

# The Impact of Socio-economic Factors on Academic Performance of Sudanese University Students

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## Abstract:

The study examined the impact of socio-economic factors as correlates on academic performance of students in University level. The objectives of the study were: i) to investigate the impact of household Characteristics on academic outcomes of students. ii) Determine the relationship between access to home resources and academic achievement of students. Random sampling used to select 40 males and females students from bachelor qualifications. The range of teachers is 20 from the same university. Result from third and fourth semesters categorized for all courses offered. The data obtained analyzed using SPSS to determine relationship between the listed socio-economic variables and academic performance of participating students. Language of expression at home, parental assistance and Home Learning Resources were predictive of academic achievement respectively. The study concluded that parental assistance is credible and fluency and literacy in a child's home language assists in laying a mental and linguistic input.

**Key words.** Economic, socio-economic, academic performance, academic achievement.

## المستخلص:

بحثت الدراسة. أثر العوامل الاجتماعية-الاقتصادية علي أداء الطلاب السودانين الدارسين للغة الانجليزية كلغة أجنبية، طلاب الجامعات. اهداف الدراسة هي(1-تقصي اثر الخصائص المنزلية علي الأداء الاكاديمي للطلاب.2-تحديد شكل العلاقة بين بيئة المنزل والاداء الاكاديمي للطلاب). تم اختيار العينه عشوائيا من عدد 40 طالب ذكر وأنثي لدارسي البكالوريوس. اما العينه الثانية من عدد 20 معلما بدرجات علمية مختلفه للاجابة علي أسئلة الاختبار. نتائج المستوي الثالث والرابع صنفت بنائا علي معطيات الدراسة.تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها بواسطة التحليل الاحصائي للبيانات. العلاقة بين الاداء الاكاديمي والمتغيرات الاجتماعية-الاقتصادية المتمثلة في «لغة المنزل التعبيرية،دعم الوالدين ومصادر التعليم المنزلية هي الفاعل الاساسي في الاداء الاكاديمي للطلاب للغة الانجليزية وفي الختام تبلورت النتائج بأن تعزيز الوالدين يعتبر واحد من أهم الادوات الفعالة في عملية التعلم اللغوي ومخرجاته.

**الكلمات المفتاحية: اقتصادي، الاجتماعي، الاقتصادي، الاداء الاكاديمي، التحصيل الاكاديمي.**

## 1. Introduction

Socio-economic background of an individual is hinged on perceived self-concept, aspiration and position within a socio-cultural environment.<sup>(1)</sup> Learning and academic activities and the attitude towards learning are determined by socioeconomic status.<sup>(2)</sup> Asserted that various studies, which have been done, showed that socio-economic factors and students' academic performance; and the level of attrition from schools and colleges are linked directly. Observed that socioeconomic factors which embody the social demographic characteristics, educational and economic characteristics prevalent in a given family have impact on the mental abilities of students<sup>(3)</sup>

Genetic constitution of an individual has also been discovered to account for at least fifty percent of academic success while fifty percent is attributable to environmental factors. According to Sirin<sup>(4)</sup>, environmental factors, which also linked to intellectual abilities and access to resources, have been found to intensely determine the academic attainment of the students.

Further, socio-economic background has also been discov-

ered to be associated with academic success and self-efficacy <sup>(5)</sup>. The relevance and the association of socio-economic background with academic performance was further expatiated and supported by the findings that there are positive relationship between students brought up in homes of lower socio-economic status and academic achievement<sup>(6)</sup> Studies also revealed that students of lower socio-economic background are more probably to originate from homes where mother and father have not obtained certificate higher than college diploma .<sup>(7)</sup> In addition, college students who happen to come from homes where parents have no formal school certificates are less likely to receive academic support and incentives to continue their education and they are most likely to misinform about tertiary education.<sup>(8)</sup>

## **2.Setting of home and its effect on students' performance:**

The home setting where a student nurtured has influence on his academic attainment and level of performance. Students from homes with lower socio-economic background are predisposed to minimal learning resources and are less likely to obtain encouraging support for academic stimulation. <sup>(9)</sup> In contrast, students from homes with higher socio-economic background are more motivated and are likely to have increased academic prospects. Furthermore, <sup>(10)</sup> observed that the physiognomies of the home setting have an impact on the learning behavior, and cognitive development of a student. Parents play a major role in behavior molding and they remain the main avenue for values and interest towards the students' learning.<sup>(11)</sup> Parents' level of education and academic attainment is related to the extent of academic assistance given to their child.

Scholars have also come up with the suggestion that peer group influence and adopted mentors plays a significant role in the academic achievement of students.<sup>(12)</sup> (2005), child independence, responsive support, and affection are linked to high quality

parent-child relationship. The quality of relationship that a student receives from parents is associated with academic achievement<sup>(13)</sup> and parents' participation in school activities that include SGB meetings,

The study of Amato (2001) that students from families with both parents (intact family) staying together often do better than students from single parentage in many instances including school assessment scores; and are more likely to graduate from school in good time with low level of attrition. Studies have revealed the impact of socio-economic factors on achievement of students in many perspectives.<sup>(14)</sup> Observed that there was synchronized association between family earnings and students achievement in English language. Students whose parents earn higher family income were discovered to obtain higher grades in aptitude test as well as better grades in senior school certificate examination in English. The study was also supported by Shamim<sup>(15)</sup> who posited that students whose parents earns higher income often perform better in English language than students whose parents are in lower income brackets.<sup>(16)</sup>

### **3.Literature review**

#### **a.The Effect of Interrelation of Socio-economic Factorsand Students' performance:**

One of the utmost interests of edifying sociology has been to examine whether students' socio-economic settings would stand any association to the methods of attainment. The notions of cultural and social wealth are progressively more used to elucidate the degree of difference within educational achievement in industrialized and developing countries. Socio-economic factors of a family covers two features of a family, as suggested by the name: socio is related with the social status of the family. We have different social classes in our society like upper, middle and lower. Economical is related with the financial status of the family, in-

come, profession and other resources of the family. These both are collectively called socio-econs somical status. These two factors play an important role in the life of every individual and affect one in his each run of life.

“There is different aspect of relationship between language and social class. <sup>(17)</sup> So like all other fields of life, language learning is also deeply affected by socio economical situation of a family. There are two extremes of the socio-economic status’ influence student in language learning, either a learner will get high efficiency in language or he will go to zero efficiency.

Socio-economic background may affect learning outcomes in numerous ways. For example, parents with higher socio-economic status are able to provide their students with the (often necessary) financial support and home resources for individual learning .They are also more likely to provide a more stimulating environment to promote cognitive development. At the level of educational providers, students from high-SES families are also more likely to attend better language institutions, in particular in countries with differentiated (or “tracked”) educational systems, strong segregation in the learning system according to neighborhood factors and/or clear advantages of private over public earlier enrolled schooling <sup>(18)</sup> further opines that parents’ socio-status could be defined more objectively by using such indices as occupation, income and education.

It was observed that high class society status learners get opportunities to study high standard colleges and language centers. Such learners get educated and ranked families. They are provided with required facilities like computer, internet etc. their families are found rich enough to facilitate them with comfort and they are given all the learning aids. So it is found that a learner from upper class with better economical status will have more opportunities of learning.

“The learners belonging to high class of society were provided with good needs for their studies. They were also given the facilities such as, models A.V aids, computer, TV, internet etc. as helping material studies. That all result in an increase of their language learning process rate and good style of language, diction and vocabulary” (19).

A learner from a well social and economically stable family is tend to be surrounded by learning facilities and from those facilities learner learns different linguistic items such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and accent. All these elements nourish his language learning process.

A learner from a lower social class and with low financial status will have poor home environment, because all members of the family suffer from economical pressure and this financial pressure affect the learning abilities of an individual. It is so because learning needs serenity and subtlety of mind and if one is under pressure or having worries of external factors he/she will be unable to focus on learning.

Opposing to upper class learners, a learner of language from lower class lacks the opportunities to go to well reputed institutes. His parents would be unable to provide him with facilities such as: TV, AV aids, computer and internet for his/her studies, and will have little access to his academic needs and other helping materials. The learner emotional and mental world is directly related to the emotionally stable position of the parents”. (20)

From the above mentioned evidences it has been found that “learners who belonged to high social class of society were having high rate of the language learning process while the learners who belonged to low class of society were having low rate of progress in language learning process.

Thereby, learning occurs in a variety of contexts. (21) the impact of various social context on learning a language is considerable because the

learning environments will enable individuals to learn how to learn and to develop as fully integrated learners. Learner's access to different social goods such as Internet, computers, books and dictionaries (Social capital) influence upon whether, what and how any individual learns a language.

In the field of education, it is important to point out that society plays an important role in the process of foreign language learning that there is a consensus among researchers on the importance of recognizing the structure of relations among social and educational institutions by examining how individuals' different social and economical experiences affect their educational outcomes. For that reason, English language instructors have to be alert and stop failing to support a practice described that,(22) because the educational system tends to reinforce the social inequalities inherent in society by failing to consider the different amounts of cultural and linguistic competence possessed by different learners with different social backgrounds; so teachers need to recognize that language instruction cannot be understood apart from social class.

#### 4. Significance of the Study :

The present study seek to investigate if there exists any relationship between academic performance and socio-economic factors. Parental involvement can have a positive or negative effect on academic achievement. Parents who set good example are a source of inspiration to their learners. On the other hand, home environment that is marked by negligence and lawlessness may adversely affect the students' academic achievement and well performance. The influence, which the home makes on academic performance, is important. Relationship between the home-environment and academic performance are not only relevant to teachers, they are relevant to parents. The teachers may advice parents about the aspects of the home, which influences positively or negatively the students' academic performance. Knowledge of the home's

influences can help parents to assist their children by improving the home as an educational enhancing environment.

The motivational aspect of the socio-economic factor is highly correlated with the academic performance of the learners. Parents who are themselves rich and well educated and who provide the sons/daughters with a favorable home environment are likely to encourage the sons to develop interest similar to their own and to motivate him to do well at college.

### **5. Statement of the Study Problem:**

Undergraduate students' performance in university level in English proficiency in four skills indicate that the some of students face difficulties in English language skills, it has been found that some students reach university level with almost no ability to understand and use it as well. This means that, the students have some problems with English language resulting from either the lack of practice or carelessness due to certain social factors. Such poor input and output, which enormous obstacles to learn and develop, this may, very well be attribute to the role of socio-economic factors. Therefore, the present study is going to investigate the effect of such factor on students' performance in English language

### **6. Objective of the Study**

1. To investigate the impacts of house hold characteristics on academic outcomes of students.

### **7. Question of the Study**

1. To what extent the household characteristics are impact on academic outcomes of students ?

### **8. Hypothesis of the Study:**

1. There are household characteristics influenced the academic outcomes of the university students.

### **9. Methodology**

The study outlines the manner in which the data is conducted. The key components are the research design, population, sample size

and sampling technique, research instruments, validity and reliability, procedure and data analysis.

### **10. Procedures of Data collection**

The students' questionnaire and teachers' interview were developed through the following stages

- Designed by the researcher in consultation with some colleagues
- Presented to the supervisor for approval.
- Referred to three experts for judgment.

### **11. Population and Sample of the Study:**

#### **a. Population:**

Population is defined as a complete set of elements (persons or objects) that possess some common characteristic defined by the sampling criteria established by the researcher. It is generally divided into two types: target population and accessible population. Target population (universe) The entire group of people or objects to which the researcher wishes to generalize the study findings, and Accessible population which is the portion of the population to which the researcher has reasonable access; may be a subset of the target population. The population of this study is divided into two portions: the first portion is the students of college of education and Arts, Alfashir university. The grade of students who are targeted in the study ranged from grade three to four years. They enrolled in a regular study and their major field is English language. These students go to the university directly from the high secondary schools without having pre-session program or courses. In their first year at the university, before specializing in English, they study general language skills in addition to different subjects of other fields. The second portion is the instructors in the college of the education and Arts. These instructors are from different colleges. Some of them are from Education, Arts. They are different in age, cultures, and interests. Some of them are Ph.D. holders while other are M.A and B.A holders. They are ranked as profes-

sors, associated professors, assistant professors and lecturers.

### **b. Sample of the Study:**

A sample is simply a subset of the population. The concept of sample arises from the inability of the researchers to test all the individuals in a given population. The sample must be representative of the population from which it was drawn and it must have good size to warrant statistical analysis. The main function of the sample is to allow the researchers to conduct the study to individuals from the population so that the results of their study used to derive conclusions that will apply to the entire population. It is much like a give-and-take process. The population “gives” the sample, and then it “takes” conclusions from the results obtained from the sample. The number of the students in the English department at college of Education and Arts is approximately 200. All of the participants (students) were of level three and four in the English language advance courses.

The second sample included (20) teachers who have several years of experience in the field of ELT with different academic qualifications and professional training.

## **12. Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Random sampling used to select students who participated in the study. This was 40 students and 20 teachers carried out by selecting male and female students and teachers.. The selection done after due consultation and approval from relevant authority to use the specified number of students and teachers for the study.

## **13. Instruments of the Study**

Instrument is the general term that researchers use for a measurement device (survey, interview, test, questionnaire, etc.) To help distinguish between instrument and instrumentation, consider that the instrument is the device and instrumentation is the course of action (the process of developing, testing, and using the device). Instruments fall into two broad categories, researcher-completed

and subject-completed, distinguished by those instruments that researchers administer versus those that completed by participants. Researchers chose which type of instrument, or instruments, to use based on the research question. .

#### **a. Instrument One. Questionnaire**

Questionnaire was the first instrument adopted to elicit information on some of the socio-economic characteristics of the participating students. Questions raised were about the employment status of participants' parents, language spoken at home, consideration in terms of affluence (high and low SES), how often parents offer assistance in school work/assignment, level of education of parents, ownership status of house, infrastructures or amenities available at home and challenges experienced with home infrastructures. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each item using a 5-point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, strongly disagree, disagree) and direct questions for teachers on the interview. To indicate the level of agreement, third and fourth semester's results of participating students utilized to ascertain whether there is a relationship between socio-economic background and academic performance.

#### **b. Instrument Two. Interview**

The interview had been used as the second source for data collection. It was in depth an interview that permits interviewees to control it in such a way that allows them to distinguish their feelings about the issue being explored; i.e. socio-economic factors and its effect on students' performance.

The interview consist of two sections with seven direct questions. The first section provides information of three items; about the experiences, qualifications and the gender of participants. The section checks the teachers' point of view about the issue in seven questions of interview.

## 14. Results and discussion:

**Table (1)** the frequency distribution for statements of the hypothesis. “There are household characteristics influenced the academic outcomes of the university students”.

| Answer            | Number     | Percent      |
|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| Strongly agree    | 84         | 30.0         |
| Agree             | 82         | 29.2         |
| Neutral           | 55         | 19.6         |
| Disagree          | 39         | 14.1         |
| Strongly disagree | 20         | 7.1          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>280</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

It is clear from table (1) that there are (84) answers with percentage (30.0%) have strongly agreed about all statements that related to the hypothesis of the study, (82) answers with percentage (29.2%) have agreed on that, (55) answers with percentage (19.6%) were neutral about that, while (39) answers with percentage (14.1%) have disagreed; also (20) answers with percentage (7.1%) have strongly disagreed about that.

According to what mentioned in table (1), this indicates that, there are statistically significant differences among the answers of the respondents, which support the respondents who have agreed with the third hypothesis. From above results, we see that the third hypothesis that states, “Parents attitude values and expectations are awaited to play role in students’ English performances” is fulfilled. Therefore, the researcher adds his voice to those who agree with the statements based on the student’s responses.

## 15. Teachers ‘point of views.

### First teacher

**Q1-** what is the relationship between parents ‘education and students’ performance in English as a foreign language?

Parents have strong relationship with their sons, and can be like real acquaintance to go along with, as well as telling stories to link

the foreign language with a foreign English education in Sudan

**Q2-**Which is more effective, parents' education or parents 'income on students' English language performance? How? please justify.

The more important effect is the parents input in English more than native language, but level of education alone cannot be affected.

### **Second teacher**

**Q1-**what is the relationship between parents 'education and students' performance in English as a foreign language?

Educated parents have positive effect on their sons 'performance, for instance, at least they help them to overcome difficulties related to academic problems.eg. Teachers in contrast to illiterate parents, play a vital role to direct and help their learners at any time and by possible means.

**Q2-** To what extent one is financial status affect one's capacity to perform English language?

Generally, life complements each other. The process of learning is not far from all parts of life, therefore, academic life effect by the way of other in deferent stages of study. Parents whose prepare all students needs the chance of learning better than other whose parents fail to do so.

### **16. Discussion:**

The study investigated the impact of household characteristics and access to home learns socio-economic background and academic performance of student's resources on academic performance of students. The results show that language of expression at home and parental assistance was significantly predictive of academic performance of the students. Previous studies have indicated that using students' home language for instructions and expression is crucial to effective learning. A students 'proficiency in his home language easily translates to access into the wider society for realities. UNESCO (2003) posited that the use of home language for expression in schools would assist in achieving qual-

ity education. Additionally, research has also shown that a child's capability to learn a second or additional language at school does not suffer when their mother tongue or home language used for instruction and expression at home.

### **17. Personal View :**

Through out the analysis of the tools of the study, the researcher came across the views of students as well as language teachers in both tools "questionnaire&interview" which used as the two main instruments to collecting data of this study. There is noticeable agreement between two samples taken in this study "students&teachers" support the major effect of socio-economic factors in the learning of foreign language. Most of the views are strongly in the favor of the point that easy financial status effect foreign language learning one way or another.

It is an obvious fact that, this study added great value to the results of the previous study and supports the most results and findings of data collected which support the positive favor of the choices of the statements and questions of the interview. So, language is learned through intensive interaction, weather it is native language or foreign language, but it can only be learned through full mutual action, not by memorizing its rules and a spending most of the time in either codings rules or linguistics features, if the family member are able to deal and interact in foreign language, the students will be able to learn the target language with ease and quickness and will be better in foreign language performance than that one, who does not have such family members and economic facilities.

### **18. Conclusion :**

Despite low socio-economic physiognomies and being nurtured by single parents, results revealed that respondents were still above average academic performance in contrast to the previous studies. The home learning resources, language of expression at home, and parental assistance, were significantly and positively

related to academic performance. These findings are of importance to assist educational planners in the provision of interventions for future academic development. The findings also focus on the need to examine and compensate for home learning resources available for learners. The findings also justify parental assistance as credible but may not entirely be responsible for students' academic performance, but it points to the need for parents' to be involved in their children's academic affairs. Additionally, fluency and literacy in a child's language of expression at home assist largely in laying a mental and linguistic foundation for learning.

### **19. Recommendations :**

The study recommends that diverse mitigating remedies that are already in place to increase academic performance should not exclusively be directed at schools or colleges but also be focused on socio-economic variables. The home environment must be taken on board in formulating educational policies and interventions. Since home language of expression is effective for increased academic performance, home language should be considered for use at schools and colleges in consonant with already existing languages. Furthermore, parents should be encouraged to provide uninterrupted and congenial learning environment for their sons at home since this could translate into substantial academic achievement.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A

### Questionnaire

Dear Students.

The researcher is carry out a study whose main objective is to establish whether there is relationship between surroundings home environment factors and academic performance of undergraduate students at Alfashir university. You have been selected as one of the respondents for the study and the information you will give will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used purely for the academic purposes.

Kindly please spare some of your valuable time to answer these questions.

Please tick or fill in as appropriate.

#### 1-Gender:

a. Male       b- Female     

#### 2- Grade

a.grade three  b- grade four

#### \*The Hypothesis

**There are household characteristics influenced the academic outcomes of the university students**

| No | statements  | Strong-ly agree | agree | Neutral | Strong-ly dis-agree | disagree |
|----|---|-----------------|-------|---------|---------------------|----------|
| 1  | Socioeconomic status of students' parents influences their academic' performance. |                 |       |         |                     |          |

| No | statements   | Strongly agree | agree | Neutral | Strongly disagree | disagree |
|----|--|----------------|-------|---------|-------------------|----------|
| 2  | Higher social class people give care and value English more than those at lower educational level.       |                |       |         |                   |          |
| 3  | I am rather motivated by my family economic occupation during academic period in the university.         |                |       |         |                   |          |
| 4  | Early enrolment of the students in a good school can enhance the academic performance in the university. |                |       |         |                   |          |

| No | statements   | Strongly agree | agree | Neutral | Strongly disagree | disagree |
|----|--|----------------|-------|---------|-------------------|----------|
| 5  | Given courses at university period quietly sufficient to perform better English without difficulties.    |                |       |         |                   |          |
| 6  | Traveling abroad and meeting native speakers help more to develop my English skills.                     |                |       |         |                   |          |
| 7  | Financial status of low family plays significance part in the way of student's attainment & performance. |                |       |         |                   |          |

## Appendix B Teachers' interview

· Teacher No.(1) up to (20).

**1-Do parents have clear impact on their students' performance?How? pleaseclarify.**

.....  
**2-what is the relationship between parents'education and students' performance in English as a foreign langugae?**

.....  
**3-Which is more effective,parents'education or parents'income on students'english language performance?How?please justif.**

.....  
**4-To what extent students motivated to improve language achievement with regard to parents'educaton?**

.....  
**5-To what extent one's financial status affect one's capacity to perform English language?**

.....  
**6-According to your experiences,to what extent surroundings impact by the way or another the range of students'performance?**

.....  
**7-How and to what extent do parents'attitudes,values and expectations about English language learning affect performance of the students?**

.....  
.....