

PARENTAL VALUE PREFERENCE AS PREDICTOR OF ACHIEVEMENT ORIENTATION OF IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS FOR FUTURE-READY EDUCATION IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract

The paper examined the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation among in-school adolescents in Enugu State, Nigeria. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the study. A correlational research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised all the 26,130 Senior Secondary (SS II) in-school adolescents in government-owned secondary schools in Enugu State. A sample of 1,350 in-school adolescents was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Data were collected using two instruments namely: the Parental Value Preference Questionnaire (PVPQ) and the In-school Adolescent Achievement Orientation Questionnaire (ISAAOQ). The instrument was validated by three experts, two from the Department of Educational Foundations (Psychology Unit) and one from the Department of Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation Unit). The reliability of the instruments was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.71 for the Parental Value Preference Questionnaire (PVPQ) and 0.73 for the In-school Adolescents' Achievement Orientation Questionnaire (ISAAOQ). Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, while simple linear regression was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation among in-school adolescents. The findings also revealed that parental value preference significantly predicted achievement orientation among in-school adolescents. The study contributed to knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the role of parental value preference in fostering adolescents' achievement orientation, thereby informing educational and family-based interventions. Based on the findings, it was recommended that parents should promote positive value systems that encourage goal-setting and academic commitment among adolescents.

Keywords: achievement orientation, in-school adolescents, parental level of education

Introduction

The decline in achievement orientation among in-school adolescents has become a growing concern, particularly in developing contexts where academic disengagement, truancy, and maladaptive achievement behaviours are increasingly reported (Ketonen et al, 2023). In contemporary educational systems that are increasingly driven by digital pedagogies and future-ready learning goals, achievement orientation remains critical for school adolescents' engagement, persistence, adaptation and academic success (Xie et al, 2022). Understanding the factors that influence achievement orientation is therefore essential for improving students' academic development.

Among the key influences on adolescents' achievement-related behaviours is the family environment, particularly the values transmitted by parents. As primary agents of socialisation, parents have extended opportunities to transmit their values, beliefs, and behavioural expectations to their children (Grusec & Davidov, 2019). Value refers to the importance individuals attach to issues, behaviours, objects, or phenomena, and it guides

attitudes, decisions, and actions. Individuals' value systems may change as a result of experience, education, and environmental influences. Consequently, people attach varying degrees of importance to situations and behaviours based on their values and preferences. Value preference refers to the attitudes and behavioural dispositions individuals exhibit toward certain goals or forms of accomplishment (Nazirova & Borbala, 2024).

Parental value preferences in the home setting reflect the priorities and attitudes parents have about success, hard work, and appropriate ways to achieve it (Šimunović & Babarović, 2020). These values shape parenting practices and are often internalised by adolescents through socialisation processes. In this study, parental value preference refers to parents' attitudes and behaviours toward the achievement of in-school adolescents. While some parents emphasise hard work, discipline, perseverance, and proper training as pathways to achievement, others may tolerate or encourage shortcuts to success (Mullins, 2019). Such value orientations may predispose adolescents to maladaptive behaviours such as truancy, examination malpractice, cultism, cyber-related crimes, kidnapping, and robbery. Research has shown that parental values and beliefs significantly predict adolescents' achievement-related attitudes and behaviours (Dietrich, 2016). Parents who emphasise positive achievement values are more likely to promote high achievement orientation among adolescents.

Research has consistently shown that parental value systems are closely linked to adolescents' achievement-related behaviours. For instance, studies have shown that parental value preferences significantly predict adolescents' achievement orientation and behaviour, as adolescents often internalize family-held values regarding effort, success, discipline, and acceptable means of attaining achievement (Mullins, 2019; Šimunović & Babarović, 2020). These findings suggest that the values transmitted within the family environment play a critical role in shaping adolescents' orientation toward academic tasks and success. Similarly, cross-cultural evidence further supports the influence of value systems on educational and behavioural outcomes across different settings. Dallasheh (2024) and Vecchione and Schwartz (2022), for example, found that both students and teachers across different countries tend to demonstrate consistent value preferences, reinforcing the idea that values are central to behavioural regulation and achievement orientation within educational settings.

Closely related to parental value preference is parental level of education, which shapes both the content and transmission of values within the home. Parental level of education refers to the highest educational qualification attained by parents. It reflects the extent of formal knowledge, exposure, and academic experience parents possess, which may influence their attitudes toward education, parenting practices, and the support they provide to their children (Idris, Hussain & Ahmad, 2020). In the context of this study, parental level of education refers to the educational attainment of parents and how it may influence the transmission of parental values and the achievement orientation of in-school adolescents in Enugu State. Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to value academic achievement, monitor their children's school activities, provide learning resources, and encourage positive study habits. They are also more likely to transmit achievement-oriented values such as discipline, persistence, and hard work to their children (Davis-Kean, Tang, & Waters, 2019; Onyedikachim & Ezekiel-Hart, 2021). In contrast, parents with lower levels of education may have limited capacity to provide academic guidance or reinforce educational aspirations due to restricted educational exposure and opportunities. Within the Nigerian context, where family background significantly shapes educational experiences, parental level of education may determine the extent to which adolescents develop positive attitudes toward achievement and

legitimate pathways to success (Ciciolla et al, 2017). Empirical evidence suggests that parental educational background significantly influences adolescents' academic motivation and achievement-related behaviours (Obi & Okeke, 2014; Shurovi, Hasan, & Ounissi, 2025).

Parental level of education has been widely reported as a significant determinant of adolescents' academic performance and achievement-related behaviours. Empirical findings suggest that highly educated parents are more likely to provide academic support, engage in learning-related activities, and foster positive achievement behaviours in their children (Careemdeen, & Awang, 2022; Wu, 2024; Deen, 2023). This indicates that parental educational attainment may enhance the transmission of achievement-supportive values and expectations within the home environment.

Despite growing recognition of the role of family factors in adolescent development, existing studies have largely examined parental value preference and parental level of education in isolation. There is limited empirical evidence on how these variables jointly influence adolescents' achievement orientation, particularly within the Nigerian environment. Furthermore, much of the available research has been conducted in non-African settings, thereby limiting contextual relevance. As educational systems continue to emphasize smart classrooms and future-ready learning environments, understanding family-based factors that shape adolescents' achievement orientation becomes increasingly important for supporting in-school adolescents' motivation and adaptability. This gap necessitates further empirical investigation into how parental value preference predicts achievement orientation and how parental level of education may condition this relationship among in-school adolescents in Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

In school settings, in-school adolescents are expected to exhibit strong achievement orientation, demonstrated through regular school attendance, active engagement in learning, commitment to academic tasks, and the pursuit of success through legitimate means. Such behaviours are often nurtured within supportive family environments where parents transmit positive values such as hard work, discipline, and perseverance, while also providing adequate guidance and academic support. Parental level of education further strengthens this process by influencing the value placed on schooling and the quality of support provided to adolescents. In an era where schools are increasingly expected to prepare learners for future-ready and technology-driven educational environments, strong achievement orientation has become even more essential for adolescents' academic engagement and adaptability.

However, the situation in Enugu State appears to deviate from this expectation, as evidence suggests a growing trend of low achievement orientation among in-school adolescents. Many students exhibit truancy, poor study habits, lateness to school, and involvement in examination malpractice, reflecting a preference for shortcuts to success. Parental value preference may play a critical role in explaining this trend, as the values parents hold regarding achievement can influence adolescents' attitudes toward effort, success, and acceptable means of attainment. However, the strength and direction of this relationship may not be uniform across all adolescents. Parental level of education may condition how values are transmitted, interpreted, and reinforced within the home, thereby influencing the extent to which parental value preference translates into adolescents' achievement orientation.

Despite these considerations, there is limited empirical evidence examining the predictive role of parental value preference on achievement orientation, as well as the moderating role of parental level of education in this relationship, particularly within the

context of Enugu State. This gap necessitates an investigation into how parental value preference predicts achievement orientation and whether parental level of education moderates this relationship among in-school adolescents.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined the predictive role of parental value preference on the achievement orientation of in-school adolescents in Enugu State, Nigeria. It also investigated whether parental level of education moderates the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation of in-school adolescents
2. determine whether parental level of education moderates the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation of in-school adolescents in Enugu State?
2. Does parental level of education moderate the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation of in-school adolescents?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation of in-school adolescents.
2. Parental level of education does not significantly moderate the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation of in-school adolescents.

Methods

The study adopted a correlational research design to examine the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation among in-school adolescents in Enugu State, Nigeria. A correlational design was considered appropriate because it enables the determination of the nature and strength of the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them (Nworgu, 2015). The study was conducted in Enugu State, which is divided into six education zones, namely Agbani, Awgu, Enugu, Obollo-Afor, Nsukka, and Udi, with a total of 321 public secondary schools (Planning, Research and Statistics Unit, Post Primary School Management Board, Enugu). The area was selected because, despite various government interventions aimed at improving educational quality through the provision of instructional materials, recruitment of qualified teachers, and reduction of school fees, concerns regarding poor achievement orientation among in-school adolescents have persisted. Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence on the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation among adolescents in the state.

The population of the study comprised all 26,130 Senior Secondary School II (SSII) students enrolled in public secondary schools in Enugu State (Planning, Research and Statistics Unit, Post Primary School Management Board, Enugu). Senior Secondary II students were considered appropriate because they had spent sufficient time in the school system to develop stable academic attitudes and aspirations, while not yet being preoccupied with external examinations. A sample of 1,350 SSII students was selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Initially, Nsukka and Obollo-Afor Education Zones were purposively selected. Thereafter, 38 public secondary schools were selected proportionately from the two education zones, comprising 21 schools from Nsukka and 17 schools from Obollo-Afor. Subsequently, 45 SSII classes were selected through proportionate stratified random sampling, ensuring that at least one class was selected

from each participating school. Finally, 30 students were selected from each class using simple random sampling, resulting in a total sample of 1,350 respondents.

Data were collected using two researcher-developed instruments, namely the Parental Value Preference Questionnaire (PVPQ) and the In-school Adolescents' Achievement Orientation Questionnaire (ISAAOQ). The PVPQ consisted of 20 items designed to assess parental value preferences relating to adolescents' achievement, while the ISAAOQ comprised 30 items that measured achievement orientation among in-school adolescents. Both instruments were structured on a four-point Likert response scale of Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1), with negatively worded items reverse scored. The instruments were face-validated by three experts, comprising two specialists in Educational Psychology from the Department of Educational Foundations and one specialist in Educational Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Science Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Their observations regarding the clarity, relevance, and adequacy of the items were incorporated into the final versions of the instruments.

To establish the reliability of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted using 30 SSII students from Government Secondary School, Abakpa, Enugu State, who were not part of the study sample. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined using Cronbach's Alpha. The PVPQ yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.71, while the ISAAOQ yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.73, indicating that both instruments possessed acceptable levels of reliability for the study. Before data collection, an introductory letter obtained from the Head of the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, was presented to the principals of the participating schools to seek permission to conduct the study. The researcher, assisted by five trained research assistants, personally administered the questionnaires to the respondents and retrieved them immediately after completion, thereby ensuring a high rate of questionnaire return.

The data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to determine the relationship between the study variables. Simple linear regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses were rejected whenever the associated probability value was less than or equal to 0.05; otherwise, they were retained.

Results

Table 1: Relationship Between Parental Value Preference and Achievement Orientation among In-School Adolescents

Variables	N	M	SD	<i>r</i>	Decision
Parental value preference	1350	3.28	0.29		
Achievement orientation	1350	3.38	0.32	.150**	Positive

M = Mean; *SD* = Standard deviation; *r* = Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient. *p* < .01

From Table 1, parental value preference (*M* = 3.28, *SD* = 0.29) and achievement orientation (*M* = 3.38, *SD* = 0.32) show a positive relationship. The correlation coefficient (*r* = .150) indicates a low but positive relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation of in-school adolescents.

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Parental Value Preference as a Predictor of Achievement Orientation

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	R ²	Beta	Sig.
Regression	2915.349	1	2915.349	31.009			.000 ^a
Residual	126732.444	1348	94.015		.022	.150	
Total	129647.793	1349					

Dependent variable = Achievement orientation. Predictor = Parental value preference. β = Standardized beta coefficient. R^2 = Coefficient of determination. $p < .001$

Data in table 2 show that parental value preference significantly predicts achievement orientation, $F(1,1348) = 31.009$, $p < .05$. The R^2 value of .022 indicates that parental value preference explains 2.2% of the variance in achievement orientation. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 3: Pearson Correlation analysis showing the relationship between parental level of education and parental value preference on achievement orientation of in-school adolescents

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	Decision
Parental value preference	1350	3.28	.26		Positive
Achievement orientation	1350	3.38	.32	.149 ^{**}	
Parental level of education	1347	2.03	.89		

M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation; r = Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient; N = Number of respondents. $p < .01$

From Table 3, parental level of education ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 0.50$) and parental value preference showed a positive relationship with achievement orientation ($r = .149$), indicating a weak but positive relationship.

Table 4: Regression analysis showing parental level of education moderating the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation

Model	SS	Df	MS	F	R ²	Beta	Sig.
Regression	2956.470	1	1478.235	15.717			.000 ^a
Residual	126691.324	1348	94.054		.023	.151	
Total	129647.793	1349					

Predictors: (Constant), parental value preference, location; Dependent Variable:

Table 4 shows that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 1348) = 15.72$, $p < .001$. The model explained 2.3% of the variance in achievement orientation ($R^2 = .023$), indicating that the predictor(s) included in the model significantly explained achievement orientation.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that there is a positive and significant relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation of in-school adolescents. This implies that adolescents whose parents uphold positive value systems such as hard work, discipline, and responsibility are more likely to demonstrate stronger achievement orientation. This finding is consistent with Mullins (2019), who reported that value

preference significantly predicts adolescents' achievement-related outcomes. It also supports Dietrich (2016) who observed that value systems transmitted within families influence students' academic motivation and behaviour. The finding further aligns with Šimunović and Babarović (2020), who noted that although societal shifts in values exist, parental value systems still play a role in shaping adolescents' attitudes toward achievement, especially when hard work is emphasized over shortcuts. However, it contradicts Vecchione and Schwartz (2022), who argued that adolescents' achievement orientation is primarily shaped by personal values rather than parental influence.

The study also found a positive and significant relationship between parental level of education and achievement orientation of in-school adolescents. This indicates that adolescents whose parents are more educated tend to exhibit higher achievement orientation. This finding corroborates earlier studies which demonstrates significant influence of parental education on students' academic performance. This finding is consistent with Shurovi, Hasanm, and Ounissi (2025), who found that parental educational background positively influences children's academic outcomes. It also aligns with earlier studies (Onyedikachim & Ezekiel-Hart, 2021; Davis-Kean, Tang, & Waters, 2019), which report that students whose parents have higher educational attainment tend to achieve better academically. The result further corroborates recent empirical evidence indicating that parental educational attainment is associated with increased academic support, monitoring, and guidance provided to children, which in turn enhances their achievement orientation. Contemporary studies emphasise that parents with higher educational backgrounds are more likely to engage in meaningful academic involvement and set higher expectations, both of which significantly improve students' academic outcomes (Jeynes, 2022; Kantova, 2024).

The study revealed that parental level of education significantly moderates the relationship between parental value preference and achievement orientation among in-school adolescents. This indicates that the influence of parental values on adolescents' achievement orientation becomes stronger as parents' educational attainment increases. This finding is consistent with contemporary research showing that more highly educated parents are better positioned to transmit achievement-related values, set higher academic expectations, and provide structured academic support that reinforces positive learning behaviours (Jeynes, 2022; Ayala et al, 2026). Empirical evidence further suggests that parental education enhances both the clarity and consistency of value socialization within the home, thereby strengthening its impact on adolescents' academic outcomes (Safira et al, 2022). The implication is that parental education amplifies the effectiveness of value transmission, ultimately improving adolescents' achievement orientation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that parental value preference and parental level of education are important factors influencing achievement orientation among in-school adolescents in Enugu State. The study demonstrated that adolescents are more likely to develop positive achievement orientation when parents emphasise core values such as hard work and when parents possess higher levels of education. Furthermore, parental level of education was found to enhance the influence of parental value preference on adolescents' achievement orientation. This suggests that both variables interact to shape adolescents' academic attitudes and behaviours.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should be encouraged to consistently promote core values such as hard work, discipline, and perseverance in order to enhance adolescents' achievement orientation.
2. Government and educational stakeholders should organize parental enlightenment programmes to improve awareness on the importance of value transmission in children's academic development.
3. Parents with lower educational attainment should be supported through adult education and sensitization programmes to improve their ability to guide and support their children's academic development.
4. Schools should strengthen home-school collaboration to ensure that positive academic values are reinforced both at home and in school.

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