



Academic Engagement, Learning Interest, and Psychological Well-being of Undergraduates: The Role of Gender and Parentage

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of undergraduates' gender and parental background on their psychological well-being, learning interest, and academic engagement. This study adopted the cross-sectional quantitative research type of the non-experimental design and was underpinned by the Self-determination Theory (ST). The study's population consisted of 230 undergraduates enrolled in degree programmes at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti in Nigeria. The data were collected using a Google Form-hosted tool tagged the "Students' Academic Engagement, Learning Interest, Psychological Well-being and Parenting Questionnaire (SAELIPWPQ)," which had Cronbach alphas of 0.92, 0.85, and 0.70, respectively. SPSS V26 software was utilized to analyse the study's data at a 5% significance level using descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance. Findings indicate no significant difference between undergraduates parentage and their learning interest ($F_{(229)} = 0.44$; $p = 0.72$), academic engagement ($F_{(229)} = 0.16$; $p = 0.92$), and psychological well-being ($F_{(229)} = 2.09$; $p = 0.10$). The findings further reveal that students' gender significantly influenced their academic engagement ($t_{(228)} = 4.21$; $p = 0.000$), but not their learning interest ($t_{(228)} = -0.76$; $p = 0.45$), nor psychological well-being ($t_{(228)} = 0.42$; $p = 0.67$). The study concludes that the percentage of undergraduates does not have a significant influence on their academic engagement, learning interests, and psychological well-being while their gender significantly impacts their academic engagement. The study recommends that a congenial and enabling learning environment that fosters students' academic engagement be provided in Nigerian universities and that positive gender dynamics, equality, and equity policies and practices be enshrined in universities' teaching and learning operations, management, and culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Education serves as the basis for the development of a high-quality human labour force, and the correlation between educational attainment and family background has emerged as a crucial metric for assessing educational equality or inequality in several nations.¹ Children's academic performance, future accomplishments, and general well-being are significantly influenced by the effectiveness, involvement,

¹ Zhonglu Li and Zeqi Qiu, "How Does Family Background Affect Children's Educational Achievement? Evidence from Contemporary China," *The Journal of Chinese Sociology* 5, no. 1 (2018): 13, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40711-018-0083-8>; Joacim Ramberg et al., "Family Background Characteristics and Student Achievement: Does School Ethos Play a Compensatory Role?," *Nordic Studies in Education* 41, no. 3 (2021): 239–60, <https://doi.org/10.23865/nse.v41.2999>.

and quality of their parents.² Their initial opportunities to interact, communicate, and build connections are provided by their parents. Additionally, by demonstrating healthy relationships and encouraging constructive interactions with others, they serve as a beneficial role model for them.³ Parenting, according to Chavda and Nisarga is the act of caring for, protecting, and guiding a child's development.⁴

In the current world, lone mothers make up 84.3% of all homes with a single parent, while lone fathers make up 15.7%. This implies that women are largely in charge of providing for their families' financial needs and raising children. The number of solitary fathers is expectedly low because men tend to remarry and put their children in the care of their mothers or other female relatives. Parent-child separation or divorce is a multi-step process, and the child's adjustment to the new normal takes time.⁵ Children of single parents start to have mental health problems long before the separation itself takes place due to arguments or poor interactions.⁶ Such children experience a variety of negative emotions at first, including confusion, despair, anger, guilt, grief, and conflicts of loyalty. Most children are saddened when a parent leaves the house or quits the marriage; however, some children feel glad in households where there is domestic violence or abuse.⁷ Research has shown that children of divorced parents and children of married parents continue to differ in several areas.⁸ Increasing empirical records indicate that divorce and single parenting have increased recently in African countries, including Nigeria.⁹

Students with single parents may experience higher levels of stress, which could be detrimental to their mental health. Aunola et al. claim that parents' daily stress may lead to a higher level of psychological control over their interactions with their children, which may in turn encourage the children to display negative emotions.¹⁰ Children's capacity to control their emotions and overall psychological health can be significantly impacted by the emotional moods of single parents.¹¹ Golombok et al. found that children's better psychological adjustment was associated with a positive

² Arve Fiskerstrand, "Literature Review – Parent Involvement and Mathematic Outcome," *Educational Research Review* 37 (2022): 100458, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2022.100458>; Anna Śniegulska, "Responsible Parenthood as the Foundation of a Child's Success in Education," *Multidisciplinary Journal of School Education*, no. 12 (2017): 125–36.

³ Urie Bronfenbrenner, "Ecological Models of Human Development," *International Encyclopedia of Education* 3, no. 2 (1994): 37–43.

⁴ Kersi Chavda and Vinyas Nisarga, "Single Parenting: Impact on Child's Development," *Journal of Indian Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health* 19, no. 1 (2023): 14–20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/09731342231179017>.

⁵ Bolanle Oriola, "Academic Engagement, Learning Interests, and Psychological Well-Being of Undergraduates from Single-Parenting Backgrounds," *Futurity Education* 5, no. 1 (2025): 52–70.

⁶ Patricia M. Crittenden and Susan Spieker, "The Effects of Separation from Parents on Children," in *Understanding Child Abuse and Neglect- Research and Implications* (IntechOpen, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1002940>; Brian D'Onofrio and Robert Emery, "Parental Divorce or Separation and Children's Mental Health," *World Psychiatry* 18, no. 1 (2019): 100–101, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.20590>; Issar Daryanani et al., "Single Mother Parenting and Adolescent Psychopathology," *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 44, no. 7 (2016): 1411–23, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-016-0128-x>; Kateryna Karhina et al., "Parental Separation, Negative Life Events and Mental Health Problems in Adolescence," *BMC Public Health* 23, no. 1 (2023): 2364, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-17307-x>.

⁷ B.M. D'Onofrio, "Consequences of Separation or Divorce for Children," in *Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development*, ed. R. E. Tremblay et al. (Center of Excellence for Early Childhood Development and Strategic Knowledge Cluster on Early Child Development, 2011), 1–6.

⁸ Hongjian Cao, Mark A. Fine, and Nan Zhou, "The Divorce Process and Child Adaptation Trajectory Typology (DPCATT) Model: The Shaping Role of Predivorce and Postdivorce Interparental Conflict," *Clinical Child and Family Psychology Review* 25, no. 3 (2022): 500–528, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10567-022-00379-3>.

⁹ Oluwagbemiga Ezekiel Adeyemi, "Diverse Family Forms and Quality-of-Life in Sub-Saharan African Countries," *Development Southern Africa* 34, no. 6 (2017): 682–93, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0376835X.2017.1405797>; Oluwatobi Abel Alawode, "Analysis of Non-Marital Fertility in Nigeria and Implications for Intervention and Future Research," *Social Sciences* 10, no. 7 (2021): 256, <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10070256>; Castro Ayebe et al., "Single Motherhood in Ghana: Analysis of Trends and Predictors Using Demographic and Health Survey Data," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 9, no. 1 (2022): 345, <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01371-6>; Chinedu Justin Efe and Oghenerioborue Esther Eberechi, "Property Rights of Nigerian Women at Divorce: A Case for a Redistribution Order," *Potchefstroom Electronic Law Journal* 23 (2020): 1–39, <https://doi.org/10.17159/1727-3781/2020/v23i0a5306>; Lorretta FC Ntoimo and Clifford O Odimegwu, "Health Effects of Single Motherhood on Children in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Cross-Sectional Study," *BMC Public Health* 14, no. 1 (2014): 1145, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-14-1145>; Clifford O Odimegwu, Nyasha Mutanda, and Chidimma M Mbanefo, "Correlates of Single Motherhood in Four Sub-Saharan African Countries," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* 48, no. 4 (2017): 313–28.

¹⁰ Kaisa Aunola et al., "Psychological Control in Daily Parent–Child Interactions Increases Children's Negative Emotions," *Journal of Family Psychology* 27, no. 3 (June 2013): 453–62, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0032891>.

¹¹ Maria Spinelli et al., "Parenting Stress During the COVID-19 Outbreak: Socioeconomic and Environmental Risk Factors and Implications for Children Emotion Regulation," *Family Process* 60, no. 2 (June 28, 2021): 639–53, <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12601>.

mother-child interaction in their study on solo parenting.¹² Poor parent-child relationships can cause children to feel more worried and insecure, which can lead to long-term psychological issues.¹³ Whether they are male or female, children of single parents or both parents who exhibit supportive and loving behaviours can become emotionally stable and resilient, improving their psychological well-being.¹⁴

Gender disparities manifest not just in biological traits but also in higher-order thinking, conversational style, emotional expression, and disciplinary performance.¹⁵ Although there is some evidence that gender affects academic behaviour (e.g., self-efficacy, engagement methods, and reactions to social expectations), there is little concrete evidence that gender has a substantial effect on undergraduates' general enthusiasm for learning. Rather, external variables, including classroom dynamics, educational strategies, and cultural norms, frequently influence these variations. Male students are more likely to engage in irrelevant behaviour during group projects, whereas female students are better at listening, integrating knowledge, and staying focused.¹⁶ Males tend to participate more in voluntary classroom discussions than females do, particularly in STEM disciplines.¹⁷ Females show greater knowledge of gender identity and poorer scientific self-efficacy, which may affect participation but not necessarily their motivation in learning.¹⁸ while the study by Xu et al. depicts higher academic engagement among females than males.¹⁹

Young adults (in this case, undergraduates) with divorced parents report higher levels of loneliness, attachment anxiety, avoidance, personality disorders, and total chronic stress (social isolation, recurring worry, and work discontent) than young adults whose parents were still living together.²⁰ According to studies done in African countries, children of single parents had lower psychological well-being and higher rates of depression, substance abuse, and suicide than children from dual-parent households.²¹

¹² Susan Golombok et al., "Single Mothers by Choice: Mother-Child Relationships and Children's Psychological Adjustment," *Journal of Family Psychology* 30, no. 4 (June 2016): 409–18, <https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000188>.

¹³ Rebecca E Lacey et al., "Parental Separation and Adult Psychological Distress: An Investigation of Material and Relational Mechanisms," *BMC Public Health* 14, no. 1 (December 23, 2014): 272, <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-14-272>; Elien Mabbé et al., "The Role of Child Personality in Effects of Psychologically Controlling Parenting: An Examination at the Level of Daily Fluctuations," *European Journal of Personality* 32, no. 4 (July 1, 2018): 459–79, <https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2156>; Elena Rasskazova, "Socialization In The Development Of Sleep Regulation: Effect Of Parental Beliefs," 2019, 548–54, <https://doi.org/10.15405/epsbs.2019.07.71>; Michelle Hei Yan Shum et al., "Living in a Segregated Community? Interaction between Families and Service Organizations Supporting People with Intellectual Disabilities during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *Journal of Social Work* 23, no. 5 (2023): 876–97, <https://doi.org/10.1177/14680173231164335>.

¹⁴ Liang Wang et al., "Moderating Effect of Gender and Engineering Identity on the Association between Interpersonal Relationships and Mental Health of Female Engineering Students," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19, no. 16 (August 21, 2022): 10425, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph191610425>; Xue Luo and Xu Huang, "The Effects of a Yoga Intervention on Balance and Flexibility in Female College Students during COVID-19: A Randomized Controlled Trial," *PLOS ONE* 18, no. 3 (March 22, 2023): e0282260, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0282260>.

¹⁵ Feng Yu et al., "Sustainable Production of Value-Added N-Heterocycles from Biomass-Derived Carbohydrates via Spontaneous Self-Engineering," *National Science Open* 2, no. 6 (2023): 20230019.

¹⁶ Yu et al., "Sustainable Production of Value-Added N-Heterocycles from Biomass-Derived Carbohydrates via Spontaneous Self-Engineering."

¹⁷ Bethany C. Leraas, Nicole R. Kippen, and Susan J. Larson, "Gender and Student Participation," *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* 18, no. 4 (December 10, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.14434/josotl.v18i4.22849>; Noemí Merayo and Alba Ayuso, "Analysis of Barriers, Supports and Gender Gap in the Choice of STEM Studies in Secondary Education," *International Journal of Technology and Design Education* 33, no. 4 (September 2, 2023): 1471–98, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10798-022-09776-9>; Dmitri Rozgonjuk et al., "The S in STEM: Gender Differences in Science Anxiety and Its Relations with Science Test Performance-Related Variables," *International Journal of STEM Education* 11, no.1(September 17, 2024): 45, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40594-024-00504-4>.

¹⁸ Steffanie M. Aguillon et al., "Gender Differences in Student Participation in an Active-Learning Classroom," *CBE—Life Sciences Education* 19, no. 2 (June 2020): ar12, <https://doi.org/10.1187/cbe.19-03-0048>.

¹⁹ Pingping Huang and Xu Liu, "Challenging Gender Stereotypes: Representations of Gender through Social Interactions in English Learning Textbooks," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 11, no. 1 (2024): 1–14.

²⁰ Violetta K Schaan et al., "Parental Divorce Is Associated with an Increased Risk to Develop Mental Disorders in Women," *Journal of Affective Disorders* 257 (2019): 91–99.

²¹ Jenny Bloom et al., "Child, Adolescent, and Caregiver Mental Health Difficulties and Associated Risk Factors Early in the COVID-19 Pandemic in South Africa," *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health* 16, no. 1 (2022): 65, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-022-00499-2>; Odunayo M. Kareem et al., "Single Parenthood and Depression: A Thorough Review of Current Understanding," *Health Science Reports* 7, no. 7 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1002/hsr2.2235>; Olasumbo Kukoyi et al., "Factors Influencing Suicidal Ideation and Self-Harm among Undergraduate Students in a Nigerian Private University," *Middle East Current Psychiatry* 30, no. 1 (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43045-022-00274-1>; Victor Igreja, Taryn Axelsen, and Alana Brekelmans, "Exploring the Mental Health of Young People in Households and Schools in Gorongosa District, Center of Mozambique," *Scientific Reports* 14, no. 1 (2024): 28057, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-79257-7>; Ingeborg Lunde et al., "Systematic Literature Review of Attempted Suicide and Offspring," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 15, no. 5 (2018): 937,

Ojo asserts that children of single parents are more likely to commit crimes, have lower academic achievement, and receive less education.²² It is also confirmed by Anyakoha and Nwachukwu that educated single parents helped their children with their schoolwork, which improved the learning outcomes of those students.²³ More importantly, academics and researchers have cautioned that low psychological well-being among university students, or those in other higher education institutions, has become a serious issue in sub-Saharan Africa, necessitating additional empirical study.²⁴ Taking into account this, this current study investigates the association between the gender and parentage, and their learning interests, psychological well-being, and academic participation at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditionally, parenting has involved gender-neutral duties, with the mother having to nurture and support the children emotionally, and the father's function being to protect and discipline them.²⁵ An unforeseen life event, like an unintended pregnancy, may cause parents to be divorced, widowed, or separated from their spouse. Stack and Meredith and Van Gasse and Mortelmans describe parenting as the process in which a man or woman decides to become a parent through donor insemination or adoption, and who lives with one or more dependent children, with or without the support and presence of an adult partner who shares parenting obligations.²⁶ Higher incomes, dual-earning parents, industrialisation, globalisation, gender equality, and better education have all contributed to a shift in the family paradigm and the rise of gender-neutral parenting roles in recent years.²⁷

People who are psychologically well can feel in control, create healthy relationships with others, enjoy and be pleased with their lives, and effectively handle stress and obstacles.²⁸ The learning of university students can be greatly impacted by psychological well-being.²⁹ Psychological well-being is characterised by good emotions and feelings, resilience to negative emotions, and a consistent pursuit of pleasure, happiness, and contentment in daily living.³⁰ Diener and Ryan assert that students' psychological well-being is a reflection of their degree of contentment, which is governed by their attitudes and views towards their wellness as well as the joy and fulfilment they experience daily.³¹

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph15050937>; Moses Muwanguzi et al., "Exploring Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) among Ugandan University Students: Its Associations with Academic Performance, Depression, and Suicidal Ideations," *BMC Psychology* 11, no. 1 (2023): 11, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01044-2>.

²² A. O. Ojo, "The Effects of Single Parent on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Nigeria," *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research* 5, no. 3 (2019): 1–6.

²³ Christiana Ijeoma Anyakoha, "Single Parenting as Correlate of Academic Performance of Students in Unity Secondary School in South East Geo-Political Zone in Nigeria," *International Journal of Technology and Inclusive Education* 5, no. 2 (2016): 837–41; Stephen Tochukwu Nwachukwu, Chinweoke Methodius Ugwu, and Joseph O Wogu, "Digital Learning in Post Covid-19 Era: Policy Options and Prospects for Quality Education in Nigeria," *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 2021, 1–18.

²⁴ Kirsi Silvennoinen et al., "Food Waste Volume and Origin: Case Studies in the Finnish Food Service Sector," *Waste Management* 46 (December 2015): 140–45, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wasman.2015.09.010>.

²⁵ Katarina Cimprichová Gežová, "Father's and Mother's Roles and Their Particularities in Raising Children," *Acta Educationis Generalis* 5, no. 1 (2015): 45–50; Abiola Adiat Omokhabi and S T Lawal, "Career Women's View of Single Parenthood in Lagos State, Nigeria: Factors and Trends," *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovation* 11, no. 1 (2023): 89–96.

²⁶ Rebecca Jayne Stack and Alex Meredith, "The Impact of Financial Hardship on Single Parents: An Exploration of the Journey from Social Distress to Seeking Help," *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 39, no. 2 (2018): 233–42; Dries Van Gasse and Dimitri Mortelmans, "With or without You—Starting Single-Parent Families: A Qualitative Study on How Single Parents by Choice Reorganise Their Lives to Facilitate Single Parenthood from a Life Course Perspective," *Journal of Family Issues* 41, no. 11 (2020): 2223–48.

²⁷ Jay Fagan et al., "Should Researchers Conceptualize Differently the Dimensions of Parenting for Fathers and Mothers?," *Journal of Family Theory & Review* 6, no. 4 (2014): 390–405; A A Omokhabi, "Female Single Parents and Family Responsibilities: Implications for Social Welfare," *African Journal of Adult Education and Development Studies* 2 (2020): 72–90; Omokhabi and Lawal, "Career Women's View of Single Parenthood in Lagos State, Nigeria: Factors and Trends"; Oriola, "Academic Engagement, Learning Interests, and Psychological Well-Being of Undergraduates from Single-Parenting Backgrounds."

²⁸ Sharon Frost et al., "Virtual Immersion in Nature and Psychological Well-Being: A Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 80 (April 2022): 101765, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2022.101765>.

²⁹ Yiyang Yang and Fan Pan, "Informal Features in English Academic Writing: Mismatch between Prescriptive Advice and Actual Practice," *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 41, no. 2 (2023): 102–19, <https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2022.2088579>.

³⁰ Laura D. Kubzansky et al., "Interventions to Modify Psychological Well-Being: Progress, Promises, and an Agenda for Future Research," *Affective Science* 4, no. 1 (March 3, 2023): 174–84, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42761-022-00167-w>.

³¹ Ed Diener and Katherine Ryan, "Subjective Well-Being: A General Overview," *South African Journal of Psychology* 39, no. 4 (December 1, 2009): 391–406, <https://doi.org/10.1177/008124630903900402>.

Psychological well-being, a subset of positive psychology, has emerged as one of the most significant fields that inspires and motivates individuals to take action to improve performance and achieve goals by emphasising the positive aspects of people's lives.³²

By helping with schoolwork and encouraging academic pursuits, active parental participation might boost adolescents' learning interests.³³ To compensate for the loss of a second parent, single parents may need to play a larger role in their children's education.³⁴ According to Purwantoro, despite their frequent absence from their children's lives, single parents can still give them the encouragement and support they need.³⁵ Students' academic motivation and achievement are significantly impacted by parentage, particularly single parenting.³⁶ This implies that by employing encouraging and active parenting techniques, single or dual parents can help create a more favourable learning environment for their children.

Research indicates that children who receive emotional, motivational, and parental support are more engaged in their studies and more excited about learning.³⁷ Due in large part to emotional and financial strain, students from single-parent households typically perform less academically than their counterparts from two-parent households.³⁸ These difficulties may make it difficult for single parents to give their children the learning materials and tuition they need to ignite their enthusiasm for learning.³⁹ However, single parents may not be able to be fully involved with the education demands of their wards, due to time constraints and other responsibilities, which reduces such student's enthusiasm toward learning and education in general.⁴⁰ Still, studies show that single parenting affects students' interactions with their school environment and degree of academic engagement.⁴¹

When single parents provide intellectual and emotional support, students' excitement and engagement in school activities can significantly rise.⁴² Active parental involvement in children's

³² Tim Lomas et al., "Third Wave Positive Psychology: Broadening towards Complexity," *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 16, no. 5 (2021): 660–74, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2020.1805501>.

³³ Ellen Louise Guinaling Amante et al., "The Relationship between Parental Involvement and Academic Motivation of Grade 11 and 12 Senior High School Students," *International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* 4, no. 2 (2022): 30–40, <https://doi.org/10.54476/s713888>; Ernawati Ernawati, "The Role of Parents in Learning Motivation and Student Achievement: A Good Achievement," *JSE Journal Sains and Education* 1, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.59561/jse.v1i1.2>.

³⁴ Paul R. Amato, Sarah Patterson, and Brett Beattie, "Single-Parent Households and Children's Educational Achievement: A State-Level Analysis," *Social Science Research* 53 (September 2015): 191–202, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2015.05.012>.

³⁵ Didi Purwantoro, Ana Andriani, and Nurdiana Lestari, "The Role of Fathers as Single Parents in Student Learning Activities," in *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Social Sciences, ICONESS 2023, 22-23 July 2023, Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia* (EAI, 2023), <https://doi.org/10.4108/eai.22-7-2023.2335393>.

³⁶ Poppy Arista Febriani, Gimin Gimin, and Indra Primahardani, "The Influence of Parenting Patterns on Student Learning Motivation at MTs Fadhilah Pekanbaru," *JETISH: Journal of Education Technology Information Social Sciences and Health* 2, no. 2 (2023): 1555–62, <https://doi.org/10.57235/jetish.v2i2.591>; Joyce Hayek et al., "Authoritative Parenting Stimulates Academic Achievement, Also Partly via Self-Efficacy and Intention towards Getting Good Grades," *PLOS ONE* 17, no. 3 (2022): e0265595, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0265595>; Amare Misganaw Mihret, Galata Sitota Dilgasa, and Tsigereda Hailu Mamo,

"Parenting Style as Correlates of Adolescents' Academic Achievement Motivation of Bate Secondary School, Haramaya, Ethiopia," *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies* 7, no. 2 (2019): 172, <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijels.v.7n.2p.172>; Oriola, "Academic Engagement, Learning Interests, and Psychological Well-Being of Undergraduates from Single-Parenting Backgrounds."

³⁷ Fitri Qori Imami, Yosafat Hermawan Trinugraha, and Abdul Rahman, "Peran Ibu Sebagai Orang Tua Tunggal Dalam Mendukung Pendidikan Anak Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19," *Journal of Education, Humaniora and Social Sciences (JEHSS)* 4, no. 2 (2021): 793–800, <https://doi.org/10.34007/jehss.v4i2.747>; Nofrizal Nofrizal, Herman Nirwana, and Alizamar Alizamar, "The Contribution of Parents Attention to Student Achievement Motivation," *Journal of Educational and Learning Studies* 3, no. 1 (2020): 55, <https://doi.org/10.32698/0982>.

³⁸ Amato, Patterson, and Beattie, "Single-Parent Households and Children's Educational Achievement: A State-Level Analysis."

³⁹ Gabriel Fredi Daar et al., "Students' Perception of the Use of Learning Management System in Learning English for Specific Purpose During the Pandemic: Evidence From Rural Area in Indonesia," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 14, no. 2 (2023): 403–9.

⁴⁰ Cut Ita Zahara and Azwarni, "Evaluation of Student Learning Motivation Based on Parenting Style: A Qualitative Study," *Community Medicine and Education Journal* 4, no. 1 (June 27, 2022): 258–61, <https://doi.org/10.37275/cmej.v4i1.225>.

⁴¹ Cecilia Sin-Sze Cheung and Eva M. Pomerantz, "Value Development Underlies the Benefits of Parents' Involvement in Children's Learning: A Longitudinal Investigation in the United States and China," *Journal of Educational Psychology* 107, no. 1 (February 2015): 309–20, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037458>; Oriola, "Academic Engagement, Learning Interests, and Psychological Well-Being of Undergraduates from Single-Parenting Backgrounds"; Neema Adam Rubamande and Marcel Mukadi, "Factors Enhancing Positive Performance of Students from Single Parent at Alfagems Secondary School," *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 09, no. 09 (2021): 185–92, <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2021.99013>.

⁴² Lauren R. Gilbert, Christia Spears Brown, and Rashmita S. Mistry, "Latino Immigrant Parents' Financial Stress, Depression, and Academic Involvement Predicting Child Academic Success," *Psychology in the Schools* 54, no. 9 (November 19, 2017): 1202–15, <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22067>; Oriola, "Academic Engagement, Learning Interests, and Psychological Well-Being of Undergraduates from Single-Parenting Backgrounds."

education fosters a sense of belonging and excitement for academic pursuits, which is critical for students' overall engagement. Positive parenting behaviours are associated with higher levels of academic engagement and self-esteem among students.⁴³ This suggests that single or both parents who employ supportive and helpful parenting strategies may mitigate some of the detrimental effects of their family structure on academic involvement. Raised in a loving and supportive environment, children with single parents can develop intrinsic motivation and participate more in school.⁴⁴ Conversely, poor parenting techniques may cause children to become less engaged and motivated, resulting in low academic achievement.⁴⁵

Research indicates that children with single parents experience emotional and behavioural problems, low academic performance, and fewer social bonds.⁴⁶ To find out how single parenting affected children's academic performance, Lasisi et al. carried out an experimental study in Nigeria.⁴⁷ Research shows that students in single-parent households perform poorly academically. Ojo investigated the impact of single and dual parenting on adolescents' adjustment issues in secondary school.⁴⁸ The findings showed that the two styles of motherhood had varied effects on how male and female teenagers responded to social issues. Additionally, it was discovered that adolescents with double parents have better parental involvement and care, and have a positive self-concept.

Albina et al. investigated whether schoolchildren with two parents performed better academically than those with just one parent.⁴⁹ The results showed that schoolchildren's academic performance is unaffected by whether they have two parents or just one. Batool evaluated the direct and indirect effects of positive parenting, a caring and encouraging parenting style, on academic performance.⁵⁰ The results show that university students' self-esteem is significantly impacted by positive parenting. In Ogun State, Nigeria, Asanre et al. investigated the effects of various parent types on senior secondary school students' mathematics ability.⁵¹ The results demonstrated that the effects of single and dual-parent households on students' academic achievement in mathematics varied, with dual-parent students performing better.

Youngsters who experience positive parent-child relationships feel loved and cared for, which improves their psychological well-being and fosters their passion and dedication to study.⁵² Shao and Kang looked at the relationship between parent-child interactions and learning engagement.⁵³ The findings indicate a positive correlation between parental-child relationships, learning engagement, and motivation. Martinez-Yarza et al. investigated the effects of family involvement on kids' social-emotional development and school engagement.⁵⁴ Families that actively engage in their children's

⁴³ Eric Gaisie, Sun Sheng Han, and Hyung Min Kim, "Complexity of Resilience Capacities: Household Capitals and Resilience Outcomes on the Disaster Cycle in Informal Settlements," *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 60 (2021): 102292; Nan Zhao, Zhenguang G. Cai, and Yanping Dong, "Speech Errors in Consecutive Interpreting: Effects of Language Proficiency, Working Memory, and Anxiety," *PLOS ONE* 18, no. 10 (October 18, 2023): e0292718, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0292718>.

⁴⁴ Abiola Adiat Omokhabi, "Using Digital Technology to Enhance Adolescent and Young Adult Development: An Examination of Implications for Child Welfare in Nigeria," *Simulacra* 6, no. 1 (2023): 1–16.

⁴⁵ Zhao, Cai, and Dong, "Speech Errors in Consecutive Interpreting: Effects of Language Proficiency, Working Memory, and Anxiety."

⁴⁶ Chavda and Nisarga, "Single Parenting: Impact on Child's Development."

⁴⁷ Adekola Kamil Lasisi, Abdulhafis Adeyinka Hassan, and Habibab Bolanle Abdulkareem, "Impact of Single Parenting on Academic Performance of Junior Secondary School Students in Mathematics," *ASEAN Journal for Science Education* 3, no. 2 (2024): 129–38.

⁴⁸ O D Ojo, "Influence of Solo and Double Parenting on the Adjustment Problems of Secondary School Adolescents," *Nigerian Journal of Guidance and Counselling* 7, no. 1 (May 14, 2008), <https://doi.org/10.4314/njgc.v7i1.37043>.

⁴⁹ Albert C. Albina et al., "Is Two Better than One? Parental Involvement in Schoolchildren with One and Two Parents and Their Academic Performance," *Journal of Educational Sciences & Psychology* 15 (76), no. 2 (December 12, 2024): 120–31, <https://doi.org/10.51865/JESP.2024.2.12>.

⁵⁰ Syeda S. Batool, "Academic Achievement: Interplay of Positive Parenting, Self-esteem, and Academic Procrastination," *Australian Journal of Psychology* 72, no. 2 (June 1, 2020): 174–87, <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajpy.12280>.

⁵¹ Akorede Ayoola Asanre et al., "Impact of Parents' Types on Mathematics Achievement of Secondary School Students in Ogun-State, Nigeria," *Journal of Science and Information Technology (JOSIT)* 18, no. 1 (2024): 1–7.

⁵² Stephanie Y. Shire, Amanda Gulsrud, and Connie Kasari, "Increasing Responsive Parent–Child Interactions and Joint Engagement: Comparing the Influence of Parent-Mediated Intervention and Parent Psychoeducation," *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders* 46, no. 5 (May 21, 2016): 1737–47, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-016-2702-z>.

⁵³ Yanhong Shao and Shumin Kang, "The Link Between Parent–Child Relationship and Learning Engagement Among Adolescents: The Chain Mediating Roles of Learning Motivation and Academic Self-Efficacy," *Frontiers in Education* 7 (April 22, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.854549>.

⁵⁴ Nerea Martinez-Yarza, Josu Solabarrieta-Eizaguirre, and Rosa Santibáñez-Gruber, "The Impact of Family Involvement on Students' Social-Emotional Development: The Mediational Role of School Engagement," *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 39, no. 4 (December 26, 2024): 4297–4327, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-024-00862-1>.

education at home have been shown to improve school engagement, which in turn promotes the development of kids' social-emotional abilities.

The study by Demalata et al. investigated how students' gender affected their academic performance, interest, classroom participation, and academic achievement.⁵⁵ The study sample consisted of Sultan Kudarat State University undergraduates pursuing a Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSED) in Science. According to the study's findings, more female respondents than male respondents showed a greater interest in science courses and better levels of participation in class. However, academic achievement and classroom participation were not substantially impacted by the gender of the students. A systematic assessment of the literature on parental participation and how it affects children's learning outcomes was conducted by Musengamana in 2023. According to the study's findings, parental involvement in their children's academic pursuits has a favourable effect on their academic success, but other factors like strict parenting and high expectations for their achievement may have the opposite effect. The impact of parental support on university students' academic participation in online learning was investigated by Song et al. in 2024. The findings showed that the three sub-dimensions of academic engagement in online learning were directly and significantly impacted by parental autonomy support. This suggested that in order to encourage their children's cognitive, behavioural, and emotional engagement, parents should provide them with independent support.

Klapp et al. found a negative relationship between academic achievement and psychological well-being, indicating that students who were under stress performed better in class than those who were not.⁵⁶ However, Bückner et al. found a favourable correlation between student's psychological well-being and academic success.⁵⁷ Several other earlier studies have shown that students' psychological health and academic success are positively correlated.⁵⁸ More specifically, psychological well-being has been discovered to have a favourable correlation with significant outcomes in higher education, including increased motivation, positive behaviours, personal development, and better grades. The well-being of university students has a major positive impact on students' aspirations, involvement in school, academic achievement, and academic output in higher education.⁵⁹ Given the importance of students' psychological well-being on their academic outcomes, research that centers on their home/family background, such as parental backgrounds, and the nuanced interplay of students' gender, becomes timeous. The study, therefore, hypothesises the following:

- H₀₁:** *There is no significant mean difference between parenting backgrounds and learning interests of undergraduates in the University.*
- H₀₂:** *There is no significant mean difference between parenting backgrounds and university undergraduates' academic engagement.*
- H₀₃:** *There is no significant mean difference between parenting backgrounds and the psychological well-being of undergraduates in the University.*

⁵⁵ Jonavie G Demalata et al., "Gender Influence on Students' Interest, Classroom Participation, Academic Achievement and Academic Performance in Science," *ASEAN Journal of Community Service and Education* 3, no. 2 (2024): 119–34.

⁵⁶ Thea Klapp, Alli Klapp, and Jan-Eric Gustafsson, "Relations between Students' Well-Being and Academic Achievement: Evidence from Swedish Compulsory School," *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 39, no. 1 (March 22, 2024): 275–96, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10212-023-00690-9>.

⁵⁷ Susanne Bückner et al., "Subjective Well-Being and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Research in Personality* 74 (2018): 83–94.

⁵⁸ Zhi Li, Veronika Makarova, and Zhengxiang Wang, "Developing Literature Review Writing and Citation Practices through an Online Writing Tutorial Series: Corpus-Based Evidence," *Frontiers in Communication* 8 (2023): 1035394; Francisco Manuel Morales-Rodríguez et al., "The Relationship between Psychological Well-Being and Psychosocial Factors in University Students," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, no. 13 (July 2, 2020): 4778, <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17134778>; Noona Kiuru et al., "Associations between Adolescents' Interpersonal Relationships, School Well-Being, and Academic Achievement during Educational Transitions," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* 49, no. 5 (May 31, 2020): 1057–72, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01184-y>; Abaid Ur Rehman et al., "The Link between Mindfulness and Psychological Well-Being among University Students: The Mediating Role of Social Connectedness and Self-Esteem," *Current Psychology* 42, no. 14 (May 11, 2023): 11772–81, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02428-6>; Isaac Ahakwa et al., "The Influence of Employee Engagement, Work Environment and Job Satisfaction on Organizational Commitment and Performance of Employees: A Sampling Weights in PLS Path Modelling," *SEISENSE Journal of Management* 4, no. 3 (2021): 34–62.

⁵⁹ Gaisie, Han, and Kim, "Complexity of Resilience Capacities: Household Capitals and Resilience Outcomes on the Disaster Cycle in Informal Settlements."

- H₀₄:** *There is no significant mean difference between gender and learning interest of undergraduates in the University.*
- H₀₅:** *There is no significant mean difference between gender and academic engagement of undergraduates in the University.*
- H₀₆:** *There is no significant mean difference between gender and the psychological well-being of undergraduates in the University.*

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Self-determination Theory (SDT) lends credence to this study. The relationships between drive, attitude, and optimal functioning are the key ideas of the theory.⁶⁰ According to its theory, motivation, engagement, or interest are either extrinsic (driven by external events) or internal (intrinsic) and are effective means of influencing people's behaviour.⁶¹ It happens when someone discovers something intriguing and chooses to support it since it fits with who they are and how valuable they feel.⁶² Extrinsic motivation, which comes from external rules or regulations, is fuelled by the desire to live up to expectations or the fear of punishment.⁶³ Extrinsic incentives can be in the form of praise, awards, rankings, accolades, and the respect and acceptance of others, including parental approval. Conduct can be controlled by forcing someone to follow the rules of others out of fear, accepting them despite disagreements, showing empathy for them, and incorporating them into their values.⁶⁴

Using this approach in the study, the researchers propose that to support students' greater learning interests, academic engagement, and psychological well-being, learner background factors like parenthood should be given priority. The new normal is the rise of single-fathered and single-mother households. Single-parent families are becoming more common in developing countries, in contrast to prior periods when the phenomenon was uncommon and considered an indication of the disintegration and collapse of the family unit.⁶⁵ This has led to the stigmatisation of single parents in many cultures and communities, which might be blamed for the decline in students' academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a nonexperimental cross-sectional quantitative research type, which analyses data from a population at a single point in time using samples drawn from a population that was pertinent to this research focus.⁶⁶

Population, Sampling Techniques, and Sample

The study's participants were undergraduate students engaged in degree programmes at Nigeria's Federal University Oye-Ekiti. Purposive sampling was used to choose this public school in Ekiti State since some children were thought to have come from different family backgrounds. A simple random sampling approach was used to select 230 undergraduate students from the various departments and faculties using a Google Form. In the first section of the Form, the sampled students were informed of the study's goals and asked for their informed consent to participate. They did so. The online survey was hosted during the

⁶⁰ Magdaline Agbu Abe Hiko, Ayhan Cakici Es, and Engin Baysen, "Single Parenting and Students' Academic Performance," *South African Journal of Education* 43, no. 4 (November 30, 2023): 1–9, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v43n4a2297>.

⁶¹ Edward L Deci and Richard M Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2013).

⁶² Deci and Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*.

⁶³ Deci and Ryan, *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*.

⁶⁴ Olle Th.J. ten Cate, Rashmi A. Kusurkar, and Geoffrey C. Williams, "How Self-Determination Theory Can Assist Our Understanding of the Teaching and Learning Processes in Medical Education. AMEE Guide No. 59," *Medical Teacher* 33, no. 12 (December 6, 2011): 961–73, <https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2011.595435>.

⁶⁵ Hiko, Cakici Es, and Baysen, "Single Parenting and Students' Academic Performance."

⁶⁶ Christian Maier et al., "Cross-Sectional Research: A Critical Perspective, Use Cases, and Recommendations for IS Research," *International Journal of Information Management* 70 (June 2023): 102625, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2023.102625>; Xiaofeng Wang and Zhenshun Cheng, "Cross-Sectional Studies," *Chest* 158, no. 1 (July 2020): S65–71, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chest.2020.03.012>.

first semester of the 2024–2025 school year. Males were 140 (60.9%) of the respondents, while females were 90 (39.1%).

Instruments

Data was gathered using a tool called the "Students' Academic Engagement, Learning Interest, Psychological Well-being and Parenting Questionnaire (SAELIPWPQ)." A, B, C, and D were its four sections. These included the respondents' gender, educational attainment, parental and faculty backgrounds, psychological well-being, academic engagement, and learning interests. Osiesi et al.'s 2024 Academic Engagement Questionnaire (AEQ) (part B) was adopted and used, which assessed students' participation in social and academic activities. Olatunbosun and Pillay have validated the internal consistency of this scale, with a Cronbach alpha of 0.81.⁶⁷ A five-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the scale, with five representing "very often," four representing "frequently," three representing "occasionally," two representing "rarely," and one representing "never." The pilot test for the current study revealed a Cronbach alpha of 0.92 in the context of the investigation. The Wu Validated Scale served as the basis for the Learning Interest Scale (part C).⁶⁸ The 14 items in this example measure the learning interests of the students and were ranked from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree on a 4-point Likert scale. Cronbach alpha for this scale is 0.85.

The shortened 18-item Psychological Well-Being Scale was developed using the Ryff Scale (the current study's pilot result produced a Cronbach alpha = 0.70).⁶⁹ According to Ryff et al., the scale was originally based on the 42-item Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) Scale, which evaluates six aspects of happiness and well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal development, positive interpersonal relationships, life purpose, and self-acceptance. Section D was composed of the following 6-Likert scale categories: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Slightly Agree (Slightly Agree), Neutral (N), Slightly Disagree (Slightly Disagree), and Disagree (D).⁷⁰

Data Analysis

Utilising SPSS V26 software, descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation) and ANOVA were employed to analyse the study's data at a 5% significance level.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of the Social Sciences, Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria (FUOYE/FSCS/2024/03/0014). Informed consent was sought from all participants prior to their participation, and they were all informed that participating in the study was entirely voluntary and that they could pull out from the study at any point in time, at any point in time. In all, the study strictly adhered to the Helsinki Declaration.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Respondents' Demography

The respondents' biodata distribution is shown in Table 1. It showed that 39.1% of respondents were women and 60.9% of respondents were men. This suggests that men made up the majority of the study's responses. Based on the results of respondents' nature of parenting, it was found that the majority of the respondents 71.7% live with both parents, 21.3% of them live with only their mother, 5.7% of them live with only their father and 1.3% of them live with their grandmother. This implies that most of the respondents live with their dual parents.

Table 1: Biodata

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
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⁶⁷ Stella Oluwakemi Olatunbosun and Jace Pillay, "Self-Esteem, Academic Engagement and Fatigue among Undergraduates: Assessing the Role of School Support," *Futurity Education* 4, no. 4 (September 29, 2024): 78–94, <https://doi.org/10.57125/FED.2024.12.25.05>.

⁶⁸ Wang et al., "Moderating Effect of Gender and Engineering Identity on the Association between Interpersonal Relationships and Mental Health of Female Engineering Students."

⁶⁹ Carol Ryff et al., "National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II), 2004-2006," 2007.

⁷⁰ Ryff et al., "National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS II), 2004-2006."

Gender		
Male	140	60.9
Female	90	39.1
Total	230	100
Nature of Parenting		
Grandmother	3	1.3
Only Father	13	5.7
Only Mother	49	21.3
Both Parents	165	71.7
Total	230	100

Tests of Assumptions

It has become imperative that researchers ensure that the data to be used for analysis meets certain assumptions of the statistical tools intended to be used. After making sure there were no notable outliers, the data gathered for this investigation were put through tests of homogeneity of variance and normality. The results of the normality assumption based on skewness and kurtosis values were -2 to +2 and -7 to +7, respectively, demonstrating that the data is normally distributed because the values from the data fall within the acceptable range (Bryne, 2010). Additionally, a test of the group means' homogeneity of variances reveals no significance ($p > 0.05$). This indicates the homogeneity of the various groups.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant mean difference between parenting backgrounds and undergraduates' learning interests.

Table 2 presents the results on the significant difference between parenting backgrounds and the learning interests of undergraduates at the university. The results of the ANOVA test reveal that the observed mean difference between parenting backgrounds and learning interest was not statistically significant ($F_{(229)} = 0.44$; $p = 0.72$). Hence, H₀₁ is not rejected. This implies that there is no difference between students' parenting backgrounds and their learning interests.

Table 2: ANOVA of Parenting Backgrounds and Learning Interests of Undergraduates

Nature of Parenting	N	Mean	SD	DF	F-value	Sig.	Remark
Grandmother	3	42.67	3.51	229	0.444	0.722	Not Significant
Only Mother	49	42.94	6.86				
Only Father	13	44.08	6.17				
Both Parents	165	42.16	6.72				
Total	230	42.44	6.68				

Significant at $p < 0.05$; $MS_{Btw} = 19.93$; $MS_{Within} = 44.89$

H₀₂: There is no significant mean difference between parenting backgrounds and university undergraduates' academic engagement.

Table 3 presents the results on the significant difference between parenting backgrounds and the academic engagement of undergraduates at the university. The results of the ANOVA test reveal that the observed mean difference between parenting backgrounds and academic engagement was not statistically significant ($F_{(229)} = 0.16$; $p = 0.92$). Hence, H₀₂ is not rejected. This implies that there is no difference between parenting backgrounds and the academic engagement of undergraduates in the university.

Table 3: ANOVA of Students' Parenting Backgrounds and Academic Engagement of Undergraduates

Nature of Parenting	N	Mean	SD	DF	F-value	Sig.	Remark
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Grandmother		3	40.67	8.15	229	0.163	0.921	Not Significant
Only Mother		49	42.86	11.31				
Only Father		13	44.38	11.84				
Both Parents		165	42.55	10.19				
Total		230	42.70	10.46				

Significant at $p < 0.05$; $MS_{Btw} = 18.05$; $MS_{Within} = 110.68$

H₀₃: There is no significant mean difference between parenting backgrounds and the psychological well-being of undergraduates in the university.

Table 4: ANOVA of Parenting Backgrounds and Psychological Well-being of Undergraduates

Nature of Parenting	N	Mean	SD	DF	F-value	Sig.	Remark
Grandmother	3	49.33	6.028	229	2.093	0.102	Not Significant
Only Mother	49	58.73	7.648				
Only Father	13	56.23	10.142				
Both Parents	165	55.54	9.529				
Total	230	56.18	9.236				

Significant at $p < 0.05$; $MS_{Btw} = 176.06$; $MS_{Within} = 84.10$

Table 4 presents results on the significant difference between parenting backgrounds and the psychological well-being of undergraduates at the university. The results of the ANOVA test reveal that the observed mean difference between parenting backgrounds and psychological well-being was not statistically significant ($F_{(229)} = 2.09$; $p = 0.10$). Hence, H₀₃ is not rejected. This implies that there is no difference between parenting backgrounds and the psychological well-being of undergraduates in the university.

H₀₄: There is no significant mean difference between gender and learning interest of undergraduates in the University.

H₀₅: There is no significant mean difference between gender and academic engagement of undergraduates in the University.

H₀₆: There is no significant mean difference between gender and the psychological well-being of undergraduates in the University.

Table 5: Significant Mean Difference Between Gender and the Dependent Variables

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Df	t	Sig	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Learning Interest	Male	140	42.19	7.39	228	-0.758	0.449	-0.640	0.903
	Female	90	42.83	5.39					
Academic Engagement	Male	140	44.94	9.77	228	4.208	0.000	5.743	1.365
	Female	90	39.20	10.60					
Psychological Wellbeing	Male	140	56.39	9.51	228	0.424	0.672	0.530	1.250
	Female	90	55.86	8.85					

Table 5 presents the significant difference between gender and the dependent variables of undergraduates at the university. The result of gender and learning interest in Table 5 reveals that the mean score ($\bar{x} = 42.19$, $SD = 7.39$) of females is slightly higher than the mean score ($\bar{x} = 42.83$, $SD = 5.39$) of males. However, it was not statistically significant ($t_{(228)} = -0.76$; $p = 0.45$). This implies that gender does not significantly influence learning interest among undergraduates in the university. Moreover, the result of gender and academic engagement in Table 5 reveals that the mean score ($\bar{x} = 44.94$, $SD = 9.77$)

of males is higher than the mean score ($\bar{x}$ =39.20, SD=10.60) of females. It was statistically significant ($t_{(228)} = 4.21$; $p=0.000$). This implies that gender, in favour of males, significantly influenced academic engagement among undergraduates in the university. The result of gender and psychological well-being of undergraduates shows that the mean score ($\bar{x}$ =56.39, SD=9.51) of males is higher than the mean score ($\bar{x}$ =55.86, SD=8.85) of females. However, it was not statistically significant ($t_{(228)} = 0.42$; $p=0.67$), implying that gender does not significantly influence the psychological well-being of university undergraduates.

DISCUSSION

At the Federal University Oye-Ekiti in Nigeria, this study examined the connections between undergraduates' psychological well-being, learning interests, parentage, and academic engagement. The results of this study show that students' learning interests, academic engagement, and psychological well-being are not significantly impacted by their parentage. Our data provides a contrasting result as to those of previous research.⁷¹ Could this be the result of inert contextual or cultural factors? Given the context, this study is of the position that undergraduates, irrespective of their parental background, are academically and psychologically resilient. Undergraduates sampled in this study may have been impacted more by external or other environmental factors than the struggles or challenges they could be encountering from their parental experiences. In the context of this study, some undergraduates fend for themselves⁷² irrespective of the nature of their parentage; for this set of undergraduates, their academic motivation, engagement, and psychological well-being could be dependent on factors outside their home/parental-related factors.

The findings of the study have indicated that gender significantly influenced academic engagement among undergraduates at the university in favour of males. Being a patriarchal society, males in the study context are aware of their responsibilities to both their immediate and external families, and the larger society. This includes adequately fending for and providing for their family and relations. This perception must have caused the male undergraduates sampled in this study to become more engaged academically than their female counterparts. This finding is in tandem with those of previous studies that indicated higher academic engagement among male undergraduates.⁷³ The study contrasts the findings conducted in China by Xu et al. which depicted higher academic engagement among females than males.⁷⁴ We think this could be contextual.

The findings also indicate that gender does not significantly influence undergraduates' learning interests, implying that student's interest in learning does not incline them to be male or female. Learning interest could be influenced by several other factors, including psychological, environmental, structural, or school-related factors. This is in line with the findings of Gaisey et al. who revealed that gender does not affect students' learning interests.⁷⁵ But contrast those of Godpower-Echie and Ihenko that indicate the potent influence of students' gender on their learning interests.⁷⁶ Additionally, research has shown that students' psychological well-being is not considerably impacted by their gender. Both male and female students frequently experience stressors such as performance pressure, academic load, and

⁷¹ Cheung and Pomerantz, "Value Development Underlies the Benefits of Parents' Involvement in Children's Learning: A Longitudinal Investigation in the United States and China."; Imami, Trinugraha, and Rahman, "Peran Ibu Sebagai Orang Tua Tunggal Dalam Mendukung Pendidikan Anak Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19"; Nofrizal, Nirwana, and Alizamar, "The Contribution of Parents Attention to Student Achievement Motivation"; Rubamande and Mukadi, "Factors Enhancing Positive Performance of Students from Single Parent at Alfagems Secondary School"; Zahara and Azwarni, "Evaluation of Student Learning Motivation Based on Parenting Style: A Qualitative Study."

⁷² Mensah Prince Osiesi et al., "Undergraduates' Educational Life and Academic Engagement in Southwest Universities in Nigeria: The Role of Gender and Perceived Poverty," *Journal of Poverty*, April 10, 2024, 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10875549.2024.2338175>.

⁷³ Leraas, Kippen, and Larson, "Gender and Student Participation"; Merayo and Ayuso, "Analysis of Barriers, Supports and Gender Gap in the Choice of STEM Studies in Secondary Education"; Osiesi et al., "Undergraduates' Educational Life and Academic Engagement in Southwest Universities in Nigeria: The Role of Gender and Perceived Poverty"; Rozgonjuk et al., "The S in STEM: Gender Differences in Science Anxiety and Its Relations with Science Test Performance-Related Variables."

⁷⁴ Huang and Liu, "Challenging Gender Stereotypes: Representations of Gender through Social Interactions in English Learning Textbooks."

⁷⁵ Gaisie, Han, and Kim, "Complexity of Resilience Capacities: Household Capitals and Resilience Outcomes on the Disaster Cycle in Informal Settlements."

⁷⁶ Godpower-Echie Glory and Sopuruchi Ihenko, "Influence of Gender on Interest and Academic Achievement of Students in Integrated Science in Obio Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State," *European Scientific Journal* 13, no. 10 (2017): 211–19.

external challenges. These pressures affect everyone's psychological well-being, regardless of gender. Learning settings that are encouraging and characterised by top-notch education and teacher support benefit all students, regardless of gender. This implies that institutional variables often outweigh gender-specific differences in psychological health outcomes.⁷⁷ Conversely, this outcome runs counter to Akhter's results, which affirmed that gender significantly influences an individual's psychological well-being.⁷⁸

Summarily, it is inferred, particularly within the context of this study, that students' learning interests, academic engagement, and psychological well-being are not significantly impacted by the nature of parental background that they come from or how they have been parented. Other extraneous variables, if considered in future research, could indicate higher significant outcomes. Also, gender in favour of males significantly influenced academic engagement among undergraduates in the university. This is tenable given that, in the study context, they are perceived to be better performing than their female counterparts, given their patriarchal underpinnings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, the study recommends that:

- i. a congenial and enabling learning environment that fosters undergraduates' academic engagement should be provided in Nigerian universities (especially the institutional management);
- ii. governments in Nigeria should promote positive gender dynamics, gender equality and equity policies and practices, be enshrined into universities' teaching and learning operations, management, and culture;
- iii. university management team should provide an enabling environment that fosters students' learning interests, academic engagement, and psychological well-being;
- iv. educational psychologists and counselors in Nigerian universities should develop mechanisms and actionable strategies that could help enhance students' learning interests, academic engagement, and psychological well-being.

CONCLUSION

Parental-related factors have been rated a critical variable that impacts students' academic and psychological outcomes. This study has examined the relationship between academic engagement, learning interests, psychological well-being, and parental background at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria. The findings of the study have revealed a nonsignificant difference between undergraduates' parenting backgrounds and their learning interests, academic engagement, and psychological well-being. The findings also reveal that the gender significantly influenced their academic participation, but not their learning interests or psychological well-being.

STUDY'S LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several merits, but it also has certain drawbacks that could restrict how broadly the results can be applied. For example, the sample size is presumably small and does not accurately reflect the population of the group being sampled. Additionally, there are some drawbacks to using self-report questionnaires as the primary method of collecting data due to problems with self-reporting bias. Future research could adopt a more robust sampling size and research methods such as mixed methods to pursue a similar research focus.

⁷⁷ Xuran Han, Wei Li, and Roberto Filippi, "The Effects of Habitual Code-Switching in Bilingual Language Production on Cognitive Control," *Bilingualism: Language and Cognition* 25, no. 5 (November 13, 2022): 869–89, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1366728922000244>; Charlott Rubach et al., "Does Instructional Quality Impact Male and Female University Students Differently? Focusing on Academic Stress, Academic Satisfaction, and Mental Health Impairment," *Frontiers in Education* 7 (February 10, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2022.820321>.

⁷⁸ Sana Akhter, "Psychological Well-Being in Student of Gender Difference," *International Journal of Indian Psychology* 2, no. 4 (September 25, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.25215/0204.040>.

Declarations

Informed Consent

The authors have obtained informed consent from all participants.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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