

# PSYCHOSOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## ABSTRACT

### OBJECTIVE

The aim of the study was to investigate and examine the social and psychological factors which are influencing the student's academic performance. The study focuses on opinions of undergraduate and graduate students on psychosocial factors which are influencing their academic performance.

### STUDY DESIGN

The qualitative research design was used in the present research.

### PLACE AND DURATION OF STUDY

The present study was conducted in Lahore, Pakistan from 22 December 2019 to September 2020.

### METHOD

Purposive samples of 35 female university student's age range 18-25 years from Lahore College for Women University (LCWU) were interviewed. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were employed as a tool for data collection. Five Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were conducted. All the collected information was then analysed and interpreted. Thematic Analysis (TA) research was used.

### RESULTS

Results of the thematic analysis showed that financial issues, mobile misuse, Teacher student relationship, Role of family, Peer group, Environment, Stress, Child parent relationship, learning issues and Distance were the most frequently occurring psychosocial determinants which were influencing the academic progress of university students.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the abovementioned result it can be concluded that student's educational progress is determined by psychosocial factors such as financial issues, mobile misuse, roles of family, peer group, teacher student relationship, parent child relationship, and environment, stress, distance and learning issues.

### KEYWORDS

Psychosocial, Academic Performance, Focus Group Discussions (FGD), Thematic Analysis (TA)

## INTRODUCTION

Students are the main assets of a nation who aimed to become architect, medical practitioner, administrators, and researcher and fulfills a state's vision. In every discipline in academia, students face numerous hindrances to master in order to succeed their exertion of ideal academic performance. Student's academic performance is an important feature in educational system. Numerous institution of higher education in Pakistan and other parts of the world are using The Grade Point Average (GPA) system and it is considered as a predictor of academic progress (AP). University administration, faculty members, and students need to identify and improve those elements that could lessen obstacles for attaining and sustaining the required GPA.<sup>1</sup>

Social, economic, emotional and environmental factors are the product of learners' educational progress. Numerous elements such as a low qualification of lecturers, lack of experienced teachers, poor incomes and payments of teachers, poor management, administration atmosphere, bad aptitude of learners, below age, reluctance to learn and poor peer groups impact can be accredited to the huge disappointment of learners in examinations.<sup>2</sup> Peers, relatives, and adults with whom adolescents come in contact, and by the spiritual organisations, schools, and group to which they belong, influences adolescents. Media, culture in which they are growing up, and the world events all of these factors have a great impact on adolescents.<sup>3</sup> Narad and Abdullah identified that the success or failure of institutions rely on the educational performance of students.<sup>4</sup> According to Halawah, home and family environment play a critical role the on academic achievement of students.<sup>5</sup>

Numerous inside and outside elements for instance gender, age, study behaviours, discipline, class attendance, the contribution of a teacher in academic achievement of students, time management, socialisation, sleep patterns, partying behaviour, socio-economic status and educational background of parents are affecting students learning performance. The student's academic achievement plays an essential role in producing great frontrunners and manpower for the society and it is responsible for the community's financial and societal growth.<sup>6</sup>

Rogaten et al research has observed the effect of time studying on the educational progress.<sup>7</sup> Mutodi and Ngirande established that parent-professor interaction, home and family support as well as child-rearing is absolutely associated with educational act.<sup>8</sup> Family and home support were the most important predictor of academic performance.



Mhiliwastated that the distance of a school influences the educational progress of students.<sup>9</sup> He highlighted that the more the distance of a school from a student's home, the more exhausted and less interested the learner will become. Therefore, it will have negative consequences on their scholastic accomplishment. A positive educational environment that reassures sentiments of faith and sanctuary in the people linked with the university, to be accurate; it affects students, professors, parents and even the community in general. The university environment is something invisible that can be professed by people who come into contact with the university.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the objectives of the present study are:

1. To determine psychosocial factors which affect the student's academic performance.
2. How psychosocial factors which affect the student's academic performance in the university.

**METHOD**

**Sample**

Sample for study consisted of 35 participants who were graduates and undergraduates female students of a public-sector women university (age of 18 to 25 years). Non-probability sampling technique, which includes purposive sampling technique, in which participants are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample.

**Assessment Protocol**

For study, focus group discussions were used as data collection tool. The discussions were based on a set pattern of questions, which are as follows:

1. What is your understanding of psychosocial factors?
2. Do you think there are different psychosocial factors which determine your academic performance? If so, which factors e.g.?
3. How many hours do you spend studying? Your study styles?
4. How much time you spend on social media, T.V, internet?
5. Any family gatherings, preferences which disturbs you on and off in your studies?
6. What do you think would be the alternative of exam system to access student's academic performance?

**Procedure**

The proposal of the study was approved by the Department of Applied Psychology, Lahore College for Women University (LCWU). The inform consent was taken from all the participants. The form consisted of items related of objectives and aims of present research invitation to participate in this research on voluntary basis. Confidentiality and privacy, anonymity, risk and benefits to partake in the present study was also mentioned. A brief overview of the research project

was explained to the participants, who were taken from Lahore College for Women University (LCWU). Five focus group discussion were conducted each focus group composed of seven participants.

The participants were invited one week prior to the focus group discussion. Date, time and place were informed. Research ethics were maintained by taking consent form each participant, and they were informed about the nature of the research and were given assurance of the information not to be used for any other purpose than educational and research. Focus group discussions (FGD) were held after the gap of one week. The set of questions were asked from each participant. The researcher records their conversations and transcribes them. Audio tape recording was done. Data will be analysed involving bringing together what we have observed, heard and read to make sense of the acquired knowledge. It was concerned with manufacturing data, finding designs, determining what is important, what is to be well grasped and deciding what to tell others. Data was analysed by using Thematic Analysis.

**Data Analysis**

Thematic Analysis (TA) research was used. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were employed as a tool for data collection. Five Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were conducted. All the collected information was then analysed and interpreted.

**RESULTS**

The aim of the study was to find out psychosocial factors and detriments which are faced by university students in Pakistan. This study gives a meaningful content for university policy makers, teachers and parents of students to learn how these factors are influencing their children and their life skills and behaviours. It facilitated university administration to devise and implement policies which helped students to improve academic performance as well as improving quality of life. The first most frequently occurring theme in the focus group discussions was financial issues (f=30). The second most frequently occurring theme in the focus group discussions was mobile misuse (f= 29).

**Table 1**  
**Thematic Analysis of Psychosocial Determinants of Academic Performance**

Sub themes	Main Themes
Lack of resources	Financial issues
Less income	
Lack of family support	
Part time job	
Low confidence	
Inferiority complex	
Lack of acceptance from peers	
Child labour	



Sub themes	Main Themes
Social media addiction Lack of concentration on studies Lack of communication Excessive use of technology	Mobile misuse
Teacher's less concentration Teacher's favouritism on work Biasness Communication gap Teaching style Judgmental remarks Appreciation Freedom of speech Teacher's behaviour towards student Friendly atmosphere	Teacher student relationship
Family background Lack of understanding Rules and regulation Competition Support Gender discrimination Influence on decisions Gatherings Early marriages	Role of Family
Peer group pressure Bad company Peer acquaintance Social approval Confidence	Peer group
Academic environment Home environment Satisfaction Social acceptance Work place environment Motivation Adjustment	Environment
Interpersonal relationship Grades Family conflicts Social rejection Financial crisis Physical Disability Emotional instability (EI) Work load Anxiety Overthinking Social rejection Peer group support Bullying Raging	Stress
Parental involvement Parental pressure Parental support Family support Parental conflicts Parents' education Socio economic status Liberty Lack of communication	Child parent relationship
Interest Language Lack of confidence Low IQ Learning style Class room environment Teacher's attitude Lack of concentration Lack of planning and schedule	Learning issues
Tired Wastage of time Health issues Sleeplessness Short attendance Transport issues	Distance

The frequency of the themes was also calculated as per sample, and presented in Table 2 as follows:

**Table 2**  
**Frequency of Main themes**

Main Themes	Frequency
Financial issues	30
Mobile misuse	29
Teacher student relationship	27
Role of family	22
Peer group	21
Environment	19
Stress	13
Child parent relationship	11
Learning issues	10
Distance	4

**DISCUSSION**

The current study has highlighted the issues or factors of university student which are determining their academic performance. A student faces a lot of problems on a daily basis, which needs to be addressed on a priority basis. This study makes parents, teachers, and university policy makers aware of the student's issues. Student's academic enactment is influenced by both psychological factors and social factors. The analysis of qualitative study identified financial issue as one of the major theme in determining academic performance as one of the participants reported that "Due to lack of resources a student may not perform well as compared to another student who has access to all resources." Agus and Makhbul revealed that students who belong to high-class families accomplished better than students who belong to lower income families.<sup>11</sup>

Mobile misuse was another major theme in determining academic performance. Currently, every student has a mobile phone, and its excessive use is creating problems for the younger young generation. As one of the participant said, "I leave my mobile phone in only two conditions, number one when I am sleeping and number two when it's on charging". Cholisaid that unnecessary habit of using mobile phone is frequently regarded as a behaviour addiction, alongside with other nonchemical addictions such as compulsive gaming, obsessive shopping or video-game addictions.<sup>12</sup>

Teacher student relationship plays a dynamic role in determining academic achievement. Teacher's expectation and teacher's assumptions about the potential of students have a perceptible effect on student accomplishment. As one of the participant said, "Teacher's remarks play a very important role in determining students' academic performance." A study conducted by Bamburgenlightened that teacher expectations play an important part in defining how much capable the student is for learning.<sup>13</sup>



Family plays an important role in every student's life. As participant said, "The students who belong to joint family system are more likely to neglect their studies as they spent a lot of time with their cousins." Schachter posited that the student's upbringing has a superficial influence on educational success.<sup>14</sup> Family structure is also one of the factors that play an imperative role in the success. Students who belong to small families have advanced success rates as compared to students from the large families.

Peer group was also one of the major elements determining the educational performance of the student. As one of the participant said "If in a group one friend is studying and rests of friends are not studying they will ask her to leave studies what you will do after studying this much." Carman and Zhang research revealed that the youth who have an extraordinary level of adherence to eccentric peer behaviour incline to have less GPA than those who have a less level of adherence.<sup>15</sup>

Our personalities are shaped by the environment. It plays an imperative role. As one of the participant said, "We are shaped by our environment. Everything we do are psychosocial factors." Rye also indicated that human growth always occurs in social and cultural context, where children and adolescent engross, transform and restructure their own frames of references, the personal attitudes, perceptions, values, and self-reflection.<sup>16</sup>

Stress is one of the major contributing factors to students' educational progress. As one of the participant said, "It's my own life experience that whenever I am mentally upset due to parents conflict, I am unable to focus on my studies I am not attentive in class and I am unable to listen to the teacher's lecture." Chemers et al study revealed that students who are expected to experience more strain are inclined to be less well-balanced and they feel less contentment with educational improvement and lesser pledge to remain in school.<sup>17</sup>

Child parent relation is considered as one of the strongest bond. If this bound is not strong, then it will create problems for both. As one of the participant said, "Sometimes parents force their children to choose a specific field whether they have an interest in it or not just for the sake of social approval." Topor et al explained that parental involvement has a momentous progressive influence on the academic progress but the level and degree of parental involvement fluctuates and has an unintended influence on educational outcomes of the students.<sup>18</sup>

Learning issues were faced by many students. As one of the participant said "We are better able to learn subject in which

we have interest and if we are getting distracted by a song we will lose our focus." Anderson and Benjamin reported that students' determination, previous schooling, mother & father's qualification, family earning, motivation to achieve something on own, student's age, learning preferences, regularity and admission qualifications are the features that have a substantial influence on the students' educational performance in various situations.<sup>19</sup>

Distance plays an important role in determining academic performance. As one participant said "If university is far away from home it will affect our academic performance." Mhiliwa reported that the more the distance of a school from the home of the student, the more fatigued and less interested the student will become. Ultimately, it will have a negative impact on their educational progress.<sup>9</sup>

### CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that student's educational performance is determined by psychosocial factors such as financial issues, mobile misuse, roles of family, peer group, teacher student relationship, parent child relationship, and environment, stress, distance and learning issues. Positive teacher and parent's role can help in minimising these issues of university students.


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