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### Association between parental socio-economic status and educational aspiration among university students

#### Abstract

*There different variables that are associated with educational achievement and educational aspiration of the university students. In the current study researcher intended to find out the role of socio-economic status of the parents and its association with educational aspiration among university students. The research is based on the quantitative methodology and survey research design. The sample size of the study is 459 respondents of the University of the Punjab selected through multistage sampling technique. The data was analyzed by using SPSS and the findings of the study suggest that there is a positive and significant relationship between socio-economic status of the parents and educational aspiration among students.*

#### Background

Education is essential for the development of society. The more educated the people of a society are, the more civilized and well-disciplined the society might be. The researches have indicated that academic achievement of students may not only depend on the quality of schools and the teachers, rather there are other factors that contribute towards the academic achievement of the students (Corwyn & Bradley, 2002). Parental involvement, type of schooling is some of the important factors that have bearing on the academic performance of the students. The more the parents involve in the process of imparting education to their children, the more the children might excel in their academic career and to become the productive and responsible members of society (Hoff, 2003).

The construct of socio-economic status is widely used in social research but there is a dispute regarding its conceptual meanings and how to measure it empirically (Bornstein & Bradley, 2003). In most of the studies the term socio-economic status and social class are being used interchangeably without much clarification.

Socio-economic status is measured by various combinations of variables which has also made it somewhat ambiguous. There are no hard and fast rules to measure the socio-economic status and there are many variable to measure this concept. Hence the concept of socio-economic status is always measured with a matrix of variables (Ensminger & Fothergill, 200).

Most importantly the construct of socio-economic status is difficult to measure owing to its complexity and cultural specificity. Socio-economic status is a relative term it can be measured by adopting different indicators. There are different signs to measure this concept in developed countries as they have more resources and more access to well-being. On the other hand it has different signs in developing countries. So socio-economic status is culturally driven and bound and has different cultural implications regarding its measurement. Different societies and cultures see this concept with different mind and different empirical evidences.

#### Predictors of Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is very important for the development of the students. Academic achievement is measured by using grades of the students and there are other indicators to measure it. As the comprehension of the knowledge, dedication towards the knowledge and subject is also an important factor that shows the academic performance and achievement of the students. There are different and multiple factors that contribute and influence the academic

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achievement of the students. Schooling, gender, parental involvement, health and poverty are important factors that have bearing effect on the academic achievement of the students.

Physical health and activity of the students is also an important and significant predictor academic achievement. A sound health and physical activity gives proper time and opportunity to work towards desired goals. Students who are physically active tend to have better grades, school attendance, cognitive performance (e.g., memory), and classroom behaviors (Fedewa, 2011).

### **Research Question**

The current study mainly intended to find out the answer of the following research question.

“The association of socio-economic status of the parents on the academic achievement of the children”.

### **Objectives of the study**

The study is conducted to achieve the following objectives

- To see how association between parental socio-economic status and academic aspiration and achievement.

### **Sociological significance**

Social interaction is an important component of study of sociology since we remain in contact with other people in the society throughout our lives. Similarly education is also an important field of sociology. But when it comes to educational attainment becomes more important as different factors contribute towards educational achievement. Sociologically speaking the factors of educational achievement are more social than educational (Sattar, 2011).

The concept of socio-economic and its implications are different for different societies and cultures. It is easily measured in western culture but is difficult to be observed and measured in Pakistani society due to lack of data and other statistical issues (Nauman et al, 1996). The current study also takes into the issue and correctly measures the socio-economic status. This makes the study more significant sociologically as it measures the concepts of socio-economic status. So for the smooth functioning and flow of the society it is better that students and youth must be academically well equipped and prepared to accept the challenges of the practical lives (Hashmi, 2008). This will help in the formation of well fabricated and organized society. This also enhances the significance of the study.

### **Literature Review**

Oreinstein (1994) described that girls feel more confident and participate actively in single sex environment as compared to Co-education class room. The feeling of embarrassment and inferiority complex is high in co-ed class room that causes them to remain unable to express themselves to the best of their ability.

Delpit (2006) also stated that single sex class room benefit the Latino's girls. They show strong academic performance in the company of other girls. Latino girls perform well while studying in single sex education. This is because they feel great and does not show any negative trend. This increase their confidence level and ultimately they perform very well as compared to the co-education.

Herr & Arms (2004) conducted a study in California public middle school. By using ethnographic qualitative approach, they examined the teachers and students reaction toward same sex classes. The school consists of 1100 boys and girls, 95 percent belong to minorities and 80 percent student belongs to low socio economic status household. They collected data by classroom observations and interviews separately from teachers and students. Teachers are asked question about their professional experiences and staff development and students are asked questions about the experiences of same sex classes compared to their previous co-educational classes. It was concluded that same sex schooling has positive influence on the academic achievement of the students.

Furstenberg and Hughes (1995) say that besides these social factors parent's involvement increases the rate of academic enactment of their child. This study does not disregard the impact of society and social factors on the academic performance of the individuals but this study emphasizes that the care, intentions and involvement of the parents increase the performance of the students.

### **Health attributes and academic achievement**

Bzostek, Goldman and Pebley, 2007 conducted a study to find out the health condition and its relation with academic performance of the students. Low health profile is associated with long term detrimental effects. One of the major affect is the poor performance in educational domains. The study implied that public health policy and programs should be directed towards eliminating health disparities.

Laura P. Wamble, 2009 in a study found that health related factors such as stress, lack of proper sleep and nutrition has great implications for the students' academic performance. The study concluded that taking proper and timely sleep, having timely meals make it easy for the students to work in the right direction with full devotion and attention.

Birch, Jerrett and Eyles, 2000 stated that disadvantaged group of the society are more prone to health deficiencies. They are more vulnerable to the health adversities and this situation further leads to multiple issues and consequences for that particular group of people. The effects of health issue are worse in the academic achievement. Students with poor health attributes have poor academic performances.

Kasper et al, 2008 found from their study that long term poverty result in lower functional status of the people. This functional status has resulted in poor academic performance of the students accompanied by health issues of the people.

Williams and Umberson 2004 investigated that poor health of adult is associated with lower college attendance and result in poor academic performance.

Pearling et al., 2005 explained the stress-process theory and stated that stress thrives across life span of a particular individual. This stress has bad health consequences and result in poor performance of the individuals. This study contends that health problems proliferate across different health domains such as physical limitations and poor academic achievement.

Husain (2011) conducted a study to find out how administrative department is responsible for academic performance of the student. The study found proper check and balance from administration is the key to a better performance of the educational institutions. The political and bureaucratic compression is also another bulging point that puts hurdles in the successive educational way. So, the study concluded that political direction and administrative control is directly related to the academic achievement of the students.

Shafqat A, 2009 found from this studies that teachers attitude towards students is directly related towards their academic performance. Positive behavior of the teachers towards students results in higher level of academic achievement of the students. The study implies that teacher's level of frankness, aggression is the factors that contribute towards the academic achievement of the students.

Hassan et al. 2012 conducted a study to find out how educational system i.e. semester or annual is more beneficial for the students. The study explored that semester system is more productive for the students as compared to the annual system. The study also shed light on the reasons and determinants of supremacy of semester system and stated that flexibility of the environment and division of the study burden is more important and beneficial to the students as compared to the annual system.

### **Pakistan's educational system and academic achievement**

Hayes 1987 conducted a study and found that the education system is mainly based on providing education and lacks quality of education. Without the quality of education, the education is meaningless because lack of academic achievement leads to lack of professional well-being. Government should ponder over keenly in order to improve the curriculum of our education. The study basically focused on the qualitative aspect of education in an order to

enhance the academic performance of the students. The study concluded that it is the quality not quantity that is important.

**Methodology**

This section contains the method and materials that were used by the researcher during the course of this study. The study tries to explore the relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement of the students. The study is a pure quantitative study and data was collected by means of a cross sectional survey design. As the study tries to explore the association between two variables hence SPSS was used to analyze the data and to determine the relationship between two variables.

**Research Design**

The researcher in this study employed quantitative research design to find out the relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement. As the objectives of the study revolves around finding out the association between two variables and there are no intensions to explore and find out the in-depth understanding of the topic hence quantitative research design is the most suitable for this study.

On the other hand the current study is explanatory in nature as the study implies on finding out the reasons behind academic achievement. When the researcher tries to see and explain the reasons behind any particular phenomenon it is said to be explanatory research design. As the current study tries to explain the socio-economic reasons of academic achievement so the study is explanatory in nature.

**Study site**

The current study was conducted in the geographical setting of Punjab University. Selection of university of the Punjab as the study site was based on following criteria.

University setting enabled the researcher to obtain sample that have certain level of academic achievement. As the prime concern of the study is to find out how academic achievement is affected by socio-economic status hence university setting was most suitable.

**Population**

Population of the current study is all the enrolled students of university of the Punjab. However, it was difficult to include all the students and departments of the university. Therefore, it was decided by the researcher to collect data from four major faculties of the University of the Punjab. In addition to that the researcher selected one major department from each faculty and collected data from those department. As the study intends to find out the academic achievement of the students hence the researcher selected higher level of degree along with higher level of semester of the students. Following table illustrates how the population of the current study was actually selected.

Sr. No.	No. of students and class	Department	Faculty
1	MSc. Sociology 3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester: 66 M.Phil: (20 Regular) PhD. (10 Regular)	Department of sociology	Faculty of Behavioral and Social Sciences
2	M.A. English: 43 MS/ M.Phil English: 15 PhD English: 6	Department of English Language & Literature	Faculty of Arts & Humanities
3	M.Sc. Chemistry Morning : 76 M.Phil Chemistry: 60 (Ten seats divided into six discipline)	Institute of Chemistry	Faculty of Natural Sciences

	Ph.D. Chemistry : 25		
4	BBIT (HONS.) 3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester Morning: 57  MBIT Via BBIT (Equivalent to M.Phil): 3 <sup>rd</sup> Semester  Morning (A): 42  Morning (B): 39	Institute of Business and Information Technology	Faculty of Business &Management Science
<b>Total</b>	<b>459</b>		

### Sample technique

In an order to collect sample size the researcher adopted multistage sampling technique. The researcher had to pass from different stages to select the respondent. Each stage is directed by the previous stage and depends upon it. Followings stages were adopted by the researcher to collect the sample size.

#### Stage one

At the first stage the researcher selected four major faculties of the University of the Punjab. The selection of four major faculties was based on the scope of the faculties and this selection covers varying disciplines of the university. Social, natural, arts and business are four major faculties of the university which were selected for the purpose of the current study. Selection of these four major faculties were mainly based on convenience and these four cover the major subjects and disciplines of the university.

#### Stage two

At the second stage the researcher selected one department from each above mentioned faculties. Again the selection of each department was based on the strength of the students and the mainly covers the discipline.

#### Stage three

At the third stage the researcher obtained the enrollment of the respective departments. So that the sample size could be calculated. The researcher selected students of MA third semester, MPhil and PhD. This was done keeping in view the objectives of the study. As the researcher intends to find out the academic achievement of the students hence students from third semester and students of M.Phil and PhD would be best suited as they could answer the question in well manner. In addition to that selection of such students is based on as they have spent two semesters in the university settings.

#### Stage four

This is the last stage of sampling technique. In this stage researcher visited the concerned department and obtained the list of concerned section and then employed systematic random sampling technique. After obtaining the enrollment list the researcher collected data from each 5<sup>th</sup> roll number of the list. However, if the roll number 5 was not available then the researcher collected data from the next available student in the list.

### Sample size

For the purpose of quantitative part of the study a sample size of 459 will be used (annex-A). This sample size is determined keeping in view the total known population and application of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) defined table.

### Measurement of independent variable

Socio-economic status has been treated as independent variable. Socio-economic status is a complex concept and there are different aspects that needed to be addressed while measuring this construct.

### Operationalization of socio-economic status

Aggarwal et al. 2005 construct a tool to measure the socio-economic status. The above mentioned tool is widely used in the social sciences to determine the socio-economic status. The use this tool is also important in health research. The current study also used this tool after pre-testing and modifying it to cultural context of Pakistan. A few questions were eliminated and a few categories in the questions were added. However, following major themes and indicators were used to measure the independent variable i.e. socio-economic status.

- Parent's family income
- Family qualification and occupation
- Area of residence
- Nature of business
- Personal and agricultural Land owned
- Number of siblings and their qualification

### Measurement of dependent variable

Academic achievement has been treated as dependent variable in the current study. Academic achievement is also a vast concept and there are different aspects related to it.

### Operationalization of academic achievement

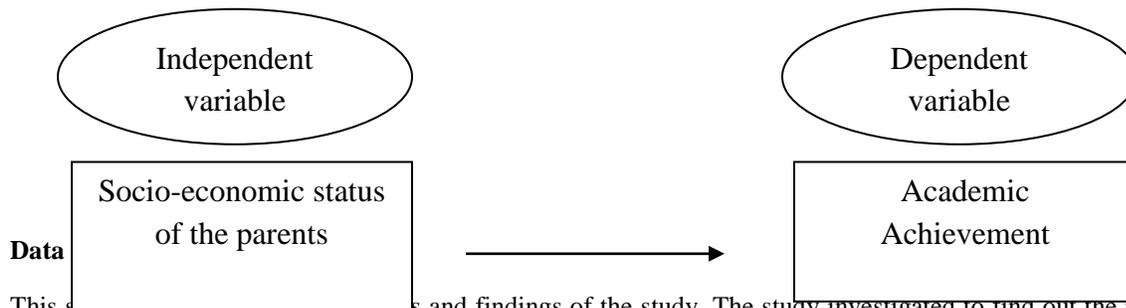
As mentioned above academic achievement is a concept that have many aspects and different to measure. The current study uses an instrument developed by Gargallo et al., 2009. This is one of the most recognized tools to measure the academic achievement of the university students or higher studies. Education research also uses this instrument to a greater extent. The validity of this tool varies from .54 to .85 (Cronbachs Alpha) which is quite high and makes this tool a valid tool. Similarly the reliability of the current tool varies from .68 to .86 which is also at a higher level. However, a few questions were eliminated by the researcher after pre-testing because those questions were in accordance with the cultural context of country. However, in the current study academic achievement is measured by following indicators.

- Taking interest in the learning process
- Critically evaluating the learning contents
- Preparing for learning and classes
- Working in team
- Application of learning and theories

### Hypothesis

The current study intends to measure the following hypothesis.

“Higher the level of socio-economic status of the parents higher will be the academic achievement of the students”



This study and findings of the study. The study investigated to find out the relationship between socio-economic status and educational aspiration among the students. SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data. As the socio-economic status was measured by using different indicators the researcher developed

four major indexes of socio-economic status i.e. independent variable. Similarly educational aspiration was also categorized into different indexes. Following table shows the indexes and related questions.

Independent Variables	
Categories	Questions
Family Income, education, background	1, 2, 5, 7, 8,10, 13, 19, 20
Assets (agricultural and non-agricultural)	14,15,16,17,18,
Housing and household	3,11,12,
Home appliances and consumable	4,6,9
Dependent Variables	
Educational aspiration	1,2,3,4,5,7,8,10
Achievement	6,22, 23,24,25,26
Critical thinking and comprehension	18,19,20,21
Working for better knowledge	9,11,12,13,14,15,16,17
Total	1 to 26

As the quantitative analysis was mainly based on the indexes rather than single question hence descriptive statistics are presented in accordance with those indexes. Following table shows the descriptive statistics of the current study based on the indexes that were formulated for the purpose of the current study. After presenting the descriptive statistics the preceding table shows the correlation between dependent and independent variable.

**Inferential statistics**

The following table shows the relationship between all the four categories of independent variable (socio-economic status) and dependent variable (educational aspiration).

Independent variable: four categories of socio-economic status Dependent Variable: educational aspiration				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
INDEX1_FIEB	0.553306	0.054120	10.22364	0.0000
INDEX2_ASSET	0.085261	0.053544	1.592366	0.1122
INDEX3_HH	0.218658	0.053068	4.120309	0.0000
INDEX4_HAC	-0.090951	0.058223	-1.562098	0.1192
C	-1.21E-07	0.036967	-3.28E-06	1.0000
R-squared	0.323860	Mean dependent var		2.80E-07
Adjusted R-squared	0.316176	S.D. dependent var		0.844639
S.E. of regression	0.698463	Akaike info criterion		2.134038
F-statistic	42.15047	Durbin-Watson stat		1.970404
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

The above table shows that family background and house/household is significantly related to the educational aspiration. While Assets and home appliances is insignificant. This shows that increase in the family background and house hold will increase the educational aspiration. And R-Square value shows increase in the family background and household index of the study will increase educational aspiration by 31%.

Independent variable: all four categories of socio-economic status Dependent Variable: academic Achievement				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
INDEX1_FIEB	0.255651	0.062765	4.073125	0.0001
INDEX2_ASSET	-0.009350	0.062142	-0.150455	0.8805
INDEX3_HH	0.042575	0.061553	0.691687	0.4896
INDEX4_HAC	-0.142839	0.067538	-2.114926	0.0351

C	0.000136	0.042931	0.003159	0.9975
R-squared	0.067053	Mean dependent var		7.02E-07
Adjusted R-squared	0.056421	S.D. dependent var		0.833878
S.E. of regression	0.810012	Akaike info criterion		2.430410
F-statistic	6.306784	Durbin-Watson stat		1.607194
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000065			

In the above table only family background is significant while all others are insignificant in relation with academic achievement. The table shows that increase in the family background will increase the academic achievement. And the R-square value shows that increase in the all four categories of socio-economic status will increase the academic achievement by 067 times. This shows a positive and significant relations among the variables of the study.

**Dependent Variable: Critical Thinking and Comprehension**

Independent variable: all four categories of socio-economic status				
Dependent Variable: Critical thinking and comprehension				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
INDEX1_FIEB	0.598513	0.032823	18.23430	0.0000
INDEX2_ASSET	0.238457	0.032474	7.343047	0.0000
INDEX3_HH	-0.071635	0.032234	-2.222337	0.0269
INDEX4_HAC	-0.040191	0.035401	-1.135314	0.2570
C	0.000126	0.022452	0.005605	0.9955
R-squared	0.628364	Mean dependent var		-1.24E-06
Adjusted R-squared	0.624129	S.D. dependent var		0.690953
F-statistic	148.3680	Durbin-Watson stat		1.949776
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

In the above table family background and assets (agricultural and non-agricultural) is significantly related while other two are not significant. Increase in all four categories of socio-economic status will increase the critical thinking by 62% and probability value shows that the relationship is significant.

**Dependent Variable: Total**

Independent variable: all four categories of socio-economic status				
Dependent Variable: total educational aspiration				
Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
INDEX1_FIEB	0.755506	0.040113	18.83459	0.0000
INDEX2_ASSET	0.313328	0.039714	7.889609	0.0000
INDEX3_HH	-0.015571	0.039397	-0.395238	0.6929
INDEX4_HAC	-0.133385	0.043271	-3.082536	0.0022
C	0.001424	0.027475	0.051845	0.9587
R-squared	0.648334	Mean dependent var		-7.04E-07
Adjusted R-squared	0.644315	S.D. dependent var		0.868000
S.E. of regression	0.517669	Akaike info criterion		1.535024
F-statistic	161.3155	Durbin-Watson stat		1.778623
Prob(F-statistic)	0.000000			

In the above table family background and assets are significant for total educational aspiration while others are insignificant. The above table shows that increase in the all four categories of the independent variable will increase the total educational aspiration by 64% as show in the above table in the R-square value.

The overall findings and results of the study shows that all the categories of the independent variables are directly and significantly related to the all the categories of the dependent variable i.e. educational aspiration.

### **Conclusion**

It is concluded from the data the socio-economic status of the parents is directly linked with the educational aspiration of the students. The educational aspiration in terms of critical thinking and positive attributes and even grades have been found significantly co-related.

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