



# Assessing The Impact Of Socioeconomic Status On Educational Aspects Of Adolescents in Manje Area, Blantyre District

**Mwayiwawo Chinunda, Dr. S. Parameswari**

DMI-St Eugene University, District Child Protection Unit-Trichy

## Abstract

Academic achievement is one of the important goals of education and affected by number of correlated factors including emotional intelligence and socioeconomic status of adolescents. This research has revealed that socioeconomic status can predict academic success better than traditional measures of intelligence. This study aims to assess the impact of socioeconomic status on educational aspects of adolescents. The research was carried out on a sample of 45 adolescents studying in different primary and secondary schools in Manje area, Blantyre district. The barriers to access school materials, lacking access to quality education, inability to pay for school fees, failure to join tertiary education, school absenteeism, poor results and bad performance and school dropout, all showed the challenges faced by adolescents from low socioeconomic status on education. However, all these challenges may infringe with adolescents education in Manje area, Blantyre district. This study also revealed that low socioeconomic status may lead to financial, social, physical and psychological effect among adolescents. On the basis of the findings made in this study, conclusions are made that socioeconomic status influences the educational aspects of adolescents. Based on the findings made in this study, we recommend that both government and non-governmental organizations should reach out more to adolescents from low or poor socioeconomic backgrounds by providing scholarships opportunities for them as well as through offering of direct financial assistance to homes in order to empower them and sustain them economically as these homes are the immediate environment of the children. In addition, promoting school infrastructure development and building new primary and secondary schools will create a chance for adolescents to have access to education.

## 1. Introduction

Africa is home of 196 million adolescents, (Independent Accountability Panel, 2017). And more than 60 percent of the total population are below 30 years of which 22 to 27 percent are adolescents. Adolescence is a dynamically evolving theoretical construct informed through physiologic, psychosocial, temporal and cultural lenses, (Fletcher, 2016). The American psychological association (APA) defines socioeconomic status as the social standing or class of an individual or group, (APA, 2018). Students from low-socioeconomic status households are not accessing

postsecondary educational programs where students earn a degree or certification from a university or college at the same rate as their higher-socioeconomic status counterparts. The disparity in postsecondary learning attainment for students from different leveled socioeconomic status households creates a problem of equity between high-socioeconomic statuses versus low-socioeconomic status groups. The overall socioeconomic makeup of suburban neighborhoods and schools is changing as a result of the increase of students living in low income households, (Rank & Hirschl, 2019). The change in demographics for suburban areas creates a challenge for schools in these areas because the literature has identified many struggles for students from low-socioeconomic status families.

## 2. Problem Statement

According to the National Center for Education Statistics reported that only 65% of students living in low income families enrolled in a college in the fall of 2016 compared to 82% of students living in high income families, which represents a difference of 17%, (McFarland et al., 2017). Furthermore, even though there seem to be supports for students from low-socioeconomic status families in their high schools and community as well as increased financial aid opportunities, the percentage of low-socioeconomic status students attending a postsecondary educational program is still lower than high-socioeconomic status students, (Musto, 2017). Researchers have studied many failed programs and initiatives in an attempt to identify why students from low-socioeconomic status households are less likely to apply to college.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the factors that influence socioeconomic status of adolescents in Manje area, Blantyre district.
2. To explore the relationship between socioeconomic status of adolescent with their education in Manje area, Blantyre district.
3. To suggest workable solutions for the enhancement of educational impact of adolescent in Manje area, Blantyre district.

## 4. Literature Review

- Efevbera et al. (2017) a study done by Hannah Dunga explore the socioeconomic factors influencing the education of the girl child in Zomba, Malawi. The findings indicated that women in the Sub-Saharan region who married below the age of 18 years were more likely to have children early, more likely to have dropped out of school and were more likely to be poor resulting in poorer child outcomes.
- NSO-Malawi & ICF\_International (2017) has revealed that for every 100 boys of primary school age out of school, there are 123 girls who are denied the right to education.
- Gondwe, (2016) states that the problem of adolescents dropping out of school in Malawi is serious and this has been an issue haunting the education system in Malawi for a long time. Literature points out that Malawi has one of the highest school dropout rate in Southern Africa with 15 % of girls (three in every twenty) and 12 % of boys (three in every twenty-five), dropping out between Standard 5 and 8 of primary school. It has been argued that both school related and out of school factors contribute to adolescents dropping at different levels of schooling.

- According to Kennedy (2015), students residing in rural residential areas on average tend to have lower socioeconomic status than those in urban areas and receive a considerably shorter education than their counterparts living in urban centers, thereby promoting socioeconomic disparities in access to education.
- Additionally, Gershenson et al. (2017) suggests that school absences may be more harmful to children from lower socioeconomic families.
- The empirical study by Cooper & Stewart. (2020) suggested that this is because parents from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have fewer financial, social and educational resources necessary to support their children in catching up with missed school lessons.

## 5. Research Methodology

**5.1 Data Collection** – Interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents in accordance with the study's goals. Secondary data, which is limited to the papers conceptual framework exclusively, has been gathered through a variety of journals, books and the internet

**5.2 Sampling Design** – a convenient sampling size of 45 respondents has been randomly selected.

**5.3 Data Analysis** – the acquired data is subsequently compiled, sorted, edited, classified and coded into a coding sheet and analyzed using a computerized data analysis packages like Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Microsoft excel before being presented as pie charts, bar graphs and frequency tables.

**5.4 Statistical Tools Used** – simple percentage analysis statistical tools have been used in the study for the purpose of analysis.



## 6. Data Analysis and Presentations

### 6.1 Socioeconomic status of adolescents in Manje area

➤ This study sought to determine the socioeconomic status of adolescents in Manje area, Blantyre district.

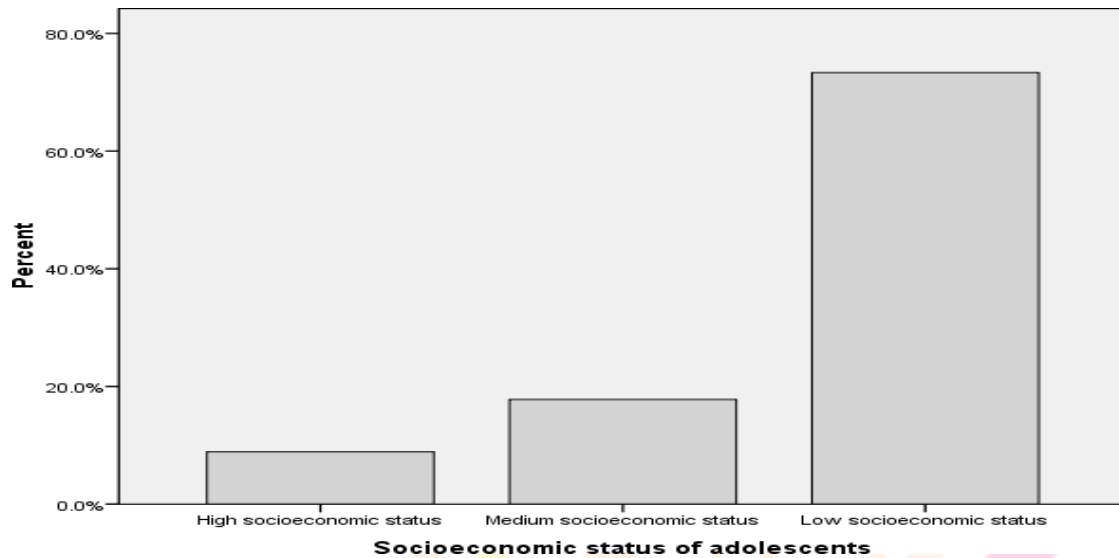


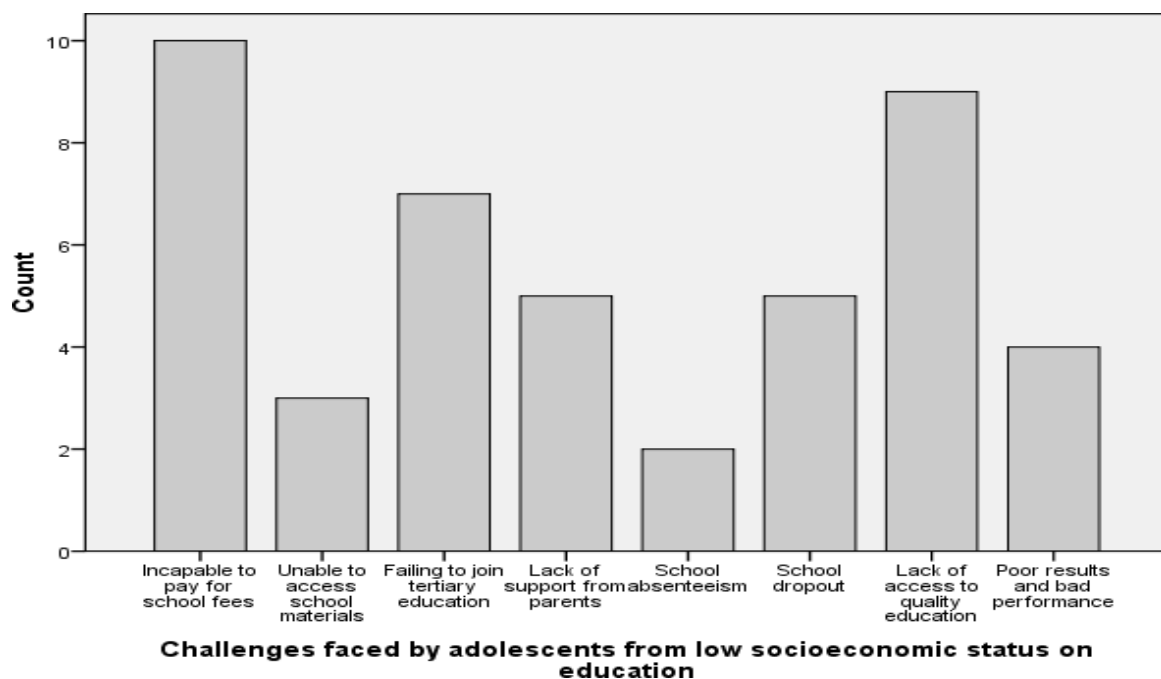
Chart 1.0 above showing the socioeconomic status of adolescents in Manje area, Blantyre district.

#### Interpretation

According to the findings, 75.6% of adolescents belong to low socioeconomic status, 15.6% are adolescents from medium socioeconomic status and 8.9% are adolescents who belong to higher socioeconomic status.

### 6.2 Challenges faced by adolescents from low socioeconomic status on education

Chart 2.0 showing the challenges faced by adolescents in Manje area, Blantyre district.



### Interpretation

According to the bar chart 2.0 from this study, the challenges faced by adolescents on education include, school dropout, school absenteeism, unable to access school materials, failing to join tertiary education, lack of access to quality education, incapable to pay for school fees, failing to join tertiary education and poor results and bad performance.

### 6.3 Effects of socioeconomic status on education of adolescents

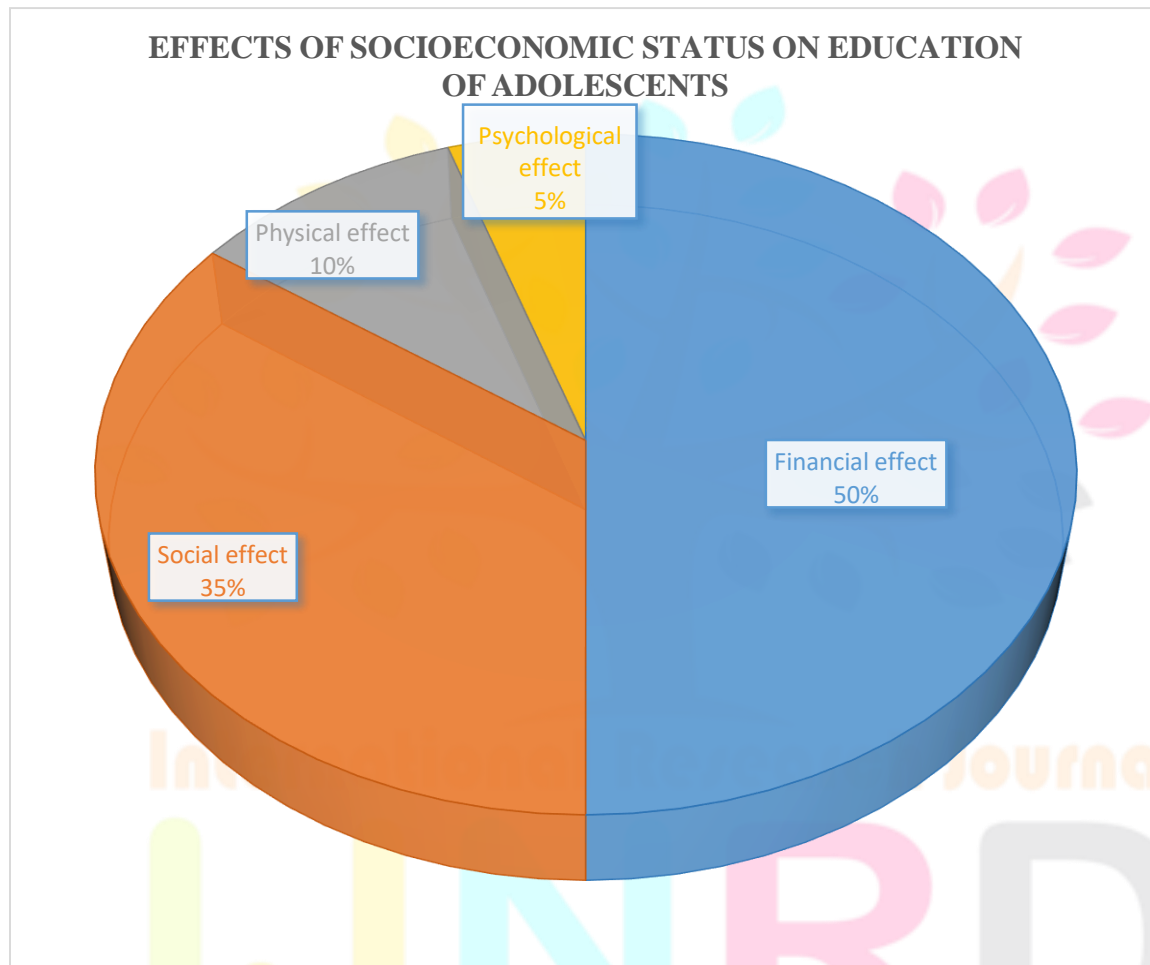


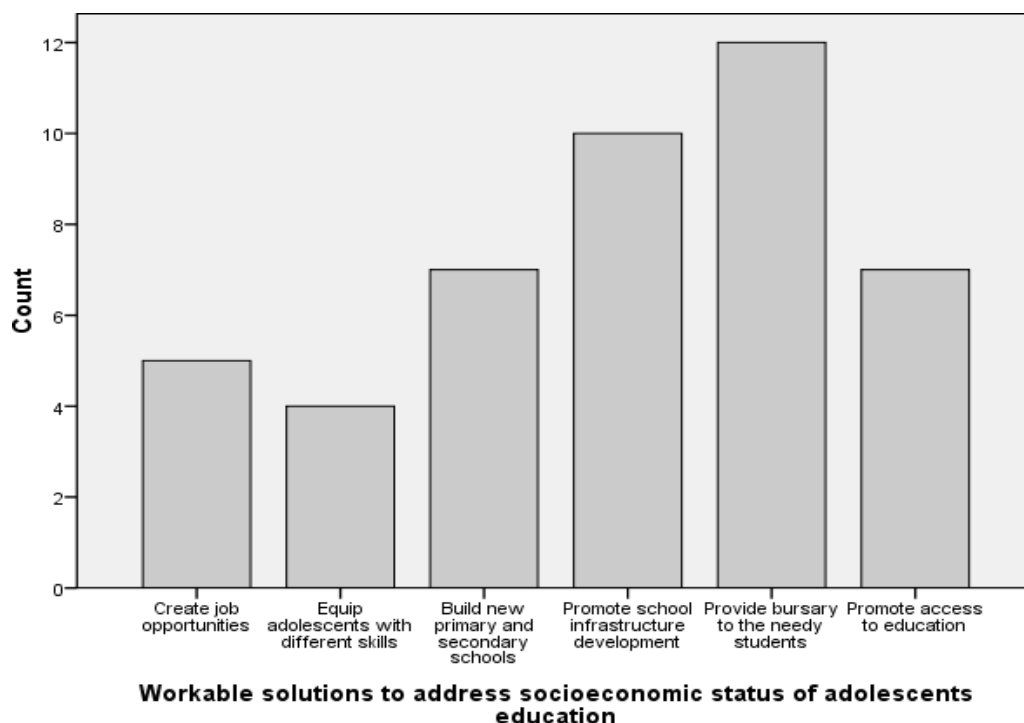
Chart 3.0: The above pie chart illustrate the effects of socioeconomic status on education of adolescents in Manje area, Blantyre district.

### Interpretation

According to the findings, 50% shows the financial effect of socioeconomic status on education of adolescents, 35% shows the social effect, 10% shows the physical effect and 5% shows the psychological effect.



## 6.4 workable solutions to address socioeconomic status of adolescent's education



**Bar chart 3.0 showing workable solutions to address socioeconomic status of adolescent's education**

According to the findings, creating job opportunities, equipping adolescents with different skills, building new primary and secondary schools, promoting school infrastructure development, providing bursary to the needy students and promoting access to education are some of the workable solutions to address socioeconomic status of adolescents.

## 7. CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that there are several challenges faced by adolescents living from low social socioeconomic status and this led to a number of effects on educational achievement of adolescents. However, widening access to and ensuring equity of all types of education through continuously increasing teaching, learning and accommodation infrastructure in all areas of the country to cater for the rapidly increasing learning population and ensuring that no learner is disadvantaged in accessing any type of education based on socioeconomic status, continuous provision of adequate teaching and learning resources, ensuring adequate availability for qualified teaching staff of all types of education and substantially increasing funding for all types of education and improving education sector coordination and revising, instituting, and implementing innovative laws, policies and strategies for all types of education will help to address socioeconomic factors that affect adolescents' education achievement.

## 8. SUGGESTIONS

The government should make sure that it focuses on poverty eradication programs in the marginalized areas and authorities should focus on technical and vocational education. Such technical and vocational education should be made accessible to students of poor and disadvantaged people.

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