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Socioeconomic status and access to quality Education

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Abstract:

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a prominent construct in social science research. Various methods for measuring SES exist, typically involving some combination of family income, parental education, and occupational status. Studies indicate that SES influences a wide range of health, cognitive, and socioemotional outcomes in children, with these effects starting before birth and persisting into adulthood. Numerous mechanisms have been proposed to explain the link between SES and child well-being, most of which involve disparities in access to material and social resources or responses to stress-inducing conditions by both children and their parents. SES impacts children's well-being at multiple levels, including family and neighborhood environments, and its effects are influenced by children's characteristics, family traits, and external support systems. International large-scale assessments are useful for examining variations in average student performance across different countries over time. Student achievement differences are linked to background characteristics, and although the most significant background factors may vary between education systems, family socioeconomic status (SES) typically explains a considerable portion of the variance in student achievement. Therefore, SES is regarded as a crucial element in education research, although challenges remain in determining the most effective way to measure SES operationally.

Keywords: Socioeconomic status, SES, Student achievement, impact on Education, high/low quality.



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1.Introduction:

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a fundamental construct in social science research, extensively linked to various aspects of human development and well-being. Defined typically by a combination of family income, parental education, and occupational status, SES serves as a key determinant in shaping an individual's opportunities and outcomes throughout life. One of the critical areas where SES exerts a profound influence is education. The quality of education a child receives is closely intertwined with their family's socioeconomic background, impacting academic achievement, cognitive development, and future socioeconomic mobility.

The foundations of socioeconomic inequities and the impact of efforts to reduce socioeconomic status (SES) gaps on educational outcomes are a major focus for researchers globally. Closing the achievement gap is a common objective for most education systems. This literature review examines SES and related constructs, the link between SES and educational achievement, variations among educational systems, and changes over time. It identifies and evaluates commonly used proxy variables for SES in education research, as well as the relevant components collected in the IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). While the literature consistently shows a positive relationship between family SES and student achievement, the strength of this relationship varies depending on different social contexts and education systems.

This research aims to explore the intricate relationship between socioeconomic status and the quality of education. By examining how SES influences educational opportunities and outcomes, we seek to understand the mechanisms through which family background shapes academic achievement. Additionally, this study will address the methodological challenges in measuring SES and propose ways to refine its operationalization in education research. Understanding the interplay between SES and educational quality is essential for developing policies and interventions aimed at reducing educational inequalities. As education systems worldwide strive for equity and excellence, insights from this research can inform strategies to support students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring that all children have access to high-quality education regardless of their family circumstances.



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2.Objectives of the research:

- ☐ Study the relationship between socioeconomic status and quality education .
- ☐ Examine how socioeconomic status influences education opportunities and outcomes
- ☐ Study the disparities in academic performance and achievement among students from various socioeconomic backgrounds.
- ☐ Propose evidence-based policy recommendations to improve access to quality education for students from all socioeconomic backgrounds.
- ☐ Investigate how community and family support systems contribute to or mitigate the effects of socioeconomic disparities on education.
- ☐ Examine how SES influences educational attainment and career outcomes over time.

3.Main Topic :

i. The relationship between socioeconomic status and quality of education in schools:

Socioeconomic status encompasses the level of education, income, and occupation of an individual or group. While students from both high and low socioeconomic backgrounds attend school, the impact of lower socioeconomic status on academic achievement is significant. Students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often encounter additional obstacles, such as a lack of learning resources, challenging learning environments, and low motivation, which adversely affect their academic performance. The quality of a nation's education system is crucial for economic growth, labor market success, and providing a route out of poverty. Beyond labor market outcomes, literacy and numeracy enable individuals to participate meaningfully in society. In all areas of the school and its educational community, the rights of every child to survival, protection, development, and participation are paramount. This implies an emphasis on education that enhances children's ability to advocate for themselves by acquiring relevant knowledge, practical skills, and positive attitudes. It also aims to create, and assist



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children in creating, safe, secure, and healthy environments for themselves and others. Families with lower socioeconomic status frequently find it challenging to offer academic support to their children due to limited time and financial resources.

ii. Socioeconomic status and academic achievement of students:

Socioeconomic status significantly influences students' academic achievements. Higher socioeconomic status often provides access to better educational resources, supportive learning environments, and greater motivation, all of which enhance academic performance. Conversely, students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face obstacles such as limited access to learning materials, challenging conditions, and lower motivation, which can hinder their academic success. The quality of education plays a crucial role in economic growth, labor market outcomes, and alleviating poverty, while literacy and numeracy enable active participation in society. Ensuring the rights of all children to education, protection, development, and participation remains a central concern in educational communities.

iii. The impact of Family socioeconomic status on students achievement in different grades:

Theoretical and empirical studies have highlighted the impact of family socioeconomic status (SES) on children's educational outcomes. These studies have explored the mechanisms linking family SES to children's achievement and identified potential pathways, one of which involves three types of capital: economic, cultural, and social. In essence, variations in the availability of these forms of capital among households ultimately result in differences in children's academic performance. For example, family income can be utilized for structured extracurricular activities, accessing prestigious educational opportunities, or establishing valuable social connections. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds face limitations based on their and their family's financial resources. Therefore, economic capital determines the level of financial assistance parents can provide for their children's academic endeavors.

4. Methodology:

i. Socioeconomic status constructs and Measures:



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The American Psychological Association (APA) defines socioeconomic status (SES) as "the social standing or class of an individual or group" (APA 2018). SES has often been used as a latent construct for assessing family background. However, there is no consensus among empirical studies on the best way to operationalize SES. In many studies, the measurement of SES is not given much attention, with little discussion on the rationale behind choosing certain indicators over others. Liberatos et al. argued that there is no single best measure of SES, as the choice depends on factors such as conceptual relevance, the potential role of social class in the study, the measure's applicability to specific populations, its relevance at the time of the study, its reliability and validity, the number of indicators included, the level of measurement, the simplicity of the measure, and comparability with measures used in other studies. Historically, SES has been conceptualized and measured in various ways. Taussig (1920) defined SES by the father's occupational status, while later, Cuff (1934) used a scorecard proposed by Sims (1927), which included questions about household items, parents' education, father's occupation, and other relevant details. Since these early studies, the development of instruments for measuring SES has become more complex. This includes more sophisticated methods like factor analysis or model-based approaches (NCES [National Center for Educational Statistics] 2012). By the 1980s, there was a general consensus that SES should be a composite variable, commonly encompassing education, income, and occupation, as these three indicators capture different facets of family background.

ii. How to overcome low socioeconomic status (SES) to access high-quality education : Here are several strategies:

1. Institutional Strategies:

- **Early Childhood Education:** Enroll children in high quality early childhood education programs, which have been shown to provide a strong foundation for later academic success.
- **School-Based Interventions:** Implement programs that provide additional support, such as after-school tutoring, summer learning programs, and enrichment activities.
- **Teacher Training and Support:** Invest in professional development for teachers to equip them with strategies to support students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds effectively.



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2. Individual and Family Strategies:

- **Parental Involvement:** Engage actively in children's education through regular communication with teachers, helping with homework, and fostering a positive learning environment at home.
- **Accessing Financial Aid and Scholarships:** Research and apply for scholarships, grants, and financial aid programs designed to support students from low-income backgrounds.

3. Policy and Systemic Strategies

- **Reducing Barriers to Access:** Implement policies that reduce barriers to advanced coursework, such as offering free Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) programs.
- **Community and School Partnerships:** Foster partnerships between schools and community organizations to provide holistic support, including health services, counseling, and extracurricular activities.
- **Technology and Internet Access:** Provide students with access to technology and high-speed internet to support digital learning, especially in underserved areas.

5. Results of study :

□ The socio-economic status of students significantly impacts the quality of education they receive. Students from poorer backgrounds often miss classes because they cannot pay their fees on time, unlike their wealthier peers. Schools with predominantly low-income students struggle to pay teachers adequately, leading to decreased teacher morale and a subsequent decline in teaching quality. These schools also lack the financial resources to host events for parents and the community as frequently as schools with students from higher-income families. Respondent 3 highlighted that socio-economic status directly affects educational quality, illustrating how student performance is influenced.



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□ It is also noticed that socio-economic status impacts the quality of education. A family's income level influences social relationships, the type of school a child attends, and family cohesion all of which affect a child's education. Wealthy families can provide their children with high-quality education by hiring the best teachers, whereas poor families may struggle to afford even basic study materials like candles. Additionally, in families with financial problems and frequent conflicts, children lack a secure environment for studying. Community attitudes also play a role; some community members discourage children from attending school, especially in areas with many bars, where children are often tempted to engage in drinking instead of studying.

□ However, communities can enhance the quality of education through various efforts: participating in voluntary services such as cleaning school roads and bushes, offering casual labor to educational institutions, sharing common facilities like football pitches, water taps, and wood lots, and engaging in the decision-making processes of educational institutions through representation in various forums.

□ Modern technology also has significantly impacted children's education. They are more interested in activities like listening to music on their phones and using the internet and WhatsApp. Instead of prioritizing school fees, they purchase expensive phones, which give them access to internet content, including pornography. Taking a rather liberal stance,..."

□ Socio-economic status affects the quality of education in various ways. Regarding learners' performance, It's noted that some parents delay paying fees, causing students to miss lessons. Additionally, some parents keep their children at home to help with tasks like harvesting or picking coffee, instead of sending them to school.

6. Conclusion:

In conclusion, this research underscores the significant impact of socio-economic status on the quality of education. It has revealed a complex interplay of factors wherein students from lower socio-economic backgrounds face numerous challenges that hinder their educational attainment. From delayed fee payments leading to absenteeism, to the necessity for children to contribute to family income through labor, and even the allure of quick profits in hazardous occupations, the barriers to learning are multifaceted and profound.



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Furthermore, the quality of teaching is not immune to the influence of socio-economic status. Schools serving economically disadvantaged communities often struggle to attract and retain qualified educators, leading to disparities in teaching quality compared to schools in more affluent areas. This disparity perpetuates a cycle of inequality, as students from disadvantaged backgrounds are deprived of the same level of instruction and support as their wealthier counterparts.

However, amidst these challenges, there are also glimpses of hope. Community involvement and support can play a crucial role in mitigating the negative effects of socio-economic status on education. By engaging in voluntary services, providing labor to educational institutions, and participating in decision-making processes, communities can contribute to creating a more conducive learning environment for all students.

Ultimately, addressing the impact of socio-economic status on education requires comprehensive and targeted interventions at multiple levels. Policy reforms aimed at reducing economic disparities, improving access to quality education, and providing support to disadvantaged communities are essential. Additionally, efforts to foster collaboration between schools, communities, and policymakers can help create a more equitable educational system where every child has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of this research on socio-economic status and quality education, several recommendations can be proposed to address the identified challenges and promote equitable educational opportunities:

- ☐ Equitable Funding Allocation
- ☐ Early Intervention and Remediation
- ☐ Holistic Support Services
- ☐ Foster partnerships between schools, families, and community organizations to create a supportive network around students.
- ☐ Implement policies that ensure equitable distribution of resources to schools based on the socio-economic status of their student population.



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