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Research article

Effect of Parental Socioeconomic Status on Educational Outcome of Tertiary Level Students at Khulna University

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ABSTRACT

Students' academic performance is impacted by socioeconomic circumstances, which have a substantial impact on the socialization process and are directly related to the role and position of their parents. It is essential to evaluate the extent to which socioeconomic issues influence academic achievement at the tertiary level in order to fulfill the democratic aim of equitable educational opportunity. Thus, the goal of this study is to examine the effects of parents' socioeconomic status on academic performance of tertiary level students in Khulna University. The sample constitutes 94 students' who are randomly selected from Khulna University by using structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, hypothesis and Tobit regression have been used to fulfill the objective of the study. This study finds that higher parental education correlates with higher academic performance, with 43.96% of fathers and 17.39% of mothers having education above higher secondary. Higher income families (36.17%) also show better academic performance. Hypothesis test finds that number of family members and extra-curricular activities significantly relate to academic performance. Regression result finds that male students and students from joint families have lower academic outcome. Alternatively, parental education, high income and high class profession positively affect the academic performance. Therefore, it is needed to enlighten and sharpen parents' awareness of the importance and impact cultural practice, attitudes and behavior play in influencing students' performance.

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Introduction

Two fundamental aspects of human life, the biological and the sociological, are recognized as God's greatest creation. Food and reproduction provide biological demands, but education fosters and transmits the societal component. By broadening their knowledge and developing their intelligence, children who receive an education are able to make decisions that will either positively or negatively impact their world (Hossain et al., 2017).

Around the world, educational systems work to equip students from a variety of social situations with the knowledge and abilities they need to realize their full potential. One of the most often researched ideas in the social sciences is socioeconomic status (SES), which is a gauge of a person's general social standing or prominence within society. Generally, it is evaluated using variables like income, occupation, and education (Conger and Donnellan, 2007). Numerous studies conducted in the last few decades have established a connection between child development and SES (Hackman et al., 2010; Aizer and Currie, 2014). Compared to children and adolescents from high SES families, those from low SES families are more likely to develop behavioral problems, anxiety, and depression as well as higher health risks (Chen et al., 2002).

However, according to the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), students' socioeconomic circumstances still have a major impact on their capacity to benefit from school and develop important abilities in many countries (OECD, 2016, p. 6). It is necessary to provide uniform educational experiences and plenty of learning opportunities across different educational institutions in order to achieve equal skill development for all students. Improving learning results for every student, regardless of school type or structure, promotes social equity and educational efficacy (Lazenby, 2016; Singh, 2014).

The relationship between family socioeconomic status (SES) and the development of children has been explained by a number of ideas. The social selection model, the sociocultural self-model, and the social causation model are the most well-known of these. According to Conger et

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al. (2002), the social causality model posits that children's development and well-being are directly impacted by social and economic factors. This hypothesis is supported by empirical data, which demonstrates how family financial difficulties can have a detrimental impact on parental relationships, emotions, and parenting styles, all of which can affect how children develop (Conger et al., 2002). Furthermore, families' investments of resources such as money, social capital, and human capital benefit children's development (Letournea et al., 2013; Chowdhury et al., 2024). However, the social selection model suggests that a person's social and economic standing can be influenced by their personal qualities (Li et al., 2020). According to Linver et al. (2002), having positive attributes as a parent can assist alleviate financial strains, decrease the likelihood of emotional, relational, and parenting challenges, and improve the wellbeing of their children.

The fundamental concepts of the social selection and social causation models are combined and enhanced by the sociocultural self-model (Stephens et al., 2012). The proposition posits that there exists a reciprocal relationship between socioeconomic situations and individual traits or features, and that both factors indirectly impact behavior through the self. According to Wiederkehr et al. (2015), current research supports this paradigm by demonstrating that academic self-efficacy modulates the association between SES and both expected and actual school performance. The racial and ethnic achievement gap between college students and high school students in the United States has been successfully closed by self- and identity-focused interventions (Cohen et al., 2009).

Both SES and personal characteristics tend to stay stable over time, despite research demonstrating that improving family economic conditions can lower the risk of psychiatric disorders in children (Costello et al., 2003) and that individual trait-focused interventions, like those targeting attention, can greatly enhance child development in low-SES families (Neville et al., 2013; Masud et al., 2024). By altering students' self-concept in certain contexts, the sociocultural self-model presents a novel and promising way to aiding child development in low-SES homes. However, previous research on the self's mediating role in the relationship between child development and SES has mostly looked at Western populations.

The sociocultural self-model serves as a framework to understand how students' academic achievements, aspirations, and self-perception are shaped by their parents' socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds (Hu et al., 2021). This model emphasizes that a student's self-concept and educational behaviors are not formed in isolation but are deeply influenced by parental education, income levels, occupation, and the cultural values embedded within their family and community. For instance, parents with higher educational attainment are more likely to provide academic support, set higher expectations, and create an environment conducive to learning.

Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to assess the relation between socioeconomic status and academic performance of students at Khulna University. The study concentrates on the social background, specifically the parents' level of education, occupation, income, and involvement in students' academic life. Moreover, it seeks to propose recommendation that would contribute to the promotion of the academic performance of students.

Operational Definitions

Academic Performance: Academic performance is the measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects. Teachers and education officials typically measure achievement using classroom performance, graduation rates and results from standardized tests. This study uses yearly grade point average (YGPA) of the students as the alternate of academic performance. It varies from 2 to 4 where higher value indicates higher academic outcomes.

Socioeconomic Status: Socioeconomic status is the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation. Examinations of socioeconomic status often reveal inequalities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power and control. This study use parental educational status, occupation status, income status and other issues to define socioeconomic status of the parents.

Materials and Methods

Data Source and Study Area

This is generally a cross sectional study. This study use primary data which has been collected from field survey using interview schedule. Basically, we choose Khulna University as the study area for better convenience of the sample. Importantly, Khulna University is the emerging university in the Bangladesh. Students from diverse academic backgrounds, such as science, arts, and humanities, are enrolled at this university. It is the reason to choose Khulna University as study area.

Sampling and Population

The study focuses on all undergraduate students at Khulna University, which is divided into six schools and 29 academic fields. There are 4,868 undergraduate students in total in the study population. First-year students, however, are not included because their academic records had not yet been released. Therefore, the study's target population comprises undergraduate students, excluding first-year students.

We employed a random sampling strategy to collect data. A comprehensive population list was prepared and segmented based on six schools: the School of Science, Engineering, and Technology, School of Life Science, School of Social Science, School of Law, School of Arts and Humanities, and School of Management and Business Administration. From this list, approximately 3% of the students in each school were randomly selected as respondents. After the random selection process, the final sample consisted of 28 students (30%) from the 4th year, 36 students (38%) from the 3rd year, and 30 students (32%) from the 2nd year. The respondents are provided with a well-structured questionnaire to gather the necessary data for the study.

Variable of the Study

The study includes both dependent and explanatory variables, each with its respective unit of measurement.

The dependent variable has been used in this study is academic performance (YGPA), measured on a 2–4 point scale following Sikdar et al. (2023) and Hossain et al. (2017) which is the best presenter of academic performance.

The independent variables include several factors. The variable Father Alive is a dummy variable coded as 1 for Yes and 0 for No. Similarly, Mother Alive is also a dummy variable with the same coding. Father's Education and Mother's Education are measured in years of schooling, following Azhar et al. (2014). Parents' Income is measured in BDT per month by following Azhar et al. (2014). Mother's Age and Family Income are measured in years and BDT per month, respectively, and referenced from Zhan (2006). Family Savings is measured in BDT per month. The other variables and their unit of measurement are reported in Table 3.

Analytical Strategy

To trace out the objective, it is important to find out the factors that influence academic performance among the students. Here, academic performance (YGPA) has been considered as a dependent variable which is measured in 2-4 scale. For limited continuous dependent variable YGPA, Tobit regression model is best fitted. This model helps to show the relationship with dependent variable YGPA and number of independent variables. The Tobit model also called a censored regression model which is designed to estimate linear relationship between variables when there is either left or right censoring in the dependent variable (also known as censoring from below and above, respectively). The general form of tobit regression is presented in equation 1.

$$\mathbf{Y_i^* = \beta_i X_i + \mu_i, \ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots (i)}$$

Where, $Y=y^*$ if $y^* \geq 2$ and $y^* \leq 4$

Xi = Matrix of explanatory variables

βi = Matrix of parameters to be estimated

μ= Stochastic error term

Hypothesis Testing

By conducting hypothesis test, authors have tried to determine the effects of parents' socioeconomic status on students' academic performance following Chowdhury et al. (2021). Through the following hypothesis tests researchers have obtained the scenario of the students' academic performance. The following null hypothesis has been tested in this paper. Since socioeconomic status (SES) is influenced by various factors, it is essential to examine different SES variables to effectively address our research questions. Therefore, we include key variables of socioeconomic status to identify significant differences and better understand their impact. The mean difference helps determine if the observed difference between group means is statistically significant using tests like the t-test or ANOVA. If the difference exceeds the critical value or the p-value is below the significance level (e.g., 0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected; otherwise, it is accepted.

H01: Number of the family member of the students has no impact on students' academic performance.

H02: Extra-curricular activities of the students have no impact on students' academic performance.

Results

Table 1 highlights the distribution of various socio-demographic variables with different percentage of yearly grade point average. It highlights male students make up 69.15% of the sample as a whole, while female students consist of 30.85%. A notable finding is that female students are more likely than male students to be represented in the upper YGPA tier (12.77%), as opposed to the middle (11.70%) and lower tiers (6.38%). This suggests that females perform better academically than males, with a gradual decline in YGPA tier observed from below 33% to upper 33%. In addition, the majority of the sample (59.57%) consists of urban students. The presence of rural students (40.43%) in the upper YGPA tier (14.89%) is marginally better than that of students in the lower and middle tiers (12.77%), indicating that students from rural regions may have an academic advanced in achieving higher YGPA levels. It also finds that the distribution of YGPA categories is more evenly distributed among students from nuclear families (69.15%), with a higher percentage in the upper tier (23.40%) than among students from joint families (30.85%).

We also find that high percentage in the top YGPA tier (19.77%), students with fathers in business (47.67%) dominate the sample and are more likely to attain higher YGPAs. On the other hand, students with fathers who work as farmers (19.77%) have a lesser likelihood of attaining high YGPAs, and their percentage in the top tier is much smaller (2.33%). The educational attainment of the father also matters. Students whose fathers have completed higher secondary school (43.96%) are more likely to be academically successful, with 16.48% of them falling into the highest YGPA category.

On the other hand, housewives make up the majority in the sample (87.78%). It finds that children with mother instructors (7.78%) tend to do better; this is demonstrated by the fact that they are more likely to be in the upper YGPA level (6.67%). Academic achievement is also correlated with mother's education; pupils who have moms who have completed education above higher secondary level (17.39%) are more likely to be in the upper tier of YGPA (8.70%).

In contrast to students from lower-income households (below 10,000), where only 4.26% of students reach the highest YGPA tier, students from better-income families (above 30,000 per month) are more likely to obtain higher YGPAs, with 17.02% in the upper tier. This shows that improved academic performance and increased family wealth are positively correlated.

Fascinatingly, the data shows that students who use social media for three to four hours a day make up the largest group (53.19%), indicating that moderate social media use does not seem to have a negative impact on academic achievement. On the other hand, students who use social media for two to three hours a day are more likely to have higher YGPAs, with 12.77% of them in the top tier, suggesting that social media use in moderation may be linked to improved academic results.

Table 1: Socio-demographic Status and Academic Performance

Variable Name	Year Grade Point Average			
	Below 33% N (%)	Middle 33% N (%)	Upper 33% N (%)	Full Sample N (%)
Gender				
Male	26 (27.66)	21 (22.34)	18 (19.15)	65 (69.15)
Female	6 (6.38)	11 (11.70)	12 (12.77)	29 (30.85)
Area of Residence				
Urban	20 (21.28)	20 (21.28)	16 (17.02)	56 (59.57)
Rural	12 (12.77)	12 (12.77)	14 (14.89)	38 (40.43)
Family Status				
Joint	10 (10.64)	11 (11.70)	8 (8.51)	29 (30.85)
Nuclear	22 (23.40)	21 (22.34)	22 (23.40)	65 (69.15)
Fathers Occupation				
Farmer	8 (9.30)	7 (8.14)	2 (2.33)	17 (19.77)
Teacher	5 (5.81)	3 (3.49)	5 (5.81)	13 (15.12)
Doctor	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.16)	1 (1.16)
Services	5 (5.81)	5 (5.81)	4 (4.65)	14 (16.28)
Business	12 (13.95)	12 (13.95)	17 (19.77)	41 (47.67)
Mothers Occupation				
Housewife	29 (32.22)	28 (31.11)	22 (24.44)	79 (87.78)
Teacher	0 (0.00)	1 (1.11)	6 (6.67)	7 (7.78)
Business	0 (0.00)	1 (1.11)	1 (1.11)	2 (2.22)
Others	1 (1.11)	1 (1.11)	0 (0.00)	2 (2.22)
Fathers Education				
Illiterate	1 (1.10)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.10)
Primary	4 (4.40)	4 (4.40)	4 (4.40)	12 (13.19)
Secondary	8 (8.79)	5 (5.49)	4 (4.40)	17 (18.68)
Higher Secondary	7 (7.69)	7 (7.69)	7 (7.69)	21(23.08)
Above Higher Secondary	11 (12.09)	14 (15.38)	15 (16.48)	40 (43.96)
Mothers Education				
Illiterate	2 (2.17)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (2.17)
Primary	5 (5.43)	2 (2.17)	5 (5.43)	12 (13.04)
Secondary	12 (13.04)	13 (14.13)	9 (9.78)	34 (36.96)
Higher Secondary	8 (8.70)	12 (13.04)	8 (8.70)	28 (30.43)
Above Higher Secondary	3 (3.26)	5 (5.43)	8 (8.70)	16 (17.39)
Parental Monthly Income				
Below 10,000	8 (8.51)	7 (7.45)	4 (4.26)	19 (20.21)
10,001-20,000	7 (7.45)	5 (5.32)	3 (3.19)	15 (15.96)
20,001-30,000	9 (9.57)	10 (10.64)	7 (7.45)	26 (27.66)
Above 30,000	8 (8.51)	10 (10.64)	16 (17.02)	34 (36.17)
Hours of Using Social Media Per Day				
1-2	2 (2.13)	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	2 (2.13)
2-3	7 (7.45)	5 (5.32)	12 (12.77)	24 (25.53)
3-4	16 (17.02)	19 (20.21)	15 (15.96)	50 (53.19)
Above 4	7 (7.45)	8 (8.51)	3 (3.19)	18 (19.15)

Source: Author's Compilation

Hypothesis Testing

Table 2 represents the hypothesis testing results of different variables including, number of family members and extra-curricular activities. The first hypothesis (H01) states that whether the number of the family member of the students has an impact on students' academic performance or not. It also find a significant relation between number of the family member and academic performance ($p<0.00$). Next, the relation between extra-curricular activities and academic performance (H02). Interestingly the hypothesis are significant at 1% significance level. This implies that an extracurricular involvement have a significant influence on students' academic achievement.

Table 2: Hypothesis Testing Result

Hypothesis	Mean Difference	T statistic	P value
H01	1.57	9.06	0.00
H02	-2.25	-17.50	0.00

Source: Author's Compilation

Regression result

Table 3 represents the tobit regression results where YGPA is the dependent variable. The explanatory variables are gender, residential area, family type, availability of electricity, family members, marital status, father alive, mother alive, father education level, mother education level, parents' monthly income, father age, mother age, father occupation, mother occupation and extra-curriculum involvement. This table reveals that the YGPA of male students is 0.10 points lower compared to female students which is statistically significant at the 5% level. Additionally, students from nuclear families have YGPA that is 0.09 points higher compared to those from joint families. Furthermore, students whose fathers are alive have a YGPA that is 0.20 points higher compared to those whose fathers are not alive ($p<0.01$). Interestingly, there is a positive relationship of father education level and YGPA, if father's education increases by one year of schooling, then YGPA increases by 0.01 unit which is significant at 10% significance level. Similarly, if mother's education increases by one year of schooling, then YGPA increases by 0.09 unit ($p<0.05$).

Likewise, it is evident that parents' monthly income significantly affects students' YGPA, highlighting its importance as a socioeconomic factor. The results show that students whose parents belong to the lower-income group have a YGPA that is 0.21 points lower compared to

those whose parents belong to the higher-income group (p<0.01). Similarly, students whose parents belong to the middle-income group have a YGPA that is 0.14 points lower compared to those from the higher-income group (p<0.01).

Occupational status, another vital socioeconomic indicator, has an impact on students' academic performance. Students whose fathers are teacher their YGPA is 0.18 unit higher compared to whose fathers are farmer (p<0.05). It also finds that whose fathers are service holder their YGPA is 0.158 unit higher compared to whose fathers are farmer (p<0.05). Moreover, whose mothers are teacher their YGPA is 0.03 unit higher (p<0.10) and whose mothers are service holder their YGPA is 0.10 unit higher compared to whose mothers are house wife (p<0.05). Extra-curriculum involvement indicates that students who involved in extracurricular activities have, on average, a 0.1-point higher YGPA compared to students who are not involved (p<0.05).

Thus, this table summarizes that male students and students from joint families have lower YGPA. Alternatively, parental education, income and high class profession positively affect the academic performance.

Table 3: Regression Results

Variable Name	Unit of Measurement	Coef.	Std..Err.
YGPA (Dependent Variable)			
Gender	1=Male, 0=Female	-0.101**	0.041
Residential Area	1= Urban, 0= Rural	-0.002	0.042
Family Type	1= Nuclear, 0= Joint	0.092**	0.041
Availability of Electricity	1=Yes, 0= No	0.209	0.231
Family Members	Ratio Scale	0.017	0.013
Marital Status	1=Unmarried, 0=Married	0.02	0.142
Father Alive	1=Yes, 0=No	0.205***	0.074
Mother Alive	1=Yes, 0=No	-0.058	0.110
Father Education Level	Years of Schooling	0.014*	0.007
Mother Education Level	Years of Schooling	0.018**	0.008
Income (Base: Higher Income Group)			
Lower Income Group	BDT	-0.217***	0.070
Middle Income Group	BDT	-0.147***	0.047
Father Age	In Years	-0.001	0.005
Mother Age	In Years	0.002	0.006
Extra-curriculum Involvement	1=Yes, 0=No	0.100**	0.045
Father Occupation (Base: Farmer)			
Teacher	1=Teacher, 0=otherwise	0.181**	0.073
Doctor	1=Doctor, 0=Otherwise	0.017	0.142
Services	1=Services, 0=Otherwise	0.158**	0.071
Business	1=Business, 0=Otherwise	0.068	0.052
Others	1=Others, 0=otherwise	0.034	0.061
Mother Occupation (Base: Housewife)			
Teacher	1=teacher,0=otherwise	0.03*	0.072
Services	1=Services,0=Otherwise	0.102**	0.133
Others	1=Business,0=Otherwise	-0.026	0.154
Source of Educational Expenditure	1=Parents, 0=Otherwise	-0.004	0.024
Constant		2.500***	0.434
Number of obs.= 94			
Prob > chi^2 = 0.0000			
Pseudo R^2= 0.7244			

Source: Authors' Compilation
**** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1*

Discussion

The objective of the study is to assess the relation between socioeconomic status and academic performance of students at Khulna University. This study finds that female students are more likely than male students to be represented in the upper YGPA tier. According to research by Duckworth and Seligman (2006) girls perform better in school because they are more motivated and have greater self-control in academic situations. Furthermore, Voyer and Voyer's (2014) meta-analysis discovered that female routinely exceed men in academic achievement in all subject areas, which accounts for their higher presence in the upper GPA ranges. We also find that students from nuclear families have higher YGPA than students from

joint families. In nuclear families, parents are better equipped to attend to their children's educational needs by offering individualized guidance and a stable atmosphere that supports academic success. According to research by Mandal and Majumder (2016), there are less distractions and more focused parental participation in nuclear family situations, which explains why adolescents from these homes performed better academically than their joint family peers.

We also find that students' academic performance is positively impacted by parental education because educated parents are better able to create a supportive learning environment for their children by supplying educational materials, helping with homework, and setting expectations for their child's performance (Chowdhury et al., 2023). An increased emphasis on the value of education is frequently correlated with higher parental education, which supports students' academic motivation and achievement. Higher educated parents typically have kids that get better marks, according to Davis-Kean (2005). This is mainly because educated parents can provide their kids with academic assistance and support throughout their schooling.

In addition, the findings illustrates that higher-income households are better able to offer educational resources, stable home situations, and access to extracurricular activities that improve academic success. Improved academic results can be attained through financial stability, which makes it possible to access better tutoring, educational resources, and schools. A key predictor of academic achievement is socioeconomic position, which includes monthly income (Altintaş, 2021and Jaeger, 2018). Studies by Schneider et al. (2022) and Dronkers and Kornder (2020) provide additional evidence to support the idea that financial benefits increase academic achievement by lowering stress associated with financial difficulty and expanding educational possibilities.

We find parental occupation also a key factor of students' academic performance. Murnane et al. (2017) claim that a parent's line of work affects their children's goals, their access to resources for school, and the amount of academic help they receive. Additionally, Davis-Kean's (2005) research emphasizes how parents' jobs influence their kids' educational outcomes by giving them the support and stimulating home environment they need to thrive in school. Furthermore, adolescents whose parents were teachers are probably going to have greater access to resources and academic support, which will further contribute to their performance in school (Dronkers & Robert, 2018). We also find positive relation between extra-curriculum activities and academic performance. Extracurricular activities enhance skills like time management, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving, which improve academic performance.

Conclusion

The goal of this study is to identify the parents' socioeconomic status that affect students' academic performance generally, evaluate the aspects that have an impact on tertiary level students' academic progress, and offer potential solutions that could improve their circumstances. A questionnaire has been used to gather data from the students, and a descriptive survey has been used as the research design. We have made an effort to identify and analyze various socioeconomic factors, including the gender of students, the educational attainment and average monthly income of parents, occupation of parents' that may have an impact on survey respondents' academic achievement. Using tobit model regression, these factors' relationships with YGPA are examined. Descriptive study finds that higher parental education correlates with higher academic performance. In addition, higher income families (36.17%) also show better academic performance. Social media use between 3-4 hours daily (53.19%) is the most prevalent among students. Hypothesis test finds that number of family members, parental income, extra-curricular activities, and parental education significantly relate to academic performance. Regression result finds that male students and students from joint families have lower YGPA. Alternatively, parental education, income and high class profession positively affect the academic performance. These findings highlight the importance of focused initiatives and policies meant to remove socioeconomic barriers, provide fair access to learning resources, and encourage academic success for all students.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest with the publication of this article

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