

# Issues Affecting Pupils' Quality Of School Performance: A Case Study Of Secondary School Level/ DRC

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## Abstract

This study was conducted to examine different factors influencing the school performance of secondary school pupils in Oicha Township, an area located in Democretic Republic of Congo. The respondents for this study were 3rd form pupils (300 male & 300 female). A survey was conducted by using a questionnaire for information gathering about different factors relating to school performance of pupils. The school performance was gauged by the result of their annual examination. Standard t-test and ANOVA were applied to investigate the effect of different factors on pupils' achievement. The results of the study revealed that socioeconomic status (SES) and pupils' education have a significant effect on pupils' overall school achievement as well as achievement in the subjects of Mathematics and English. The high and average socio-economic level affects the performance more than the lower level. It is very surprising that parents' education means more than their occupation in relation to their children's school performance at school. It was found that girls perform better than the male students.

**Keywords:** Quality performance, achievement, socioeconomic status, demographic factors, gender and school achievement.

Date of Submission: 08-10-2023

Date of Acceptance: 18-10-2023

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization and technological revolution, education is considered as a first step for every human activity. It plays a vital role in the development of human capital and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living (Battle & Lewis, 2002). It ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to increase their productivity and improve their quality of life. This increase in productivity also leads towards new sources of earning which enhances the economic growth of a country (Saxton, 2000). The quality of students' performance remains at top priority for educators. It is meant for making a difference locally, regionally, nationally and globally. Educators, trainers, and researchers have long been interested in exploring variables contributing effectively for quality of learners' performance. These variables are inside and outside school that affect pupils' quality of school achievement. These factors may be termed as pupil factors, family factors, school factors and peer factors (Crosnoe, Johnson & Elder, 2004). The formal investigation about the role of these demographic factors rooted back in 17th century (Mann, 1985). Generally these factors include age, gender, geographical belongingness, ethnicity, marital status, socioeconomic status (SES), parents' education level, parental profession, language, income and religious affiliations. These are facts which are at the basis of failures or successes in pupils' learning. In a broader context demography is referred to as a way to explore the nature and effects of demographic variables in the biological and social context. Unfortunately, defining and measuring the quality of education is not a simple issue and the complexity of this process increases due to the changing values of quality attributes associated with the different stakeholders' view point (Blevins, 2009; Parri, 2006).

Besides other factors, socioeconomic status is one of the most researched and debated factor among educational professionals that contribute towards the school performance of pupils. The most prevalent argument is that the socioeconomic status of learners affects the quality of their school performance. Most of the experts argue that the low socioeconomic status has negative effect on the academic performance of pupils because the basic needs of pupils remain unfulfilled and hence, they do not perform better at their schools (Adams, 1996). The low socioeconomic status causes environmental deficiencies which results in low self-esteem of pupils (US Department of Education, 2003). More specifically, this study aims to identify and analyze factors that affect the quality of pupils' performance.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Educational services are often not tangible and are difficult to measure because they result in the form of transformation of knowledge, life skills and behaviour modifications of learners (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis, & Fitsilis, 2010). So, there are no commonly agreed upon definition of quality that is applied to education field. The

definition of quality of education varies from culture to culture (Michael, 1998). The environment and the personal characteristics of learners play an important role in their school success. The school personnel, members of the families and communities provide help and support to pupils for the quality of their school performance. This social assistance has a crucial role for the accomplishment of performance goals of pupils at school (Goddard, 2003). Besides the social structure, parents' involvement in their child's education increases the rate of school success of their child (Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995).

The relationship between gender and the school achievement of pupils has been discussed for decades (Eitle, 2005). A gap between the achievement of boys and girls has been found, with girls showing better performance than boys in certain instances ; something which is surprising because, most of the time, girls always have extra house works after school activities (Chambers & Schreiber, 2004). Gender, ethnicity, and father's occupation are significant contributors to student achievement (McCoy, 2005; Peng & Hall, 1995).

Above and beyond the other demographic factors, the effects of SES are still prevalent at the individual level (Capraro, M., Capraro, R., & Wiggins, 2000). The SES can be deliberated in a number of different ways; it is most often calculated by looking at parental education, occupation, income, and facilities used by individuals separately or collectively. Parental education and family SES level have positive correlations with the pupil's quality of achievement (Caldas & Bankston, 1997; Jeynes, 2002; Parelius, D., & Parelius, A., 1987; Mitchell & Collom, 2001; Ma & Klinger, 2000). The pupil with high level of SES perform better than the middle class pupils and the middle class pupils perform better than the pupils with low level of SES (Garzon, 2006; Kahlenberg, 2006; Kirkup, 2008).

The achievement of pupils is negatively correlated with the low SES level of parents because it hinders the individual in gaining access to sources and resources of learning (Duke, 2000; Eamon, 2005; Lopez, 1995). Low SES level strongly affects the achievement of pupils, dragging them down to a lower level (Sander, 2001). This effect is most visible at the post-secondary level (Trusty, 2000). It is also observed that the economically disadvantaged parents are less able to support the cost of education of their children at higher levels and consequently they do not work at their fullest potential (Rouse & Barrow, 2006).

Krashen (2005) concluded that pupils whose parents are educated score higher on standardized tests than those whose parents were not educated. Educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding the school work, activities and the information being taught at school. They can better assist their children in their work and participate at school (Fantuzzo & Tighe, 2000; Trusty, 1999).

Theory of Educational Productivity by Walberg (1981) determined three groups of nine factors based on affective, cognitive and behavioral skills for optimization of learning that affect the quality of school performance: Aptitude of the pupil (ability, development and motivation); instruction (amount and quality); environment of the pupil (home, classroom, peers and television) (Roberts, 2007).

The home environment also affects the school performance of pupils. Educated parents can provide such an environment that suits best for school success of their children. The school authorities can provide counseling and guidance to parents for creating positive home environment for improvement in pupils' quality of work (Marzano, 2003). The academic performance of pupils heavily depends upon the parental involvement in their academic activities to attain the higher level of quality in school success (Barnard, 2004; Henderson, 1988; Shumox & Lomax, 2001).

There is a range of factors that affect on the quality of performance of pupils (Waters & Marzano, 2006). A series of variables are to be considered when to identify the affecting factors towards quality of school success. Identifying the most contributing variables in quality of school performance is a very complex and challenging job. The pupils in public schools belong to a variety of backgrounds depending upon their demography. This diversity is much vast and complex as ever before in D.R. the Congo culture. Keeping in view all these discussions, researchers conducted this study to examine the effect of different factors on the pupils' quality of pupils achievement at the secondary school level in Oicha Township.

### **III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of the study were to:

- a) Analyze the effect of socio-economic status, parental education and occupation on quality of pupils' performance.
- b) Explore the effect of socio-economic status on pupils' achievements in the subjects of Mathematics and English.
- c) Find the difference in quality of pupils' achievement in relation to their gender.

Hypotheses:

- a) There could be an effect of socio-economic status, parental education and occupation on quality of pupils' school performance.
- b) A socio-economic status on pupils' achievements in the subjects of Mathematics and English seem to be observed in case of globalization we live nowadays.

c) Quality of pupils' achievement in relation to their gender would be observed in the way that there is a difference among them.

#### IV. METHOD AND PROCEDURE

This descriptive study was conducted by using a survey method. The population was the secondary school male and female pupils from Oicha Township in D.R. the Congo. At the first stage twelve male and female public sector secondary schools (six each) were selected conveniently. Secondly, only fifty volunteer pupils (25 male and 25 female) out of all volunteers from one section of third form were selected randomly from each of the 12 schools. Thus the sample size for the study was 600 pupils (300 male and 300 female). The study was delimited to only demographic factors such as pupils' gender, parents' education, parents' occupation and socio economic status. The quality of school performance was measured by their achievement scores of the 9th grade annual examination verified from the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Lahore and school records. Data regarding the variables such as parents' education, parents' occupation, SES, urban or rural belongingness, and pupils' gender were collected by using a questionnaire.

#### V. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The collected data were analyzed by applying descriptive and inferential statistical measure. A t-test was used to compare the achievements of male and female pupils. The significant effect of different factors on pupils' achievement was explored through multiple comparisons by applying ANOVA.

**Table 1: Effect of SES, Fathers' and Mothers' education and occupation on pupils' succeses.**

Fathers' Education, and Mothers' Education		Parents' Occupation	
Schooled	Illiterate	Occupied	Not occupied
396	204	0	0

**Comment:**

Table1 shows that socio-economic status (SES), fathers' education, and mothers' education, had a significant effect on pupils' overall school achievement as well as on Mathematics and English scores in 3 rd form in a high rates of significance. Further it is obvious that parental occupation had no significant effect on school achievement. Hence the hypotheses that there are significant effects of SES level and parental education level on pupils' school achievement have been confirmed. Also the hypothesis that there is no significant effect in achievement on the basis of parental occupation was accepted. It is therefore concluded that SES level and parental education affect the achievement of their children, but the parents' occupation had no effect.

**Table 2: Multiple comparison of effect of SES on Mathematics, English, and cumulative achievements**

Marks in English		Marks in Mathematics	
High	293	High	219
Low	189	Low	190
Average	118	Average	119

**Comment :**

As shown in Table 2, comparison of effect of SES levels (Low, & High) on pupils' achievement scores in the subjects of Mathematics, indicated that pupils belonging to high SES level overall perform better in the subjects of Mathematics and English. The hypothesis that there would be significant difference in school performance of pupils due to their socio-economic status is therefore confirmed. The pupils with high and average SES exhibit better quality of performance than the pupils with low level of SES.

**Table 3: Analysis of Fathers' education and cumulative achievement**

Fathers' with low or high diploma		
Illiterate	Intermediate	Secondary diploma or (and) University diploma
146	173	281

**Comment :**

The multiple comparisons in Table 3 show that fathers with state diploma degree and education have more affects on pupils' achievement than other achievements.

**Table 4: Analysis of Mothers' education and quality of school performance (overall marks obtained)**

State diploma Mothers	Other levels
443	157

**Comment:**

It is evident from Table 4 that mothers with Secondary state diplomas levels have significant effects on the achievement of their children as compared to other education levels.

**Table 5: Comparison of achievement for Male and Female Pupils**

Male pupils failure in English and Math	Female pupils failure in English and Math
382	218

**Comment :**

This chart indicates that there is a significant difference in the marks of male and female pupils. The hypothesis that there could significant difference in the quality of school performance of pupils in relation to their gender is therefore rejected. It is concluded from the results that female pupils perform better than the male in the subjects of Mathematics and English as well as in the overall achievements scores.

**VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

There are various factors inside and outside school that contribute for the quality of academic performance of pupils. This study only focused on some of the factors outside school that influence the pupils' achievement scores. The key aspect for the educators is to educate their pupils' effectively so that they may be able to show quality performance in their schools' activities. To achieve this objective it is necessary for the educators to understand better about the factors that may contribute in the school success of pupils.

This study concluded that the higher level of SES is the best indicator contributing towards the quality of pupils' achievement. Family characteristics like socio economic status (SES) are significant predictors for pupils' performance at school besides the other school factors, peer factors and pupil factors. Higher SES levels lead to higher performance of pupils in studies, and vice versa (Hanes, 2008). Parental education also has effects on pupils' school performance. Parental occupation has little effect on their child's performance in studies than their education. Pupil's gender strongly affects their pupil performance, with girls performing better in the subjects of Mathematics, and English as well as cumulatively. Girls usually show more efforts leading towards better grades at school. It is very important to have comprehensible understanding of the factors that benefit and hinder the school progress of an individual's education.

To determine all the influencing factors in a single attempt is a complex and difficult task. It requires a lot of resources and time for an educator to identify all these factors first and then plan the classroom activities and strategies of teaching and learning. It also requires proper training, organizational planning and skills to conduct such studies for determining the contributing factors inside and outside school. This process of identification of variables must be given full attention and priority so that the teachers may be able to develop instructional strategies for making sure that all the children be provided with the opportunities to arrive at their fullest potential in learning and performance. Further research is needed to explore the problem on a large sample from more scattered geographical regions including other pupil factors, family factors, school factors and peer factors.

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