

Socioeconomic Status and Students' Achievement Score at Secondary Level: A Correlational Study

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Abstract

The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and students' achievement score (SAS) at the secondary level schools. Three attributes (parental income, parental educational level and parental occupation) regarding socio-economic status were used to explore their relationship with students' achievement score. The present study was correlational by method and quantitative approach was adopted to determine the association between socio-economic status and students' achievement score of 9th grade students. A sample of 320 male students for this study was taken through multistage cluster random sampling technique from the public secondary schools of the district Faisalabad. A self-developed scale was used to measure the socio-economic status of the students who participated in the study. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data through SPSS 20 Version. For inferential statistics Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) was used. The results of the present study showed a moderate positive relationship between parental income and students' achievement score; $r(320) = .42, p < .01$; between parental educational level and students' achievement score; $r(320) = .51, p < .001$; and between parental occupation and students' achievement score; $r(320) = .58, p < .001$.

Keywords: Parental income, parental educational level, parental occupation, socio-economic status, students' achievement score.

1. Introduction

The provision of Quality Education (QE) is the basic birth right of every child without any caste, color, or creed, etc; and it is a significant indicator of human resource development (HRD) in a country (Shittu, 2004). But there is a vast gap in this regard between developed and developing countries. As Pakistan is a developing country and different factors affect the provision of QE for a learner. Socio-economic status (SES) of a child is one the major factors which is directly associated with the provision of QE of a child; and the consequence of the provision of QE is surely the attainment of higher Academic Achievement Score (AAS) in a test. AAS is an important aspect in the life of a child. The success or failure of a learner is measured with respect to his/her academic achievement score.

The SES of a child can be determined mostly by his/her parents' occupational status (OS), educational level (EL) and income level (IL) (Jeynes, 2002); and several studies have explored that SES affects the students' achievement score (McNeal, 2001; Jeynes, 2002; Hochchild, 2003; Eamon, 2005). The SES is generally categorized into three main classes include: i) low socio-economic status, ii) middle socio-economic status, and iii) high socio-economic status to

depict the three different areas i.e. income, education and occupation of a family or of an individual into which he/she may fall. In a study Battle and Lewis (2002) found that lower SES children have slower and lower academic achievement as compared to those students who belong to higher SES families. In a study in Pakistan, Shah and Khan (2002) investigated that parental education and father's occupation had a significant effect on their children's achievement score.

There is a positive relationship between SES and students achievement grades (Eamon, 2005). Graetz (2007) explored that children having high socio-economic status perform better in educational activities and attain higher grades in exams than low socio-economic status children. Those families, who have low sources of income, commonly face depression, disruption and separation in parenting, and family conflicts, etc. Consequently, these factors divert the focus of students' from their studies and this situation lead students' towards low achievement score. The SES of an individual is also a predictor of its behavior.

Ahmar and Anwar (2013) found in their study which was conducted in Lucknow, a city of India that students' academic achievement (SAA) was affected by the SES and those students who belonged to high SES demonstrated better performance in exams than low SES students. Similarly in another study in India, Kumra (2015) also explored that students belonging to high SES attained better achievement score than the students of low SES.

In a study Seyfried (1998) found that low SES learners had attained score about 10% lower than high SES learners on the National Assessment of Educational Programs (NAEP). It is considered that low SES affects students' achievement score (SAS) because low SES averts access to fundamental resources and cause additional anxiety at home (Majoribanks 1996; Jeynes 2002; Eamon 2005).

According to Akhtar (2012) SES is a construct which is composed of two variables: i) social status (SS), and ii) economic status (ES). Social status (SS) of an individual is determined by his/her social position in his/her society, while economic status (ES) is related to the income or economic position. He explored in his study that low SES students were low achievers; and family income and students' achievement are positively correlated but SES is accounted for by only five percent of the variability in students' academic achievement.

Hijazib & Naqvi (2006) explored in a study conducted in Pakistani context that family income and students' academic score are negatively associated with each other, but a mother's education is positively associated with her child academic achievement score in school. Similarly in a study Saifi and Mehmood (2011) found that parental education, occupation and availability of facilities at home influence on their child's academic achievement.

The low SES is a significant predictor and indicator of poor academic achievement because students belonging to low SES families cannot perform well in their educational activities and they have poor educational facilities available at home like helping books, sufficient learning materials of better quality and quantity as compared to high SES families students.

Consequently, SES of the learners may effect on their scholastic performance and in the attainment of higher grades (Chaliha1 and Hazarika, 2012).

In a descriptive survey type study, conducted in the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Pakistan), Ghazi et al. (2013) found a positive significant correlation between total family income and father's job grade; and their children academic performance at school.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The current study aimed to explore the relationship between socio-economic status (SES) and students' achievement score at the secondary level schools.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

- To determine relationship between parental socioeconomic status and their children achievement score at the secondary level,
- To suggest recommendations according to the findings of the study; and for further studies regarding socio-economic status (SES) and students' achievement score.

1.3 Research Questions

- Is there any significant relationship between parental income and students' achievement score?
- Is there any significant relationship between parental educational level and students' achievement score?
- Is there any significant relationship between parental occupational status and students' achievement score?

1.4 Delimitations of the Study

- The current study was delimited to 9th grade male students of the public sector schools in Faisalabad.
- Socio-Economic Status (SES) - a self-developed scale.
- Students' Achievement Score (SAS) – from 8th grade result of Punjab Education Commission (PEC) Lahore, from the sampled schools.
- The study was also delimited to only parental monthly income, educational level and occupation.

2. Research Methodology

The present study was correlational by method and quantitative approach was adopted to explore the association between socio-economic status and students' achievement score of 9th grade students. Through a cross-sectional survey data were collected from respondents of this study.

2.1 Population

All students enrolled in 9th class in the year of 2016 in public secondary schools of the province Punjab was the target population of this study, while student enrolled in 9th class in the year of

2016 of public secondary schools in Faisalabad district was taken as the accessible population to conduct this study.

2.2 Sample

A sample of 320 male students for this study was taken through multistage cluster random sampling technique from the public secondary schools of the district Faisalabad.

2.3 Instruments

A self-developed scale was used for measuring the socio-economic status of the students who participated in the study. Also the students' achievement score (SAS) was attained from 8th grade result of Punjab Education Commission (PEC) Lahore, from the sampled schools.

2.4 Pilot Testing and Administration of the Instrument

The validation of the SES scale was estimated through experts' opinion. Therefore, the SES scale was discussed with experts of the education department. After validation of the SES scale, the reliability of this research instrument was measured through SPSS 20 version. The reliability of the socio-economic status scale was found 0.846.

After completing this phase, the researchers personally visited the sampled schools and data were collected with the help of concerned school teachers. The SES scale was given to those students who were selected in the sample and requested to fill in this instrument from their parents. The response rate remained 100%.

3. Data Analysis

After data collection phase, data were coded and entered into the SPSS for statistical analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data through SPSS 20 Version. For inferential statistics Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) was used.

3.1 Results of the Study

Socio-economic status plays a significant role in their children's life. The success and failure of students mostly depends on parents' income, educational level and occupation, etc. So, the aim of this study was to determine the effect of SES on students' achievement score at elementary level in public schools.

Research Question 1: *Is there any significant relationship between parental income and Students' achievement score at the secondary level?*

To explore relationship between parental income and students' achievement score at the secondary level, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) was applied.

Table 1

Correlation between Parental Income and Students' Achievement Score

Variables	N	r	p
Parental Income & Students' Achievement Score	320	.42	.002

** $p < .01$

A Pearson's (r) correlation coefficient was used as inferential statistics to examine relationship parental income and students' achievement score at the secondary level. The above table results portray a moderate positive relationship between parental income and students' achievement score; $r(320) = .42, p < .01$. Therefore, it is inferred from above results' that increase in parental income, students' achievement score also increases.

Research Question 2: *Is there any significant relationship between parental educational level and students' achievement score at the secondary level?*

To investigate relationship between parental educational level and students' achievement score at the secondary level, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) was applied.

Table 2
Correlation between Parental Educational Level and Students' Achievement Score

Variables	N	r	p
Parental Educational Level & Students' Achievement Score	320	.51	.000

*** $p < .001$

A Pearson's (r) correlation coefficient was used as inferential statistics to examine relationship between parental educational level and students' achievement score at secondary level. The above table results reveal a moderate positive relationship between parental educational level and students' achievement score; $r(320) = .51, p < .001$. Therefore, it is inferred from above results that increase in parental educational level, students' achievement score also increases.

Research Question 3: *Is there any significant relationship between parental occupation and students' achievement score at the secondary level?*

To investigate relationship between parental occupation and students' achievement score at the secondary level, Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) was applied.

Table 3
Correlation between Parental Occupation and Students' Achievement Score

Variables	N	r	p
Parental Occupation & Students' Achievement Score	320	.58	.000

*** $p < .001$

A Pearson's (r) correlation coefficient (r) was used as inferential statistics to examine association between parental occupation and students' achievement score at the secondary level schools. The above table results depict a highly significant positive relationship between parental occupation and students' achievement score; $r(320) = .58, p < .001$. Therefore, it is inferred from above information that parental occupation influences on students' achievement score.

4. Discussion

The aim of this correlational study was to find out the relationship between socio-economic status and students' achievement score at the secondary level. Three attributes (parental income, parental educational level and parental occupation) regarding socio-economic status were used to

measure relationship with students' achievement score. The results of the present study showed a moderate positive relationship between parental income and students' achievement score; $r(320) = .42, p < .01$; between parental educational level and students' achievement score; $r(320) = .51, p < .001$; and between parental occupation and students' achievement score; $r(320) = .58, p < .001$.

Therefore, it is obvious from findings of the present study that SES and students' achievement level are moderately associated with each other. As in Pakistani context, where a large number of families' income is very low and they hardly meet the expenditures and needs of their family members, therefore in such scenario SES significantly influences on the provision of quality education for learners and on their academic achievement score.

The findings of this study were also consistent with the findings of Eamon (2005) and Graetz (2007) who explored that there is a positive relationship between SES and students' achievement grades. The findings of this study were also supports to the findings of Shah and Khan (2002), and Ghazi et al. (2013) that parental education and father's occupation and income had a significant effect on their children's achievement score.

5. Recommendations

As parental socioeconomic status is positively correlated with students' achievement, therefore it is recommended through this study that government should take serious initiatives to provide jobs and raise the socioeconomic status of people throughout the country. Also government should make proper planning to increase the remuneration of the services of employees both in public and private sectors.

It is also recommended that similar studies should be conducted to explore the relationship between socioeconomic status and female students' achievement score at the secondary level in public schools. Similar studies should also be conducted to explore the effect of the socioeconomic status on both male and female students' achievement level.

6. References

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