Publications and Ethics (CHPRE) of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). A written consent was also sought from the Koforidua Municipal Assembly. In addition respondents consent was also obtained after the objective of the study had been succinctly explained to them. Privacy and confidentiality were maintained by ensuring that names and addresses of the respondents were not included in the questionnaires.

### **Consent to Publish**

We the authors of this manuscript declare that the corresponding author has our permission to submit this manuscript for publication.

### **Competing Interest**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

### **Authors' Contribution**

Data collection was undertaken by the first author. All the authors contributed in the design and preparation of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

### **Availability of Data**

The complete data for this work can be obtained from the Research Repository of Department of Sociology and Social Work, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology-Kumasi Ghana

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