Impact of Family's Socio-Economic Status on the Meritorious Performance of University Entrants

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Abstract

The present study was designed to explore the relationship between the socio-economic status and entrance merit of the university entrance toppers. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw the sample from various departments of Kashmir University. The sample for the present study consisted of all the first five top merit holders in the entrance test conducted by Kashmir University for admission to various postgraduate courses (N=185). Data was collected by using Kalia and Sahu's Socio-Economic Status Scale to measure the socio-economic status of the toppers and by using PG entrance merit points of the university entrance toppers. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to analyse the data. The findings of the study revealed that there exists a significant negative relationship between the socio-economic status and entrance merit of the university entrance toppers.

Keywords: Entrance toppers, socio-economic status, Entrance merit

1. Introduction

Socio-economic status (SES) is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. It is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. Socio-economic status is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education and occupation. Family background has repeatedly proven to be a strong predictor of academic achievement. Families with a lower socio-economic status often struggle to provide academic support to their children. Limited financial resources make it difficult for the parents to create a home-based learning environment. Parents in a low socio-economic household cannot afford reading materials, technology and tutors for their children. When children do not have a positive learning environment at home, it negatively affects their academic achievement level in school.

There are many types of disadvantaged students: physically, mentally, socially & culturally, educationally and emotionally. The socially disadvantaged students are not handicapped by genetic deficiency, but by the socio-economic circumstances of their lives. The socio-economic disadvantage prevents them from developing their basic and natural potentialities. Socio-economic status plays an important role in the life of a person. Socio-economic status refers to the position that an individual or family occupies with reference to prevailing average standards of cultural possessions, effective income, material possessions and participation in group activities of the community (Chapin, 1928). The educational achievement gap has deep root; it is evident very early in child's lives; even before they enter schools. Socio-economic differences – such as health and nutrition status, home environments that provide access to academically related experiences, mobility rates, and financial assets can certainly influence academic achievements (Laosa, 2005). Therefore socio-economic status includes both the social and economic status of the individual in the group. Thus the variations in achievement are also due to the differences in socio-economic status of the children, differential treatment given by parents, parent's educational level and influence of the surroundings and so on. The influence of socio-cultural factors on various aspects of individual development has particularly caught the attention of educationists. Individual success and failure can also be judged by facilities and environment provided for his study, self-concept and study habits. As pointed out by Telford and Sawrey (1964) children belonging to higher socio-economic status are not only brilliant but also are provided better opportunities for developing intellectually, physically and emotionally. The type of intellectual environment in the home will definitely have an impact on the school achievement of the child and this intellectual environment in turn is determined by intellectual level of parents, parent's education, occupation, income, size of the family etc.

Sushma H.B. and Surekha (2014) found that socio-economic status is the strongest predictor of student's academic achievement. Another study conducted by Musarat Azhar *et al.* (2013) concluded that students belonging to strong financial status perform better than those who face problems in finance. Ritu Chandra and Shaikh Azimuddin (2013) in their study reveals the difference between high, average and low socio-economic groups and their achievement and found positive correlation between socio-economic status and academic achievement. The study of Farkhanda Ahmar and Ehtesham Anwar (2013) concluded that the socio-economic status of students greatly influence their academic achievement and those who belonged to high socio-economic status (SES) showed better performance. Osonwa *et al.* (2013) study reveals that children from lower economic groups scored significantly lower than children from higher income households. Shoukat Ali, Zubair Haider *et al.* (2012) data indicate that age, father/guardian socio-economic status and daily study hours

significantly contribute to academic performance of graduate students. Whereas Farid Ghaemi and Mahbubeh Yazdanpanah (2014); Machebe Chioma and Ifelunni Clara Odozi (2014); Ram Prakash Gupta and Kratika Katoch (2013) found that parental socio-economic status did not have any significant effect on the academic performance of the students. They concluded that there is no significant relationship between low socio-economic status and academic achievement. This may also be due to the fact that low socio-economic status students have stronger motivations and so they may try to learn and get higher scores.

1.2 Objectives
The following objectives were formulated for the present investigation:
i.   To study the socio-economic status of university entrance toppers.
ii.   To study the relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of university entrance toppers.
iii. To study the relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of male entrance toppers.
iv.   To study the relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of female entrance toppers.
v.   To study the relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of science stream entrance toppers.
vi.   To study the relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of arts stream entrance toppers.
vii. To study the relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of commerce stream entrance toppers.

1.3 Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were formulated for the present investigation:
i.   There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of university entrance toppers.
ii.   There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of male entrance toppers.
iii. There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of female entrance toppers.
iv.   There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of science stream entrance toppers.
v.   There will be a significant negative relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of arts entrance toppers.
vi.   There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of commerce stream entrance toppers.

2.   Methodology and Procedure
2.1 Sample
The sample for the present study consists of all the first five top merit holders in the entrance test conducted by Kashmir University for admission to various post graduate courses and are presently perusing their studies in various departments (N=185).

2.2 Tools Used
1.   Kalia and Sahu's Socio-Economic Status Scale (2012), was administered on the sample subjects to measure their socio-economic status.

2.3 Statistical Analysis
The statistical techniques of mean and Pearson's product moment correlation were used to analyze the data.

3.   Analysis and Interpretation
In order to achieve the objectives formulated for the present study, the data collected has been tabulated as under.

Table 1.0
Showing coefficient of correlation between Socio-Economic Status and Entrance Merit of University Entrance Toppers.

Variables	N	Coefficient of correlation	Level of Significance
Socio-Economic Status	185	- 0.19	Significant at
Entrance Merit	185		0.01 level

The perusal of the above table depicts that there exists a significant negative correlation between the

mean scores of socio-economic status and entrance merit of the university entrance toppers, as the value of 'r' is (- 0.19) which is significant at 0.01 level but negative. Thus from the confirmation of the result, the hypothesis no. 1 which reads as, *"There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of university entrance toppers",* stands accepted. On the basis of this result it can be inferred that socio-economic status does not contribute to the entrance merit of toppers.

Table 1.1

Showing coefficient of correlation between Socio-Economic Status and Entrance Merit of Male Entrance Toppers.

Variables	N	Coefficient of correlation	Level of Significance
Socio-Economic Status	100	- 0.29	Significant at
Entrance Merit	100		0.01 level

The perusal of the above table shows the relationship between the mean scores of socio-economic status and entrance merit of *male* entrance toppers. The calculated 'r' value is reported to be (- 0.29) which exceeds the tabulated value at 0.01 level of significance. The result reveals that there exists a significant negative relationship between the mean scores of socio-economic status and entrance merit of male entrance toppers. Thus from the confirmation of the result, the hypothesis no. 2 which reads as, *"There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of male entrance toppers",* stands accepted.

Table 1.2

Showing coefficient of correlation between Socio-Economic Status and Entrance Merit of Female Entrance Toppers.

Variables	N	Coefficient of correlation	Level of Significance
Socio-Economic Status	85	- 0.14	Not Significant
Entrance Merit	85		

The perusal of Table 1.2 shows the coefficient of correlation between the mean scores of socio-economic status and entrance merit of *female* entrance toppers. The calculated r-value (- 0.14) is less than the tabulated r-value at 0.05 level of significance. From this we reveal that there exists a non-significant negative relationship between the socio-economic status and entrance merit of female entrance toppers. Thus from the confirmation of the result, the hypothesis no. 3 which reads as, *"There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of female entrance toppers",* stands rejected.

Table 1.3

Showing coefficient of correlation between Socio-Economic Status and Entrance Merit of Science stream Entrance Toppers.

Variables	N	Coefficient of correlation	Level of Significance
Socio-Economic Status	95	- 0.05	Not Significant
Entrance Merit	95		

The perusal of above table shows the coefficient of correlation between the mean scores of socio-economic status and entrance merit of *science stream* entrance toppers. The calculated r-value is reported to be (- 0.05) which is less than the tabulated r-value at 0.05 level of significance. From this we reveal that there exists a non-significant negative relationship between the socio-economic status and entrance merit of science steam entrance toppers. Thus from the confirmation of the result, the hypothesis no. 4 which reads as, *"There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of science stream entrance toppers",* stands rejected.

Table 1.4

Showing coefficient of correlation between Socio-Economic Status and Entrance Merit of Arts stream Entrance Toppers.

Variables	N	Coefficient of correlation	Level of Significance
Socio-Economic Status	85	- 0.19	Not Significant
Entrance Merit	85		

The information presented in the Table 1.4 reveals the coefficient of correlation between the mean scores of socio-economic status and entrance merit of *arts stream* entrance toppers. The obtained r-value (- 0.19) is less than the tabulated r-value at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there exists a non-significant negative relationship between the socio-economic status and entrance merit of arts stream entrance toppers. Thus from the confirmation of the result, the hypothesis no. 5 which reads as, *"There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of arts stream entrance toppers",* stands rejected.

Table 1.5

Showing coefficient of correlation between Socio-Economic Status and Entrance Merit of Commerce stream Entrance Toppers.

Variables	N	Coefficient of correlation	Level of Significance
Socio-Economic Status	5	- 0.41	Not Significant
Entrance Merit	5		

The information presented in the Table 1.5 reveals the coefficient of correlation between the mean scores of socio-economic status and entrance merit of *commerce stream* entrance toppers. The obtained r-value (- 0.41) is less than the tabulated r-value at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there exists a non-significant negative relationship between the socio-economic status and entrance merit of commerce stream entrance toppers. Thus from the confirmation of the result, the hypothesis no. 6 which reads as, *"There will be a significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of commerce stream entrance toppers",* stands rejected.

The results are in conformity with the findings of study reported by Farid Ghaemi and Mahbubeh Yazdanpanah (2014) who found negative relationship between socio-economic status and academic achievement among university junior students. Machebe Chioma and Ifelunni Clara Odozi (2014) found that parental socio-economic status and parental educational background did not have significant effect on the academic performance of the students. Ram Prakash Gupta and Kratika Katoch (2013) in their study concluded that socio-economic status of the students has no influence on their academic achievement.

4. Findings

- It has been found that even a student from low socio-economic status can perform better and can become a topper if he has a desire to excel.
- Significant negative relationship has been found between the socio-economic status and entrance merit of university entrance toppers.
- Significant negative relationship has been found between the socio-economic status and entrance merit of male entrance toppers.
- Non-significant negative relationship has been found between socio-economic status and entrance merit of female entrance toppers
- It has been found that there exists negative but non-significant relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of science stream entrance toppers.
- Non-significant negative relationship has also been found between socio-economic status and entrance merit of arts stream entrance toppers.
- Non-significant negative relationship has been found between socio-economic status and entrance merit of commerce stream entrance toppers.

5. Inferential Suggestions

Thus it is quite obvious from the results that socio-economic status does not necessarily contribute to high performance i.e. high entrance merit of university entrance toppers. The above results clarifies that low socio-economic status can't overshadow the meritorious abilities of students. The findings of the present study reveal that there is inverse relationship between socio-economic status and entrance merit of university entrance toppers, it means lower the socio economic status, higher is the entrance merit. This may also be due to the fact that the high socio-economic status students have different opportunities and welfare in their life, so they may not have many motives or purposes to spend time and effort for learning, and thus, they achieve lower scores than the low socio-economic status students who wish to have a good life, have stronger motivations and so may try to learn and get higher scores than them. Therefore it is not important to have good accommodation, well equipped study rooms and costly study amenities to exceed in various academic fields as is common misconception of many low socio-economic students. This means that even a student from low financial background can become a topper if he has a need for achievement.

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