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## **Impact of School Socio-Cultural Capital on Students' Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in South Punjab**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study has attempted to evaluate the role of school based socio cultural capital on the academic performance of secondary students in South Punjab, Pakistan and especially in relation to four variables: classroom size, teacher educational preparation, language used during lectures by a teacher, and parent teacher meetings. A qualitative methodological design was used and it consisted of twelve focus group discussions (FGDs) in three districts. Thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative information. The results of the study indicated that increased classroom size, teacher training, effective instructional language use, and involvement of parents in parent-teacher meeting had considerable influence on better academic performance. Qualitative results have stressed the factor of supportive teacher-students relationships, clear teacher-student communication, and school-home rapport as having a critical influence on students, learning experiences. The research paper finds that school-based socio-cultural means are a crucial variable in boosting the academic performance and suggests ameliorating the classroom environment to its fullest extent, is to support teacher education, the teaching language, and active parental engagement to support effective yet fair education. The results can bring real life advice to policymakers, educators, and administrators of schools that want to enhance the quality of secondary education under resource-restricted conditions.*

**Keywords:** *Socio-cultural capital, Academic performance, Classroom size, Teacher training, Teacher language, Parent-teacher meetings, Secondary education, South Punjab.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The conceptualization of the variables which influence the academic performance of the students is critical in the education systems whereby classroom facilities, training of the teachers and cooperation between the school and the home are quite diverse. This paper will look at four major variables in a school, such as classroom size, teacher education preparation, teacher use of language during lectures, and parent teacher meetings to determine the role of these variables in determining the performance of the secondary students. The size of the classroom influences the amount of attention and separated involvement, teacher training shapes teaching quality, language of lectures influences understanding amidst multilingual classes and parent instructor meetings empower communication among the home and the school. Combining these variables,

one can see a united picture of the learning environment in the school and emphasize institutional practices accompanied by academic success.

Bourdieu (1986) defines social and cultural capital as non-material assets in families, schools and communities that define academic achievement and personality building. Socio-cultural capital in this research study means access by the students to supportive networks, parental intervention, language exposure, or cultural opportunity that facilitates the learning process. Students having high cultural and social capital enjoy better home environment, quality communication and academic provision (Gaddis, 2013; Maria and Awan, 2019). Emotional support and academic resilience is further reinforced by social capital that contains trust and collaborative networks (Bradley and Corwyn, 2002). Studies conducted in developing nations always indicate the influence of cultural practices, parents education and school environment on the learning behavior and classroom performances as significant (Akintoye and Saliu, 2020; Cornelius et al., 2019).

The socio-cultural capital among school aspects in this research is the intangible aspects of resources and social relationship practices in which students are influenced by them in studying. Education training of teachers is a cultural capital and the mastery of subject, which is institutionalized. Linguistic cultural capital is evident in teacher words in lectures in which concise and easy communication enhances clarity and confidence. Parent teacher meetings establish bridging social capital as they intensify home school cooperation. The classroom size is a structure condition, which influences social capital because a small group helps to establish a greater teacher- student engagement, whereas high classes promotes peer cooperation. Combined, all of these social-cultural capital types bring about the academic achievements and the learning context of students.

However, the educational performance of secondary students in South Punjab has been poor and not as expected even after many attempts aimed at uplifting the education standards. Schools are usually in a situation that is characterized by congestion in classrooms, lack of teacher training, teaching language, poor school and home collaboration. Big classes sever individual attention, lack of training of teachers limits teaching methods in modern times and language barrier in dispensation of instructions makes understanding difficult. The meetings between parents and teachers are poorly designed, which also impedes the effective monitoring of student progress. All the above combined result in a learning environment that inhibits the capacity of students to optimize on classroom delivery but little research has attempted to investigate the combined effects of these factors on academic attainment within the area.

### **Main Problem of the Study**

This paper considers four major school-related variables, which include Classroom Size (SOC), Teacher Educational Training (TET), Teacher Language during Lecture (TLDR), and Parent -Teacher Meetings (PTM). Student interaction and student assistance depends on classroom size, as teacher training improves quality of pedagogy. Language used in teaching affects the comprehension and memorization and the parent-teacher conferences enhance the home-school contact. To develop policies and interventions leading to better educational equity and performance of students in South Punjab, it is necessary to determine the joint effects of these variables in the system of socio-cultural and social capital.

### Objectives of the Study

The study objectives are as under:

- **To examine** the association between Classroom Size (SOC) and Student Academic Performance (AP)
- **To evaluate** the effect of Teacher Educational Training (TET) on Student Academic Performance (AP).
- To determine the influence of teacher language when lecturing (TLDR) on academic performance (AP) in students.
- To determine the effects of Parent -Teacher Meetings (PTM) on Student Academic Performance (AP).

### Research Question

1. Do you as a student find it easier to comprehend lessons, be active, and do well on exams when you have a large or a small classroom?
2. How do professional or highly qualified teachers impact your learning, understanding of concepts and even your grades?
3. What influences your understanding and performance at school; the language teachers use in lectures, their directness, simplicity and instructions?
4. What role do parent-teacher meetings play in your motivation, study habits and general result in terms of academic performance?

### Review of Literature

The literature review in this research investigates the existing theory and research on how the school-based factors such as Classroom Size (SOC), Teacher Educational Training (TET), Teacher Language during Lecture (TLDR) and Parent -Teacher Meetings (PTM) determine the academic performance of secondary students, as well as the moderating effect of the socio-cultural capital. It is based on the theory of capital by Bourdieu that social and cultural resources viewed as present in the families, school, and communities affect the chances and performance of students. Even though the individual school factors are investigated in international and national research, only a limited number of studies evaluate them together in South Punjab, which supports the validity of the current study (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Rogošić & Baranovic, 2016).

The classroom size is speculated on the basis of teacher attention and involvement, whereas overcrowded colleges lower the engagement and performance (Akintoye and Saliu, 2020; Krueger, 2003). The training of teachers is also crucial, because well-equipped teachers exhibit greater pedagogical competence and provide more quality of education (Darling-Hammond, 2020).

Understanding of an instruction is greatly influenced by its language; in multilingual areas, where articulated and culturally accustomed language is optimally remembered and grasped, then clear and comprehensible language is used (Ledogar, 2008; Gay, 2021). Parent-teacher meetings also contribute to academic development as they allow information exchange, early intervention, and frequent monitoring (Jeynes, 2012; Tan and Fan, 2023).

In general, according to the literature, small classrooms, well-qualified teachers, good instructional language, and good collaboration between schools and homes are all found to contribute to learning among students. Nevertheless, there is a distinct research

gap on the combined effect they have on secondary students in South Punjab enacting the necessity of the currently conducted study.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this section the methodological framework utilized the study in determining the interrelations of social and cultural capital, family resources, and their impact on academic and personal development of secondary school students is delineated. The paper involved the measurement of the effects of the following sociocultural resources at the family level on the learning outcomes and developmental trajectories: the parental engagement level, the cultural exposure of families, and the social networks (Brindle and Lewthwaite, 2023). An in-depth evaluation was carried out based on both quantitative survey data and qualitative information that was obtained out of focus group discussions. The qualitative research design would be used to explain the role of socio-cultural capital, family resources, and school factors in South Punjab. They used 12 focus group discussions (FGDs) with 8-10 students each in them to collect data. Interpretation of the experience of the participants was conducted through thematic analysis; therefore, this analysis has generated a further insight on the factors contributing to academic performance and personality development.

### **Research Design**

A qualitative approach was used by the researcher to improve the research results on reliability and validity. Qualitative observational perceptions have been incorporated into a rational framework to provide a more delicate perspective of education procedures (Creswell, 2017). Combined methodological approach was specifically favorable to the training situation in which quantitative measures are used to detect analytical characteristics, and qualitative methods are applied to conceptualize the experiences of students (Johnson et al., 2007; Creswell, 2014). In that regard, the convergent parallel mixed-methods design was adopted since it was necessary to find about the effects of socio-cultural capital, family resources, and school factors on academic performance and personality development of students. The qualitative element used FGDs to emerge with deeper insights into fraternal, school, and community factors perception and experience on the part of students.

### **Population and Sample**

The target population was secondary school students in form of 9 and 10 grade in three districts of South Punjab, that is Multan, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan. A stratified multistage random sampling was applied:

**Stage 1** - district selection: three districts were selected purposely to cover both the urban and rural settings;

**Stage 2**- stage of school selection: four secondary schools (two boys schools and two girls schools) were selected randomly out of each district making a total of twelve schools;

**Stage 3**- selection of students: the students were selected in each school as randomly as possible, ten students represented, including five students of grade nine and five of grade ten.

### **Data Collection Instruments**

Guide was developed prior to the conduct of FGD in all districts. Consent was taken from the participants. The researcher conducted all the FGDs in person. Notes and

recordings were gathered for thematical analysis and quality report. A note taker was engaged to make notes during the FGDs.

### **Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis of qualitative data was performed with NVivo 12 based on the six steps proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006): familiarization with transcripts; initial code generation; theme search; theme review; theme definition and naming; and conclusions presentation with examples of quotations (McHugh, 2013; Goodman and Krustak, 1954; Benesty et al., 2009).

## **RESULTS**

### **Thematic Analysis**

In this section, the thematic analysis of the qualitative data is provided based on the focus group discussions and the open-ended answers of the 9th and 10th grade students of different public secondary schools of the South Punjab region. The aim of the analysis was to address the perspectives of students and their lived experiences in as far as the impact of socio-cultural capital on academic performance and personality development. Using a coding-based method, commonly repeated ideas and patterns were recorded, segmented and narrowed down with the help of key themes and sub\\_themes. Parental support, school environment, socio-economic status, peer interaction, emotional resilience, and cultural norm are some of the themes that proved to be important in explaining the role played by non-material resources in determining the educational results and personal outcomes of students. This qualitative observation is value added to the quantitative results and further elaborates the functioning of different facets of socio-cultural capital on the domestic educational setting (Bourdieu, 1986; Reay, 2004).

### **Objective 1: To examine the association between Classroom Size (SOC) and Student Academic Performance (AP)**

**Theme 1. Composed of Peer interaction and academic engagement.** Larger classroom students claimed to have more chances of learning and solving problems together. As was mentioned, various viewpoints and discussions in groups enhanced perception and critical thought ability. One student noted that in a bigger classroom that one can ask questions of friends who are sitting there and it is a place that they all help one another in learning the challenging subjects. This fact means that teacher attention varies according to classroom size but it also facilitates social learning with peers.

**Theme 2: Small-group classes and individual attention and learning issues.** On the other hand, learners in smaller classes emphasized a low level of participation and the absence of interesting intellectual discussions. One student pointed out, that in our small class, we tend to sit silently, as we have nobody to share the ideas with and the lessons seem to be slow. This implies that the presence of very small classes might hinder exposure of students to ideas and their active learning, hence, impacts on academic performance.

### **Objective 2: To evaluate the effect of Teacher Educational Training (TET) on Student Academic Performance (AP).**

**Theme 1: Teacher training results in better grade of instruction.** The learners pointed out that well trained teachers were in a better position to exemplify concepts in a clear manner, use state of art teaching resources, and involve learners in interactive learning. One of the students told, that our teacher provides charts and examples that simplify the



comprehension of science; I believe that I am able to learn so much due to their training. This corroborates the observation that highly qualified teachers have a great impact of improving academics.

**Theme 2: Learning gaps as a result of untrained teachers.** Lack of professional training of teachers was also known to cause problem among the students. The classes were repetitive with uninformed exposition. One of the students reported that there are occasions when he/she does not comprehend the lesson due to the teacher not explaining it in a proper way; it is too confusing. This brings out the fact that a lack of proper training of teachers may directly affect the understanding and performance of students.

**Objective 3: To determine the influence of teacher language when lecturing (TLDR) on academic performance (AP) in students.**

**Theme 1: Clarity and understanding as a result of a good teacher language.** It was emphasized that the language used by teachers should be simple, clear, and recognizable by the students to their culture in order to comprehend difficult concepts. One of the students added, "In case the teacher explains in our own language, I will be able to understand easily and able to answer the questions in the classroom. Good communication will increase the level of understanding and retention that will translate into academic performance.

**Theme 2: Communication breakdown because of the language barrier.** Learners in the multi-lingual or rural schools complained of problems when teachers used language they did not understand or known jargon. One of the students replied that there are instances when I fail to understand what the teacher is saying especially when they use English words that we are not familiar with. This proves that the wrong use of language in lecture-based situations may cause confusion, decrease under engagement, and grade school success.

**Objective 4: To determine the effects of Parent -Teacher Meetings (PTM) on Student Academic Performance (AP).**

**Theme 1: Improved Academic Support with Effective Parental involvement.**

Learners claimed that regular PTMs helped parents understand their son's and daughter academic needs and support them at home. The comment of one of the students stated, they help me to revise and recheck my homework when my parents are present during the meetings; I perform well during examination. This observation indicates that parental involvement serves to strengthen the home -school nexus and enhance the learning results.

**Theme 2: No Advisor, No Academic Attention because of Low PTM Involvement.**

On the contrary, other students reported that the lack of guidance and motivation was in place because parental attendance in PTMs was infrequent. The reason as given by one of the respondents was that, their parents do not attend meetings, and hence do not even know when they feel in distress, since I am alone with my studies. This narrative points out to the negative consequences of poor parent school cooperation on performance.

## DISCUSSION

The identified thematic analysis with the support of quantitative data shows that school-based factors play a significant role in determining the academic performance of students in South Punjab. The relationship between size of the classroom (SOC) and performance of the students became a complicated phenomenon. Although it is

commonly assumed that smaller classes can be beneficial in terms of individual attention, qualitative information indicated that very small classes might limit peer interaction and intellectual stimulation. The students in bigger classes said they had greater collaborative learning, problem solving, and critical thinking. These findings are consistent with quantitative findings, which showed that classroom size had a positive effect on academic performance in case there was adequate social interaction. Current studies prove this duality and stress that peer interaction and social learning are essential intermediaries of student engagement and cognitive growth (Slavin, 2018; Krueger, 2003). Also classroom size does not only influence the teacher attention, but also the wealth of social and cognitive interactions amongst students hence leading to excellent academic achievements.

Teacher educational training (TET) too showed a strong positive relation with the student achievement. Qualitative feedback revealed that, teachers (who had undergone professional training) presented materials better, used resources and helped the students think at a higher level compared to untrained teachers who had a problem with clarity and delivery of the lesson. This result is in line with quantitative data that demonstrates that teacher competence is strongly correlated with better academic achievement. Findings of previous research support the notion that the quality of teachers, such as training in pedagogy and mastering of the subject, is one of the key factors in determining the level of learning, as it leads to better understanding and motivation of students (Darling-, 2020; Hill, 2015).

Another critical success factor in academics became the language of instruction (TLDR). The students reported that language familiar in their culture and language hindrances in classroom facilitated greater understanding, participation and recall. On the other hand, technical or language that is not well known makes it difficult to understand and engage in. These observations are supported by quantitative data that state that there is increased performance when instruction is in accordance with the linguistic background of students. This result is supported by research conducted in multilingual and rural settings, as it shows that language-appropriate instructions enhance cognitive and socioemotional performance (Gay, 2021; Ledogar, 2008).

Lastly, parent-teacher meetings were revealed to be a major indicator of academic success. Students highlighted that the regular and productive interaction with parents in PTMs supported guidance, assistance of parents with homework, and observation of pupils progress in school. The quantitative results also showed the same as high PTM involvement was correlated with high academic performance. The current literature supports the idea that parental participation (especially school-home interaction), improves motivation, attendance, and performance (Fan 2014; Jeynes, 2016). Low participation with parents on the other hand restricts monitoring and support and this has the adverse effect of undermining results.

In general, the discussion shows that school factors such as classroom size, teacher training, use of a language, and PTMs have a strong positive correlation with academic performance of students. The qualitative data supplements the quantitative data by explaining the processes in which these variables have an impact on learning by

confirming that home-school collaboration, social, and cultural capital, and peer interaction are indeed complementary to each other in boosting student achievement.

## CONCLUSION

The current research involved the evaluation of how socio-cultural capital and the school based variables affect the performance of students in academic aspects and personality development of the student in secondary schools in South Punjab, Pakistan. Based on the theory of capital developed by Pierre Bourdieu, the study established that the family, school, and community possessed a significant amount of social and cultural resources, which influence the learning outcomes of students and their personal development in a significant manner. Quantitative and qualitative analyses proved that parental involvement, teacher competence, classroom environment, language of instruction, and home-school collaboration, in turn, lead to academic achievement and formation of personalities among students.

Socio-cultural capital as offered by parents was found to be a key factor that affected performance of students. The desirable learning environments at home were achieved by parental education levels, participation in academic surveillance, emotional and career counseling, and support of cultural and linguistic behaviors. The researchers discovered that children who had parents who fully participated in their academic life and those who had good character exerted better in education and displayed high personality traits such as confidence, communication skills, and emotional stability. On the other hand, parental involvement was not rampant and language barriers restricted the student performance, highlighting the importance of family involvement in educational achievement. The results support the previous studies on the relevance of social and cultural capital in fostering academic success (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000; Barone, 2022).

Factors in school also played a significant role in affecting performance of the students. The size of the classroom influenced the learning opportunity of both individuals and peer learning; large classrooms enabled collaborative learning whereas small classes prevented intellectual interaction at times. The training of the teachers was crucial to the achievement of effective lesson delivery, encouragement of understanding, critical thinking and interactive learning. Whereas, the understanding and retention increased with the clarity and appropriateness of the teacher language in terms of culture, the linguistic barriers decreased the engagement and performance. Home-school cooperation was also reinforced through parent-teacher meetings where there is a provision of avenues through which academic monitoring can be done, guidance and motivation. These findings point to the fact that schools are central places where social and cultural capital interplay with leadership and other structural aspects to determine academic outcomes.

Finally, the paper concludes that family, school, and community resources are interdependent and result in the production of academic performance and personality development in South Punjab. The optimum learning occurs when parents' guide and support, teachers train and communicate using language easily understood, classroom set-ups apply peer interaction and there is a regular communication between parents and schools. The results highlight the necessity of policies and the interventions, which would support the socio-cultural capital, better teacher training, optimal classroom environments, and better parent-school relationships. These factors can be handled to



decrease the gap in education, promote the development of equitable learning conditions, as well as to make students well-rounded and able to excel not only academically but also in personal development.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The schools should keep the classroom sizes moderate, and slightly bigger so as to facilitate learning amongst peers and to keep the academic stimulation, and to make sure that individual learner attention is not lost.
2. Consistently, professional development programs ought to be established with a focus on the current pedagogy methods, learner-centred training, and inclusive teaching methods to improve teaching effectiveness.
3. It is advisable that teachers use correct, culturally conditional and friendly language during lectures to enhance understanding and interactivity especially in cases where the environments are multilingual.
4. Parent-teacher meetings ought to be held after specific intervals, formally and meaningful in order to support cooperation among the parents and teachers in keeping track of the student performance and also in bridging learning deficiencies.
5. Large or bigger classes should be fitted with sufficient guidance material, technological devices, and educational tools to enhance the various teaching and learning methods.
6. Displayed practices Group work, peer-to-peer learning, and interactive activities need to be encouraged to tap into social capital in the classroom, which support the improvement of academic performance.
7. Evaluation and support of the teachers in terms of quality of instruction, and use of language, and professional development in the institution should be instated by institutional mechanisms through systematic feedback and mentoring programmes.
8. The practice and culturally relevant teaching materials should be incorporated to help the learners relate academic material to their corresponding social and cultural experiences to enhance higher engagement and performance.
9. School programmes, activities of the culture, and resources to enhance the learning environments should be supported through the involvement of the local community organizations, social networks, and educational stakeholders.
10. The education policymakers must consider and develop a policy that communicates in terms of classroom management, teacher competence, parental involvement and collaboration with schools and communities hence enhancing total student academic achievement as well as the well-rounded growth.

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