



# “Examining the impact on academic achievement among socio-economic disadvantage students”<sup>0</sup>

**Chitransh Panday**

Master of Arts in Sociology

Department of Sociology

Institute of Social Sciences Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar University Agra, Uttar Pradesh, India

## **Abstract:**

This paper examines the intricate relationship between socioeconomic disadvantage and academic achievement among students. Socioeconomic status (SES) has long been recognized as a significant determinant of educational outcomes, with disparities persisting across various indicators such as standardized test scores and graduation rates. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds face multifaceted challenges that intersect with their academic trajectories, hindering equitable educational attainment.

The objective of this study is to analyze the specific socioeconomic factors contributing to academic disadvantage and explore the extent to which limited access to resources impacts academic achievement among disadvantaged students. Drawing on existing literature and research findings, this paper delves into the complex dynamics shaping educational experiences and outcomes for students facing socioeconomic adversity.

**Key words:** Socioeconomic status (SES), Educational equity, Cultural influences, Targeted interventions.

## **Introduction**

In contemporary education discourse, addressing the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on academic achievement stands as a critical imperative. Socioeconomic status (SES) has long been recognized as a potent determinant of educational outcomes, with disparities persisting across various educational indicators such as standardized test scores, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates. Students hailing from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds face multifaceted challenges that intersect with their academic trajectories, posing barriers to equitable educational attainment.

The aim of this study is to comprehensively examine the intricate interplay between socioeconomic factors and academic achievement among students experiencing disadvantage. Specifically, this research aims to analyze both the tangible socioeconomic indicators, intangible yet influential cultural norms and expectations that shape the educational experiences of disadvantaged students.

Furthermore, this research endeavors to unpack the influence of cultural norms and expectations on academic motivation, engagement, and performance among students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Cultural factors, deeply ingrained within communities, exert profound effects on educational aspirations, attitudes towards schooling, and academic behaviors. Understanding the nuances of these cultural dynamics is indispensable for designing targeted interventions and support systems that resonate with the lived experiences of students facing socioeconomic adversity.

### **Objective:**

1. To study the socioeconomic conditions impact upon students who face disadvantages.
2. To examine the extent to which limited access to resources impacts the academic achievement of disadvantaged students.

### **Research question:**

1. What specific socioeconomic factors contribute significantly to the disadvantage experienced by students in academic settings?
2. How does limited access to resources, influence the academic achievement of disadvantaged students?

### **Research Methodology:**

Desktop research involves reviewing existing literature, reports, and studies to understand the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on academic achievement among students. It includes gathering information from academic databases, journals, and reports, selecting relevant sources based on specific criteria, analyzing data to extract key insights, and synthesizing findings to draw conclusions. Desk research provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by disadvantaged students and informs strategies for promoting equitable educational outcomes.

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## Review of literature

### 1. Gillian Considine and Gianni Zappalil(2002)‘The influence of social and economic isadvantage in the academic performance of school students in Australia’

The research paper delved into the intricate dynamics of academic performance within the context of family. While existing literature extensively explores the broader relationship between family and children's academic outcomes, it leaves a gap in understanding the nuanced factors influencing educational achievements within specific socio economic categories. Drawing on data from over 3000 students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, the research aimed to quantify the impact of socioeconomic, familial, individual, and contextual factors on school performance. Despite some data constraints, the study's model specification proved robust. Results from logistic regression unveiled several statistically significant variables influencing academic performance, including sex, unexplained absences, ethnicity, parental educational attainment, housing type, and student age. Remarkably, family structure, primary income source, and geographical location showed no substantial predictive power once other factors were controlled. Of particular note, parental education level emerged as a pivotal predictor of academic success even amidst financial adversity, suggesting that the "social" and "economic" components of SES may exert distinct influences on educational outcomes. This finding underscores the need for policies and programs not only offering financial aid to schools and families but also empowering low-income parents to provide crucial psychological and educational support to their children. The study's insights advocate for multifaceted approach addressing behavioral challenges among boys, the needs of non-English speaking background groups, and community-based initiatives targeting entrenched disadvantage.

### 2. Stéphane Mahuteau, Kostas Mavromaras(2013) ‘An Analysis of the Impact of Socioeconomic Disadvantage and School Quality on the Probability of School Dropout’

The journal examines how social and economic factors influence school dropout rates among 15 to 18-year-old students. It suggests that utilizing PISA data on individual students and schools can predict dropout likelihood, aiding policy interventions. The paper's main objective was to determine if PISA scores effectively predict dropout rates. Methodological challenges, such as attrition and endogeneity, were addressed, and multilevel regression was used to estimate student and school quality based on PISA scores. Results indicate that PISA scores significantly predict dropout, particularly for lower achievers, highlighting socioeconomic disparities. Socioeconomic status directly and indirectly affects dropout rates, alongside factors like gender and indigenous status. Notably, the combination of low PISA scores, socioeconomic status, and school value added dramatically increases dropout probability. PISA scores could serve as valuable predictor post-15 years of age, aiding interventions. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing socioeconomic disparities and targeting interventions for students facing severe disadvantage.

### 3. Selcuk R. Sirin (2005) ‘Socioeconomic Status and Academic Achievement: A Meta-Analytic Review of Research’

This meta-analysis updates research on SES and academic achievement, leveraging advances in methodology to offer a comprehensive understanding of the relationship. It highlights the need for researchers to incorporate SES into measurement models, moving beyond mere acknowledgment in discussions. The analysis emphasizes the importance of assessing family background in all educational studies. It also challenges the traditional practice of relying solely on SES indicators without considering moderating factors, especially among minority students. Methodological challenges, such as discrepancies in data collection methods, are identified, prompting future research to address these issues. Ultimately, the findings serve as a guide for policymakers and researchers striving to promote equal educational opportunities by understanding the nuanced interplay between SES and academic achievement.

### 4. Anathi Lubisi; Fhulu H. Nekhwevha (Effects of Family Background on Poor Academic Performance of Grade 12 Learners)

This research paper showed, through findings, that family background is a major factor in the academic performance of learners. It also shows that good family background is linked to performing better academically, while learners from low socio-economic background perform poorly at school. This argument is aligned to the notion of the study, which states that as socio-economic background determines learner access to learning material, children from poor families have little access to instructional materials such as textbooks and libraries, resulting in their poor academic performance. This links very well with the theoretical framework of the study driven by Bourdieu’s concept of cultural reproduction; this indicates that because children from the elite class have access to educational resources, both at home and at school, they perform excellently at school. The findings revealed that conditions at homes of Grade 12 learners and lack of facilities in school, such as instructional resources, have a negative impact on academic performance of Grade 12 learners. The studies recommend that department of education should priorities schools of the lower-class when it comes to teaching and learning resources, school libraries, information literacy should be provided as well as technological recourses in schools of the lower-class.

#### Discussion:

1. **Access to Educational Materials and Technology:** Disadvantaged students often face challenges in accessing essential educational materials and technology, which are vital for their academic success. Limited availability of textbooks and supplementary learning materials can hinder their ability to comprehend course content thoroughly. Additionally, inadequate access to computers, internet

connectivity, and software can impede their capacity to engage in online learning activities and research, which have become increasingly prevalent in modern education.

2. **Learning Environment:** Disparities in classroom resources and library access further exacerbate the academic hurdles faced by disadvantaged students. Insufficient laboratory equipment, art supplies, and educational tools in classrooms can compromise the quality of instruction and hands-on learning experiences. Moreover, restricted access to well-stocked libraries and quiet study spaces inhibits their opportunities for independent research, reading comprehension, and information literacy skills development.
3. **Academic Support and Enrichment Opportunities:** Disadvantaged students often lack access to crucial academic support and enrichment opportunities outside of regular classroom instruction. Tutoring services and academic support programs, which are essential for addressing individual learning needs and reinforcing classroom concepts, may be financially out of reach or unavailable due to lack of awareness. Similarly, participation in extracurricular activities, which fosters social skills, self-confidence, and overall well-being, is hindered by financial barriers and transportation issues.
4. **Parental and Community Involvement:** Limited parental engagement in education, influenced by socioeconomic factors such as long working hours or lack of educational background, contributes to the academic challenges faced by disadvantaged students. The absence of parental support diminishes students' academic motivation and performance. Moreover, the availability of community-based support services, including public libraries, after-school programs, and mentoring initiatives, plays a crucial role in mitigating the impact of resource constraints on academic achievement.
5. **Psychological and Socio-emotional Factors:** Disadvantaged students often grapple with stress, anxiety, and low self-efficacy beliefs due to socioeconomic pressures and limited access to resources. Financial instability, housing insecurity, and exposure to adverse childhood experiences contribute to chronic stress, which impairs cognitive functioning and concentration in school. Consequently, eroded self-efficacy beliefs and academic identity perpetuate cycles of underachievement and disengagement, further widening the achievement gap.
6. **Policy and Systemic Interventions:** Addressing the inequities stemming from socioeconomic disparities requires comprehensive policy and systemic interventions. Advocating for equitable funding across schools and districts is paramount to addressing resource disparities and ensuring access to high-quality educational opportunities for all students. Implementing targeted support programs, such as needs-based scholarships, free lunch initiatives, and literacy programs, alleviates the burden of resource scarcity on disadvantaged students and fosters inclusive learning environments that promote academic success and equitable outcomes.

## Conclusion:

Socioeconomic disadvantage significantly impacts academic achievement among students, manifesting through various tangible and intangible barriers. The literature reviewed demonstrates that socioeconomic factors intersect with educational outcomes in intricate ways, highlighting the need for holistic approaches to address disparities in academic attainment.

Limited access to resources emerges as a central challenge faced by disadvantaged students, encompassing barriers related to educational materials, technology, learning environments, academic support, and parental/community involvement. These challenges hinder students' ability to engage effectively in learning and contribute to the perpetuation of achievement gaps.

Psychological and socioemotional factors further exacerbate the impact of socioeconomic disadvantage on academic achievement, as students contend with stress, anxiety, and low self-efficacy beliefs stemming from economic instability and adverse experiences.

Systemic interventions are crucial for mitigating the effects of socioeconomic disparities on academic achievement. Equitable funding allocation, targeted support programs, and community-based initiatives are essential components of a comprehensive strategy to promote inclusive learning environments and foster academic success among disadvantaged students.

Addressing socioeconomic disadvantage in education requires collaborative efforts from policymakers, educators, communities, and families to dismantle systemic barriers and ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities for all students. By understanding the complex interplay between socioeconomic factors and academic achievement, stakeholders can work towards creating a more just and inclusive educational landscape where every student has the opportunity to thrive.

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