

Influence Of Parents' Socioeconomic Status On Students' Education In Secondary Schools In Bondo Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract:

Any nation's social, economic, and cultural progress depends heavily on education. The primary causes of dismal performance by students in secondary school are a source of concern for educationists in Bondo sub-county. The aim of the study was to determine how socioeconomic status (SES) of parents' affect students' education in Bondo sub-county. The study was informed by B.F. Skinner's theory of behaviorism. The study adopted a concurrent triangulation design within mixed-methods approach. The target population of the study was 1320 students from 5 public secondary schools in Bondo sub-county. A sample of 10% was taken out of the total population of students in each school using stratified sampling to answer the questionnaire, 50 parents were selected using simple random sampling for the interview and 10 teachers who were selected purposively responded to interview questions. The sample size of the present study was 132 students. Validity of research instruments was achieved by seeking expert opinion from the department of psychology and educational foundations of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. Reliability was attained by carrying out a pilot study in sampled schools that were not part of the main study sample and by using the Cronbach reliability test, where an index of 0.695 was obtained. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, aided by SPSS version 26, while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic framework. The study found that parents' socio-economic status affects students' education in secondary schools in Bondo sub-county. Therefore, the study recommended that parents should sacrifice to engage in students' studies in secondary school, as that would positively impact on students' studies. Furthermore, the study recommends that, parents should strive to improve their socioeconomic status for the betterment of their children's education in secondary school.

Keywords: Socioeconomic status (SES), sub-county, performance and secondary school

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I. Introduction

Education is essential to any society since it can avert many interpersonal and societal problems. It enables an individual to get employment, earn good earnings, promote good health, and obliterate poverty. For societies, it spurs creativity and innovation and fosters societal cohesion World Bank (2018). Li & Qiu (2018), in a study conducted in China, observed that a country's progress depends on the quality of education it provides to its citizens, and parents' socioeconomic status predicts the children's academic achievement in school.

According to Poulain, T., Mandy, V., Carolin, S., Anja, H., Antje, K., and Wieland, K. (2019), the family background in which a child is born plays a vital role in his or her social, emotional, mental, physical, cognitive, and psychological growth and development, as well as academic performance in schools. Additionally, a study conducted in Asia by Hossain, T., Shohel, T. A., & Jahan, N. (2017) noted that socioeconomic status (SES) is an amalgamation of educational level attained by parents, political power, profession prestige, occupation, and the amount of income being generated by the family. Furthermore, in Pakistan, Gul, R., Talat, M., Mumtaz, M & Shaheen, L. (2021) posited that socioeconomic status is a concept taking into consideration both resources and prestige associated with occupation, which affect both students and parents.

In a study conducted in Quetta, Ayub, A., Gul, R., Malik, M., Sharjeel, M. Y., & Rauf, M. B. (2021), revealed that education plays a pivotal role in giving a road map of how to approach life and helps in terms of gaining knowledge and access to information, which are beneficial in forming new learning. According to Liu, J.; Peng, P.; Luo, L. (2020) in a study conducted in China showed that students who come from families of low socioeconomic status (SES) generally perform poorly as compared to their peers from more affluent backgrounds. Furthermore, Gul, R., Khan, S. S., Mazhar, S., & Tahir, T. (2020) observed that the mothers who

are educated are capable of educating and helping their children in their studies at home as compared to the ones who are not educated, which in turn results in their better performance in academics.

Burns (2019) observed that Sub-Saharan African countries should allocate adequate resources to expand access to secondary education in parallel with quality education for the benefit of students. Additionally, in Ghana, Milledzi, Saani, & Brown (2018) noted that the most recognized and easy method of ensuring lasting security and good opportunities for the upcoming generation of any nation is through education. Furthermore, Osei-Owusu *et al.*, (2018), in a study that was carried out in Ghana to investigate the effects of parenting socioeconomic status on students' academic performance, discovered that the academic performance of the Yamfo senior high school students is highly determined by their parents' socioeconomic status. Parents of high socioeconomic status would establish a solid foundation that is necessary for the students' development, which their counterparts of low socioeconomic status might not be able to provide. The socioeconomic status of the parents would determine their position to provide the resources that their children need.

In Nigeria, Miftahu & Melaiye (2021) observed that parents' socio-economic status is made up of two major factors: social and economic status. The social status of parents in society portends the position they occupy in society through acquisition, while economic status deals with the wealth they have. This therefore showed that in studying socio-economic factors affecting the performance of students in secondary school, various dimensions of socio-economic status should be tackled effectively by the researcher for better understanding of the influence of each dimension.

According to Ministry of Education (2018) in Rwanda, the low number of students participating in public boarding secondary schools is linked to the low socio-economic status of their parents. Furthermore, Muzaza *et al.*, (2017), in a study on the effect of the socio-economic status of parents on the educational success of students in high school in the Western Province of Zambia, posited that the parents' socioeconomic status has a great influence on the performance of students who are in secondary school. Moreover, a study by Gobena (2018) to examine the relationship between students' academic performance and their socioeconomic background revealed that the family socioeconomic status predicts the students' academic performance in schools.

According to the findings of a study by Gabriel *et al.*, (2016) on the relationship between parental socio-economic factors and the academic achievement of students in Westland District in Nairobi County, the study established that the education level of a family significantly affects the academic performance of a student. Similarly, Livumbaze & Achoka (2016), in their study in Hamisi Subcounty, Kenya, showed that most students perform poorly in secondary schools because of the low socio-economic status of their parents, while a few from well-off families perform better academically since their parents could meet their educational needs.

Furthermore, Juma, Muasya & Masese (2016), in a study conducted in public secondary schools in Tana River County, Kenya, revealed a positive correlation between parents' socioeconomic status and students' academic performance in secondary school. Parents of higher socioeconomic status have the prowess of paying fees on time, creating a conducive environment, and providing necessary learning resources to their students as compared to their counterparts, who might not be able to do the same for their students.

According to an economic survey report (2018), Bondo Sub-County is in the category of the poorest counties in Kenya, despite the main livelihoods being agriculture and fishing. According to the survey, about 41.1% of households fall below the poverty line, with 47.2% of the population classified as impoverished. Despite studies carried out in related fields, the poor performance of the students in the sub-county is a concern, hence the need to interrogate factors that are contributing to this situation. In light of this, the aim of this current study was to look into how parents' socioeconomic status affects their children's education in secondary schools in Bondo Sub County.

II. Theoretical Framework And Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

According to Collins and Stockon (2018), a theoretical framework is a system of theories, beliefs, assumptions, expectations, and concepts that are used to shape research. The current study was informed by B.F. Skinner's theory of behaviorism. According to B. F. Skinner, the most effective approach to comprehending behavior is to examine reasons behind an action's outcomes - a concept he called operant conditioning. In the theory, Skinner holds that behavior that results in positive outcomes is more likely to be repeated, whereas behavior that results in negative outcomes is less likely to be repeated. Animals were used in Skinner Box experiments as a means of studying operant training.

Later on, Skinner managed to capture the animal's behavior in a condensed amount of time with objectivity. Operant classical theory's conclusion confirms that environmental factors possess a far greater impact on behavior. The theory was relevant to the current study as it helped in understanding how parents' socioeconomic status affects their children's education in secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County. In this regard, the theory projected that the students who were targeted by the study were coming from homes of

different socioeconomic status, which determined the level at which their parents were engaging in their studies, resulting in their differences in performance. Additionally, Skinner's behavioral theory tends to support the idea that the outcome of a behavior informs a lot about future prospects.

Literature Review

Universally, for a learner to be able to concentrate and excel in education, their basic needs should be met first. This could only be achieved through their parental involvement, which is dictated by their socioeconomic status (Rayhan et al., 2019). Parents' income, their education level, and their occupation are among the factors that can be used to estimate the socio-economic status of the family. Parents' socio-economic status can benefit students' educational outcomes as it helps to meet their basic needs; hence, students from affluent family backgrounds perform quite well in school as compared to those from destitute families (Boonk et al., 2018). The reviewed study dealt with the excellence in academic performance recorded by students from affluent families, while the current study sought to fill the gap by investigating how the socioeconomic status of parents affects the education of children in secondary school.

Park and Lee's (2020) study in Korea revealed that the disparity in parents' involvement in students' academics depends on the family structure and is positively associated with students' academic performance. The more stable the family structure is, the higher the student's academic performance in school. Additionally, the study revealed that parental involvement is pointedly higher in two-parent families than in the rest of the families. The results obtained in the current study conducted in Kenya may be different from those obtained in Korea due to differences in geographical location. Additionally, the study used only quantitative data, yet this current study adopted both qualitative and quantitative data to fill the gap in the literature. While the past study dwelt on family structure, this current study majored on the socio-economic status of parents.

In Pakistan, a study highlighted that parents of low socio-economic status often work most of the time to fend for their families and therefore have limited or no time to engage in their children's education, and this negatively impacts their academic performance in school as compared to those from affluent parents (Saleem, A., Gul, R., Ahmad, A., 2021). Parental involvement in children's studies is very crucial since that inspires them to work hard despite the fact that support can take different forms, which include the provision of an innocuous and conducive environment for studies, intellectual simulations, parent-child conversation, contact with the school to share information, participation in the school's activities and aspirations relating to personal fulfilment, participation in school events and schoolwork, and governance (Bukhari *et al.*, 2021). The scholarly gap filled by this current study was that the reviewed literature in Pakistan by Bukhari et al. (2021) employed a qualitative case study research design, while the current study adopted qualitative and quantitative methods to get the findings.

According to Harry (2020), a study in Peru about family size, schooling, and child labor reveals that students from families of low economic status go to schools with limited resources.

Family income influences survival rates and causes absenteeism. The study reveals that lack of school fees leads to absenteeism, which ultimately results in poor performance in national examinations. Furthermore, students from low socio-economic families experience difficulties in their studies, thus resulting in their dropping out of school much earlier because their parents are incapacitated to support their studies. The findings from this study showed that poor families are unable to provide their children with school needs and meet the cost of education, which leads to absenteeism among the children and results in poor academic performance. Harry's (2020) study showed how students' whose parents are of low socio-economic status suffer academically due to lack of school fees that they cannot afford, which results in poor performance, absenteeism, and dropping out of school.

The current study therefore filled the scholarly gap by adopting a mixed-methods approach to provide more information as to why, despite the government's provision of subsidies to schools, the performance of students from Bondo subcounty is still dismal.

According to a study carried out in Nigeria, the majority of students from families of low socio-economic status have low academic performance. This is because their parents have less interest in following up on their education (Pant, 2020). Additionally, Miftahu & Melaiye (2021) in a related study in Nigeria indicated that parents' occupation does not influence their students' academic performance in secondary school, but their income affects their performance since their income is key to the payment of the necessary levy and fees required for studies. The reviewed studies were carried out in Nigeria while the present was conducted in Kenya, a different geographical collection to fill the study gap. Additionally, the reviewed studies adopted one design of data collection, while the current study filled the gap by adopting a mixed-methods approach.

Dachi (2020), in a study conducted in Tanzania, demonstrated that students from low-income parents are more likely to be illiterate. This is because their parents do not value education and rarely want to spend money on their studies as compared to their well-off counterparts, and as a result, they register poor academic performance compared to the high-income family. Furthermore, in Ethiopia, a report from the Building Resilience in Ethiopia (2021) program posited that the COVID-19 pandemic increased existing inequalities with

unequal access to distance learning opportunities during school closure between higher and lower-income households. Parents of low socio-economic status were unable to support the distance and online activities of their students as compared to their counterparts of high socio-economic status. The reviewed studies were carried out in different locations in Tanzania and Ethiopia while the current study was conducted in Kenya where there are no records showing that such a study had been conducted.

In Kenya, Kieti (2018) opined that academic achievement of students in the Matungulu sub-county of Machakos County is influenced by the socioeconomic status of their parents; for instance, low socio-economic prowess contributes to the inadequacy of learning resources, subsequently negatively affecting students' academic performance. The current study used interview schedules and questionnaires to collect data for in-depth information since the reviewed literature was quantitative in nature. Furthermore, Goro et al. (2019), in a study conducted in Kisumu investigating the influence of parental level of education on pupils' academic achievement in public primary schools in Kisumu West Sub-County by using a descriptive and correlational research design, observed that parents' level of education has a positive influence on children's academic performance. The reviewed study was conducted in a primary school setting, while the current study was executed at the secondary school level.

A related study in Mbita District on the impact of parental financing and influence on students' academic performance in secondary school observed a link between student academic performance and parental involvement in school activities. Students' performance was found to rely significantly on parental involvement in their studies. The more the parents support the children's studies, the better their academic performance (Sika, 2019). The reviewed studies were done outside Bondo Sub-County and have quantitative data only, therefore offering little information on the influence of parents' socio-economic status on their involvement in the education of students in secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County, which is what this present study chooses to focus on. The current study therefore adopts a mixed method approach to investigate the relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Bondo Sub-County.

III. Research Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a concurrent triangulation design within a mixed method approach by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data for overall analysis successively. Triangulation implies the incorporation of methodologies in a study of the same phenomenon (Rothbauer, 2008). Concurrent triangulation design was suitable for the present study because it provided the researcher with both qualitative and quantitative data which gave the researcher clear understanding of the problem and hence arrived at a comprehensive finding of the research question (Maxwell, Molina, and Niglas, 2016).

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

According to Mannay (2010), a sample size refers to a portion drawn from a population that is intended to lead to statistical estimates of the attributes of the whole population. According to Oso and Onen (2011), a sample size of 10 of the total population should be considered adequate for a study. Therefore, the researcher used stratified sampling technique to sample 132 students (10%) of the total number of students in each sampled secondary school to respond to the questionnaires. The strata were based on students' forms and gender. A sample of two teachers were selected from each sampled school for interviews using purposive sampling technique, that is., the class teachers and teachers in charge of guidance and counseling in school. The purposeful sampling technique that is mainly used in qualitative studies is defined as choosing units (e.g., individuals, groups of individuals, or institutions) based on specific objectives associated with responding to a research study's questions (Lucas, 2013). Additionally, out of the 500 parents, a total of 50 were sampled through simple random sampling for an interview. They were asked open-ended questions by the researcher for easy collection of detailed information for a duration of between 15 and 20 minutes.

Research Instruments

Quantitative data

In this study, quantitative data were primarily gathered from the students using a questionnaire in a standardized manner so that the results are internally consistent and coherent for analysis. Questionnaires enhanced the anonymity of respondents and the uniformity of questions to ease comparability.

Socio-economic status questionnaire and academic performance questionnaire were used. The researcher provided the questionnaire to the students, which included both open-ended and closed-ended items. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information and thematic areas on the objectives of this study as per Likert's scale, which eased the transcription of data analysis as per SPSS 26.

Qualitative data

Qualitative data was collected using interview technique. The method was considered suitable for the study since the study touches on the socioeconomic status of parent. Both parents and the teachers were therefore expected to share out their feelings. Additionally, the data which was collected via interviews enabled the researcher to explain, support and confirm the finding of the study (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought the permission from the Board of Postgraduate Studies (BPGS) of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga of the University of Science and Technology (JOUUST), National Council of Science and Technology (NACOSTI), sampled schools and participants. The researcher then developed the questionnaire guides and interview schedules for data collection.

Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires from 132 students while qualitative data was collected from 10 teachers and 50 parents using interview schedules.

Data Analysis

Data collected was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative data from questionnaires was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 while the qualitative data was analyzed using the thematic framework.

IV. Findings And Discussions

The study investigated how parents' socio-economic status affected their involvement in the education of their children in secondary school in Bondo Sub-Couty. To achieve this, the researcher designed a questionnaire carefully to enquire from the respondents on how their parents' socio-economic status correlate with their involvement in their studies. The statements had facts which were related to parents' socio-economic status and involvement in students' education in secondary school.

The responses were in Likert scale whereby the respondents were to rate their responses in a scale score of; SA- Strongly Agree, A- Agree, U-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD-Strongly Disagree. The students' responses are tabulated in the Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Views of Respondents on Parents' Socio-Economic Status and Students' Education

Statement	SA	A	U	D	SD
My academic performance has improved with the aid of my parents' hiring teachers for coaching during the school holiday.	20 (15.2%)	19 (14.4%)	9 (6.9%)	26 (19.7%)	58 (43.9%)
Revision materials provided by my parents have motivated me to work extra hard and improve in my academics.	49 (37%)	31 (23.5%)	11 (8.3%)	12 (9.1%)	29 (22%)
The ability of my parents to pay my school fee on time has helped me to settle on my studies and improve my academic performance.	54 (40.9%)	25 (18.9%)	9 (6.8%)	24 (18.2%)	20 (15.2%)
The act of my parents rewarding me whenever I record a remarkable improvement inspires me to work harder.	39 (29.5%)	27 (20.5%)	11 (8.3%)	18 (13.6%)	37 (28%)
The provision of basic needs by my parents has made it easy for me to study and perform well in my studies.	61 (46.2%)	35 (26.5%)	8 (6.1%)	15 (11.4%)	13 (9.8%)

The quantitative results obtained from the views of 132 respondents in the present study revealed that parents' socioeconomic status influences their level of involvement in their children's education in secondary school at different levels. The results showed that 63.6% of respondents disagreed with the statement that their academic performance has improved with the aid of their parents' hiring of teachers for coaching during the holiday. The respondents' views show that the majority of parents are financially incapacitated to hire teachers to coach their students during holidays due to their low socio-economic status. Therefore, the majority of students from low socioeconomic status performance are low since their parents are not able to get involved in their studies by hiring teachers to coach them during the holidays.

These findings are in agreement with the results of a study conducted by Lambert, M. C., Duppong Hurley, K., January, S.-A., & Huscroft D'Angelo, J. (2022) in high school that observed that parental involvement in students' education results in positive academic performance. Low parental involvement in students' education utterly results in low academic performance by the student (Lara & Saracosti., 2019). Additionally, Cano, T., Perales, F., & Baxter, J. (2019) observed that parents of low socioeconomic status, such as those with low education, are not concerned to support their students' education, and as a result, the students are less motivated in their studies, resulting in poor performance.

The findings in Table 4.6 showed that parental involvement in the children's studies by buying revision materials inspired them to work hard in school. This was confirmed by the students' respondents, who agreed at 60.5% with the statement that their parents' ability to purchase revision materials for them is of great importance to their studies. The respondents' observations showed that when parents purchase academic materials for their children, they stand a higher chance of performing well since they will be able to revise on their own even when they are at home. The findings from the respondents agree with the observation that when students are exposed to more learning resources, their learning opportunities will equally increase (Hossain, Shohel, & Jahan, 2017). The present study further noted that the ability of parents to pay school fee on time for their children enables them to settle down and study, thus resulting in better academic performance. The student respondents confirmed this by majority agreeing at 59.8% with the statement on the questionnaire guide. The results showed that students whose parents are of low socioeconomic status are in a disadvantaged position, as they will always be asked to go home for fees while their counterparts are studying, thereby interfering with their learning and eventually their academic performance.

Findings in Table 4.6 showed that 50% of the participants felt that the rewards they receive from their parents whenever they perform well inspire them to work harder. The respondents' views showed that whenever students are appreciated for their good academic performance, they get motivated to put more effort into their studies. This concurred with the findings of the study by Srivastava (2018) which stated that students are able to execute better performance whenever they are appreciated through rewards and suitable impetus by their parents' courtesy of their good work.

The results of the present study additionally discovered that the students' respondents (72.7%) agreed that they are motivated in their studies by their parents' ability to provide for their basic needs. The respondents' responses showed that whenever parents are capable of meeting the basic needs of their children, they get motivated in their studies. These findings agreed with the results of Igbo et al. (2015), which asserted that students' academic performance can be seriously improved by parents' ability to provide upkeep and inspiration in all areas of the students' social lives. However, some students (21.1%) confuted the statement that their parents' ability to provide for their basic needs is the force behind their academic success. The respondents' views corroborated the findings of a study by Lu (2020), which shows that there are students from low socio-economic status who are resilient and have the capability to overcome various challenges and have been able to achieve success in their educational pursuits.

Additionally, the qualitative results obtained from teachers and parents' respondents during the interview equally revealed that there is a relationship between parents' socioeconomic status and students' academic performance in secondary school. The findings showed that students' academic performance improves with the aid of parents' hiring teachers for their coaching during the school holiday. The respondents' views agreed with the results of a study by Sika (2019), which augmented that the more the parents involve themselves by supporting students' academics, the better the performance. Students' whose parents are of low socio-economic status suffer academically due to their inability to pay school fees and support them in other ways academically (Harry 2020).

Furthermore, the sentiments of the respondents corroborated the findings of a study by Lu T. (2016) that posited that appropriate parental involvement in children's studies could result in physical and mental health development, which finally results in better academic performance.

In Mexico, a study by Chun and Devall (2019) on the role of parental involvement in students' academics observed that when parents engage themselves in their children's studies by providing required materials, that advances their children's academic performance and socialization. Students' good academic performance could be reinforced by good learning resources that they are exposed to (Boonk *et al.*, 2018).

Similarly, a study by Karemesi (2010) stated that school fees and other payments that the school demands from parents usually affect the students' academic performance, especially those who come from families of low socio-economic status. Where the parents might not be able to make such payments on time, the students will be sent away, interfering with their learning sessions. Furthermore, Srivastava (2018) additionally observed that rewards can motivate students to work hard and perform better in their studies. The qualitative results from the interview with class teachers revealed that the rewards serve as an extrinsic motivation for the learners.

V. Concluding Remarks

The study findings revealed that there is a correlation between parents' socioeconomic status and their level of involvement in their children's education in secondary schools which ultimately influence their performance. This can be attributed to the parents of low socioeconomic status inability to hire teachers to coach their students at home, purchase revision materials, pay fees, access to rewards to appreciate their children's efforts in studies, and provision of their basic needs to enable them to settle down for their studies. Nevertheless, it can also be concluded that the student's excellence in academics in secondary school, requires

an individual effort because there are students whose parents are of low socioeconomic status but out of their resilience, they still perform better than their counterparts from affluent backgrounds.

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