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Correspondence should be addressed to Obaid Ullah; obaid@numl.edu.pk

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Socioeconomic Status and Access to Quality Higher Education: A Quantitative Study

Noor Ul Ain [a] Obaid Ullah [b] Bisma Basheer [c]

Abstract: The study explores the role of socioeconomic factors in accessing quality higher education. A descriptive research design was used and, accordingly, a sample size of 152 students from the population of 260 from the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad using sample size determination techniques was selected. A proportionate random sampling technique was used to get equal sample proportions from the three selected departments. Data was collected through a validated self-developed five-point Likert scale questionnaire with the Cronbach Alpha score as 0.756. Ordinal Regression Analysis (ORA) was used for the analysis using SPSS. The study findings revealed that hypotheses i.e., "there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on student's access to resources", "there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on family support and parental education access to quality education", and "there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on student's emotional and psychological abilities" are rejected as the model fitting information for Confidence Interval at 5% and 12 degrees of freedom shows rejection of fit of the model. The study concludes that socioeconomic status significantly influences access to quality education at a higher level. The government and policymakers should provide financial assistance to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Keywords: Socioeconomic Status, Higher Education, Ordinal Regression Analysis, Quality Education

Introduction

Education plays an important role in an individual's life, helps in improving the quality of nation's population. Education is the basic element for shaping an individual's quality future. Childhood education not only plays a vital role in an individual's achievement and well-being but also improves the quality of the workforce and the nation's capacity for innovation and creativity (Heckman, 2011). Consequently, it helps in determining the quality of the developmental potential of a country as a whole. Education is a key factor in shaping life opportunities. Individuals with higher education are more likely to get employed and earn higher income, as a result, it impacts their health, financial stability, and well-being (Farquharson, McNally, & Tahir, 2024).

Access to quality education for everyone has emerged as a recent development in human history. Since long ago, education has been accessible to only those who could pay for it, which often decides an individual's position in society. Parents from high-income families were able to enroll their children in high-quality schools, generally they had more education themselves, and able to make better choices for their child's schooling (Lee & Smith, 1995). Furthermore, education is considered the foundation for a nation's socioeconomic, political, and technological progress. It is often stated that a country's achievements are

[a] M.Phil. Education Scholar, Department of Educational Sciences, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, Pakistan.
[b] Manager, Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC)/Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, Pakistan.
[c] M.Phil. Education Scholar, Department of Educational Sciences, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad, Pakistan.

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closely related to the quality of its education. However, there is a rising need for higher education such as secondary, technical, and university fields, essential for socioeconomic development through knowledge and skills acquired by these pathways (Hanushek, 1997).

Socioeconomic status refers to someone's position or status in a society they live in based on various aspects such as their income, access to resources, parental educational level, and occupation. Moreover, other factors may include to what extent they have access to health care facilities, financial security, living conditions, and influential power within their community or society. It is mainly associated with overall human development and well-being. However, the socioeconomic status of a child affects their educational attainment, which is closely related to their family's socioeconomic status in society. Furthermore, it has a great impact on a child's well-being, which may include their academic performance, cognitive thinking skills, and opportunity for a prosperous future (El-Baraka, 2023).

In recent years, socioeconomic status was not seen as a significant aspect affecting students' academic progress. However, over time, it became clear that the socioeconomic status of children greatly influences their academic achievements. Eventually, this led to the understanding that children from low-income families tend to perform academically poorly as well (Shaheen & Gul, 2014). Furthermore, family and social environment have a great impact on students' academic performance and outcomes. A family's socioeconomic status influences the home environment, the accessibility of resources to children, their neighborhoods, and their school (Tompsett & Knoester, 2023).

In addition, children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds enjoy more advantages, while those from low socioeconomic status experience more stress and challenges. Likewise, high socioeconomic parents are more inclined to engage their child in extracurricular activities, which equips them for their future careers across social and academic achievements (Tompsett & Knoester, 2023). The current study aims to examine how socioeconomic status influences students' access to equal quality education at a higher level. Moreover, the current study aimed to analyze the disparities between students from diverse backgrounds. This research provides deep insights into whether students from low socioeconomic status face difficulties while accessing higher education or vice versa.

This study provides valuable insights about the challenges faced by students from low socioeconomic status for stakeholders, including teachers, administrators, parents, educational policy makers and government. The research also aimed to outline a roadmap for stakeholders to work for creating a more inclusive and equitable education system that contributes to addressing the difficulties faced by students from low-income families.

Objectives

The following were the study objectives:

i. Examine the influence of socioeconomic status on students' access to equal quality education.
ii. Analyze the disparities between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Hypotheses

The following were the research hypotheses of the current study:

a) H_1: Socioeconomic status has a significant impact on students' access to resources.
   H_o: There is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on students' access to resources.
b) H_1: Socioeconomic status has a significant impact on family support and parental education. Ho: There is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on family support and parental education.
c) H_1: Socioeconomic status has a significant impact on students' emotional & psychological abilities.
   H_o: There is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on students' emotional & psychological abilities.
d) H_1: Socioeconomic status has a significant impact on students' access to quality higher education.

H_o: There is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on students' access to quality higher education.

Statement of the Problem

Socioeconomic status is a crucial aspect of an individual's life. It has a great influence on a person's ability to access any sort of resources and avail of various life opportunities. It also shapes an individual's status in a society based on the availability of resources. Socioeconomic status also greatly influences students' educational experiences and their access to quality education. Students with low socioeconomic status often face various challenges while accessing quality education due to limited resources. These challenges lead to disparities among students from low and high socioeconomic statuses. These disparities not only affect students' academic success but also impact their mental health and future careers. Many research studies have been conducted, and policy initiatives and financial aid programs exist, but still, there is a gap to address the challenges faced by students while accessing equitable education. The research problem of the current study is to examine how socioeconomic status affects students' access to quality higher education. This study has uncovered the particular difficulties faced by students from diverse economic backgrounds while acquiring higher education. This study will provide awareness to students, teachers, parents, and specifically to policy makers to take measures needed to improve students' educational experiences and provide them necessary aid which help them to pursue higher education.

Significance of the Study

Socioeconomic status builds an individual's position in a society, which is essential for a person to access resources of a country or society (where they live). It is crucial to understand and address the influence of socioeconomic status on students ' access to quality education. Disparities related to socioeconomic status led to various challenges, where students of low socioeconomic status often struggle with their academic performance, engagement, and motivation toward higher education in comparison to students from higher economic backgrounds. Several studies were conducted on various dimensions of the socioeconomic status of students in different countries, but very few studies have been reported at the tertiary level in Pakistan. The undergraduate level is an essential stage of academics that builds students' critical thinking, creative thinking, and research skills to actively participate in solving real-world problems and encourage them to be productive parts of society. Therefore, understanding the students' access to higher education based on their status in society is crucial for addressing the related issues. This study intends to provide a roadmap for the policy makers in assisting students from the deprived areas to access quality education.

Literature Review

Socioeconomic Status

Socioeconomic status is a concept, which typically involves various factors such as income, education and living environment that represents a person's social ranking or access to resources. Research has shown that low socioeconomic status is often associated with the differences in brain development and cognitive abilities in young individuals (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; Pollak & Wolfe, 2020).

The student's socio-economic condition has considerable impact in multiple ways i.e., student from higher socio-economic conditions have greater access to the resources like gaining private tutoring, teaching and technological materials including computers, internet and books. Subsequently, the students from the higher socio-economic conditions have access to the quality nutritional products which have impact on cognitive development and academic performance and vice versa. The pre-requisite associated with any academic programs includes personal health care of student (whereas the students from the low socio-economic conditions have least resources and financial capacity to focus on quality health care facilities, which eventually creates financial stress) affects the potential of socialization of students via engaging in peers and academic networking. The students with the same socio-economics status can engage in common desired goals affecting the academic performance either positively or negatively (Lutfiu & Hoxha, 2024).

Research has revealed that higher socioeconomic status is generally associated with the better schooling, experienced teachers, and higher enrollment and graduation rates. However, for black adolescents these advantages are smaller as compared to white adolescents. Due to racial inequalities in education system black students are more likely to be in schools with higher poverty rates, less experienced teacher, and lower enrollment and graduation rates as compared to the white students from the families with the same level of income (Assari & Zare, 2025).

Access to Resources

Socioeconomic status can usually be measured by using different objective indicators that show the degree of access to available resources. Three main factors are often used to define objective socioeconomic status, which may include income, education level, and occupation (Baker, 2014; Kraus & Stephens, 2012; Manstead, 2018).

Research has shown that students from good financial status tend to be more engaged in home learning. Although financial comfort does not directly influence the amount of time students spend while learning at home. However, it does influence factors like access to internet services, availability of technology resources, space, and noise levels, as these factors may have an impact on the learning of students. Additionally, families with greater financial resources are more likely to have proper mentorship available to guide their child's home learning. This financial security leads to improved access to tools and a friendly learning environment, thus leading to indirect contribution to desired learning outcomes (Easterbrook, Doyle, Grozev, Kosakowska-Berezecka, Harris & Phalet, 2023).

According to Tan (2024), at a broader spectrum, the formulation of policy for students with low socio-economic status needs to encompass multiple factors, i.e., provision of suitable opportunities and resources to marginalized students, ensuring the academic engagements of low socio-economic students and addressing the inequalities regarding the poverty and any kind of discrimination.

A strong and stable education systems provide equal and equitable access to quality education to the general students despite their socio-economic status. Research studies indicate that students' access to resources is equal, but the socio-economic status affects the enrollment pattern of students (Gui & Alam, 2024).

A research study found that students from low socioeconomic background usually face various difficulties such as financial constraints, limited learning resources, and managing work and studies together. These difficulties strongly influence students' academic achievement and retention. Additionally, family responsibilities and limited social support also leads to higher drop out risk rates. Likewise, high cost of transport health issues also acts as barriers for education. However, financial support such scholarships, academic support, and access to learning resources help students to continue their studies and also improve academic performance (Thelma, 2024).

Family Support

Rakesh et al. (2021) highlighted that socioeconomic status at both family and neighborhood levels has a unique influence on brain connectivity in various ways. They also noted that for children in low socioeconomic neighborhoods, having supportive parents (who emphasize education) can make a significant difference. However, another research conducted reveals that a Family's socioeconomic status does not have any influence over the educational achievement of students in Ibanda District. Both high and low performing students can find across various families having diverse socioeconomic status, might be high and low in their academic performance (Abenawe & Extension, 2022).

Research has revealed that due to financial constraints and parental stress, children from single parent families often experience low quality of life and worse behavioral issues rather than those belong to

traditional families. Similarly, children living in stepfamilies also face difficulties especially in child-parent relationship. Furthermore, financial resources play an important role in child well-being, showing that higher socioeconomic status is associated with the better mental health (Grüning Parache, Vogel, Meigen, Kiess, & Poulain, 2024).

Social factors such as family, religion, ethnicity, religion, friends, and faculty play an important role in the academic success of economically disadvantaged students (Mishra, 2020). Family support such as giving advice, motivation, and placing high value on education, plays a key role in students' academic journey (Boveda, 2017; O'Shea, 2016).

Various socioeconomic factors such as parental education, family income, and residential place play crucial role in shaping the attitudes of tribal girls' students to pursue higher education. Although literacy rates are improved and now more girls want to pursue higher education however, challenges like cultural norms, gender stereotypes, and limited infrastructure still exist. These challenges make it difficult for girls to access education particularly in rural and economically disadvantaged areas. In contrast, families with high income and more education are more likely to support their daughters' to pursue higher education. However, tribal girls still face difficulties to pursue higher education such as discrimination in literacy rates on the basis of gender, and lack of representation of their cultures within the mainstream cultures (Dwivedi, 2024).

Psychological Factor

Research shows that economically disadvantaged students may face challenges, such as low self-esteem and reduced autonomy, due to their low status. As a result, they may come across various psychological problems, including limited motivation, learning challenges, and feelings of hopelessness more than their peers (Miller & Rottinghaus, 2014; Shogren et al., 2018). These variations in socioeconomic status may influence students' decisions to choose learning activities, as they have diverse perspectives and goals for education, which may show varied academic outcomes from both groups (Shogren et al., 2014; Shogren & Shaw, 2017; Shogren et al., 2018).

Research has shown that higher psychological well-being often comes from having good family experiences and good health (Ryff, 2014) and can lead to lower rates of depression (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ruini & Cesetti, 2019).

Research shows that students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds face various physiological challenges in their learning, which may include low self-esteem and feelings of failure and isolation (Johnstonbaugh, 2018).

Student Achievement

While examining different groups, it has been found that a strong sense of role identity affects both the explorative and exploitative learning of students. When students understand their roles and responsibilities, they are more likely to get involved in various learning activities (Li, Peng, Yang, & Chen, 2020).

Research reveals that disadvantaged non-economically students have the least chances to explore new learning avenues and enrich their academic repertoire a compared with the students having good economic condition, therefore, they may experience limited advantages in their academic achievements. To address this issue, universities are encouraged to use various online platforms to share educational material and data while offering flexible learning options to engage students in learning activities (Chen Li, Peng, & Yang, 2020).

Furthermore, students from low socioeconomic status are often influenced by various factors such as social expectations and family responsibilities, helping them to understand their roles and get engaged in

learning as compared to those of high socioeconomic status. Although limited achievement motivation theory examines the impact of economic factors on students' confidence, their success expectations, and their goals. Consequently, non-economically disadvantaged students may benefit from greater social support and educational resources. They may possess higher self-expectations and clearly defined personal goals. However, when they face challenges, they may feel an amplified sense of loss, anxiety, and diminished enthusiasm, which may negatively affect their academic performance and the strategies they choose for learning (Li et al., 2020).

Parental Education

Parents with higher education often have high acquaintance with their children's education. Parental involvement plays an essential role in improving educational outcomes, especially for those children who belong to low socioeconomic status families (Guterman & Neuman, 2018; Park & Holloway, 2017; Wilder, 2013). Furthermore, parents with higher education often engaged with their children in online mode for monitoring their academic performance (Andrew et al., 2020), also, they are expected to oversee their children's education while balancing their jobs. However, parents form lower socioeconomic background have more free time to assist their children's home learning, but they may encounter various difficulties such as lack of confidence, motivation, and knowledge due to which they are unable to be engaged with their children's learning, which contributes to negative experiences with home learning (Thorell et al., 2021).

Research has indicated that parental education especially mothers' education plays an important role in shaping teenagers' reading comprehension skills. Students having educated parents are more likely to have better reading comprehension skills. Likewise, socioeconomic status plays an essential role, as higher family income and better environment at home often associated with parental education, resulting in improved reading abilities (Rico-Juan, Peña-Acuña, & Navarro-Martinez, 2024).

Comparison between Disadvantaged and Non-Disadvantaged Students

A comparison between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students showed differences in their learning approaches, motivation levels, and learning outcomes. Non-disadvantaged students were more engaged in their learning, which shows that lack of resources affects the academic performance of disadvantaged students. To meet their expenses, most of the students work part-time, which may further impact their learning outcomes (Chen Li, Peng, & Yang, 2020). A research study indicates that the education and occupation ladder can predict important aspects of psychological well-being that traditional measures of socioeconomic status like income and education do not fully cover. This emphasizes testing these findings with different groups to effectively understand how socioeconomic status affects well-being and health (Navarro-Carrillo et al., 2020).

Impact of Pandemic on Diverse Socioeconomic Status

Various studies have shown that the pandemic caused a 32-37% drop in reading progress and a 50-63% loss in Mathematics learning for students in U.S schools as compared to what was expected during the year 2019-2020 (Kuhfeld et al., 2020). Many Western countries are affected by the pandemic. However, the negative impact is not the same for everyone, it is especially severe in economically disadvantaged areas or students from vulnerable families (Bayrakdar & Guveli, 2020; Borman, 2020; Domingue et al., 2021; Kuhfeld et al., 2020). Some argued that students from wealthier backgrounds even perform better as a result of the extra educational support they receive during homeschooling (Borman, 2020). Additionally, results suggest that educational gaps between different socioeconomic groups increase due to the pandemic (Goudeau et al., 2021).

During school closures, parents play a crucial role in their children's education by helping them with their schoolwork. Studies show that parental involvement is a key factor in children's academic success and

making homeschooling more effective (Castro et al., 2015; Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003; Guterman & Neuman, 2018).

Impact of Home Setting on Learning

Several researchers have reported that socioeconomic status and gender disparities are more likely to be influenced by diverse home learning involvement while acquiring education during pandemic isolation. It has been reported that students show poor academic performance nationwide compared to their peers (Department for Education, 2020). These students are less likely to be involved in homeschooling activities than their peers who belong to economically advantaged groups during school closure as a result of the pandemic in England (Bayrakdar & Guveli, 2020; Green, 2020; Lucas et al., 2020).

A key reason for educational inequalities while home learning is the "digital divide" (Borman, 2020; Goudeau et al., 2021). Students from low-income families often do not have access to various essential tools, such as laptops and high-speed internet, which are necessary for remote learning (Eyles et al., 2020). Furthermore, the learning environments in such homes may not be ideal and make it more challenging for such students to learn effectively in noisy and overcrowded spaces (Andrew et al., 2020; Sammons et al., 2015; Shield & Dockrell, 2008).

Access to Higher Education

Access to higher education refers to students' ability to get enrolled in desired program and being able to cover the initial costs. This process is influenced by external factors such as economic status, government policies, and social issues that are related to gender and race as well as personal experiences like academic effort and family encouragement (Walker, 2019).

The importance of access to quality education for all is also highlighted in sustainable development goal SDG 4. It aims for everyone to emphasize on equal access to affordable and quality education by 2030. Worldwide only 9.5% of the students form low income families enroll in higher education as compared to 75.6 % of the student's from high income families (UNESCO, 2020).

A research study shows that in many developed countries, over 60% of the people have attended higher education, with Switzerland at 69%, New Zealand at 67%, and the Netherlands at 64%. In developing countries, less than 20% of the population, such as Indonesia, India, and South Africa, has access to higher education (Wanti et al., 2022).

Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds frequently need financial support from their universities to pursue their studies. For instance, these students tend to choose those universities that offer them financial aid rather than those universities who only offer student loan to cover their educational expenses (Monks, 2018).

Methodology

Nature of the Study: The quantitative method regarding quantitative research focusing on descriptive study design was used in the current research study. This design was selected because it allows a clear and detailed understanding of the current situation regarding the role of socioeconomic status in shaping access to quality higher education. Similarly, it helped in the exploration of various ideas, notions, and thoughts from a larger population.

Population & Sample: All students from National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad was constituted the population in this research study. Sample size determination technique was used to draw sample of 152 students from population. Proportionate random sampling technique was used, where equal proportion of sample was taken from each department, which includes psychology, education, and international relations.

Instrumentation: A closed-ended ended self-made 5 points Likert scale like questionnaire having four themes related to the research objectives was used for the collection of data from the sample of the study. Each theme contained seven items, which were given to students for the collection of data.

Validity: The content validity of the questionnaire was validated by 3 experts and then exposed to respondents for the collection of responses.

Pilot Study: For conducting pilot study using rule of thumb, 10% of respondents were selected from the population without inclusion in the actual study.

Reliability: The Cronbach Alpha score for the self-construct questionnaire (28 items) was 0.756 (range is 0.5 – 0.9), which reveals that the instrument is reliable to collect data from the original sample.

Data Collection: Data was collected through face-to-face mode where students consent was taken, then questionnaire was given to them after pilot testing, and their responses was recorded. From respondents, 100% response was recorded.

Ethical Consideration: All ethical considerations were given due consideration while conducting the research. The data was not shared with any third party, and the identity of the respondents was kept confidential.

Data Analysis

After the completion of data collection, data was then arranged, tabulated, and analyzed. Ordinal Regression Analysis was used for analysis of collected data as the nature of data was ordinal, and 3 dependent variables were checked against one independent variable and good sample size to test the hypothesis through SPSS.

Theme 1: Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Access to Resources

Seven items were included in the first theme, which were created in the light of objectives of current research study. The frequency of responses and average marginal percentage of the respondents of various components for every theme was analyzed individually.

Table 1

Impact of socioeconomic status on access to resources

S. No.	Statements	Responses	N	Marginal %
1	Financial constraints limit students' ability to access educational materials.	SDA	33	21.7%
		DA	16	10.5%
		N	15	9.9%
		SA	35	23.0%
		A	53	34.9%
2	Limited access to technology, such as the internet, affects the academic achievement of students.	SDA	15	9.9%
		DA	36	23.7%
		N	28	18.4%
		SA	37	24.3%
		A	36	23.7%
3	The high cost of co-curricular activities limits students' participation.	SDA	20	13.2%
		DA	29	19.1%
		N	27	17.8%
		SA	34	22.4%
		A	42	27.6%

S. No.	Statements	Responses	N	Marginal %
4	Economic conditions restrict students from getting a supportive learning environment at home.	SDA	11	7.2%
		DA	28	18.4%
		N	39	25.7%
		SA	27	17.8%
		A	47	30.9%
5	Economically advantaged students have greater access to educational resources.	SDA	12	7.9%
		DA	23	15.1%
		N	23	15.1%
		SA	53	34.9%
		A	41	27.0%
6	Most families are unable to offer tutoring services to their children.	SDA	15	9.9%
		DA	28	18.4%
		N	19	12.5%
		SA	40	26.3%
		A	50	32.9%
7	Financial limitations lead to less participation of students in educational trips or events.	SDA	16	10.5%
		DA	18	11.8%
		N	23	15.1%
		SA	39	25.7%
		A	56	36.8%

The above table 1 demonstrates 33 (21.7%) respondents were of the notion of strongly disagree (SDA), 16 (10.5%) respondents were disagreed (DA), 35 (23%) respondents were strongly agree (SA), and 53 (34.9%) respondents agree (A), while 15 (9.9%) respondents were neutral (N) to the statement "Financial constraints limit student's ability to access educational materials" from the total sample respondents.

The above table 1 presents 15 (9.9%) respondents were strongly disagree (SDA), 36 (23.7%) respondents were disagreed (DA), 37 (24.3%) respondents were strongly agreed (SA), and 36 (23.7%) respondents were agreeing (A) to the statement "Limited access to technology such as internet affects academic achievement of students". However, 28 (18.4%) respondents were neutral (N) from the total sample respondents.

The table 1 shows 20 (13.2%) respondents were strongly disagree (SDA), 29 (19.1%) respondents were disagreed (DA), 34 (22.4%) respondents were strongly agreed (SA), and 42 (27.6%) respondents were agreeing (A) with the statement "High cost of co-curricular activities limit student's participation". 27 (17.8%) respondents were impartial to the statement from the total sample respondents.

The table 1 further demonstrates 11 (7.2%) respondents were strongly disagree (SDA), 28 (18.4%) respondents were disagreed (DA), 27 (17.8%) respondents were strongly agreed (SA), and 47 (30.9%) respondents were agreeing with the statement "Economic conditions restrict students to get supportive learning environment at home". While 39 (25.7%) respondents remained neutral (N) with the statement.

The table 1 also reveals 12 (7.9%) respondents were strongly disagree (SDA), 23 (15.1%) respondents were disagreed (DA), 53 (34.9%) respondents were strongly agreed (SA), and 41 (27.0%) respondents were agreeing (A) with the statement "Economically advantaged students have greater access to educational resources". However, 23 (15.1%) respondents remained neutral (N).

Similarly, the table 1 further presents 15 (9.9%) respondents were strongly disagree (SDA), 28 (18.4%) respondents were disagree (DA), 40 (26.3%) respondents were strongly agree (SA), and 50 (32.9%) respondents were agree (A) with the statement "Most of the families are unable to offer tutoring services to their children". However, only 19 (12.5%) respondents were neutral (N) with that statement.

Furthermore, the above table 1 displays 16 (10.5%) respondents were strongly disagree (SDA), 18 (11.8%) respondents were disagreed (DA), 39 (25.7%) respondents were strongly agreed (A), and 56 (36.8%) respondents were agreeing with the statement "Financial limitations lead to less participation of students in educational trips or events". However, 23 (15.1%) respondents were neutral (N) to the statement.

Information regarding Model Fitting

Below table 2 shows the model fitting information where the calculated value abbreviated as CV, (76.36) of Chi-square (x^2) was higher than the tabulated value abbreviated as TV (21.03), which indicates that fit of model was rejected with level of significance or Confidence Interval (CI) at 5% and 12 degrees of freedom (v).

Table 2

Model Fitting Information, Goodness of Fit, and Pseudo-R-Square

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	x^2	v	α	
Intercept	384.928		12	-	-
Final	308.573	76.355		-	-
Goodness of Fit					
Pearson	-	351.519	288	.006	-
Deviance	-	260.468	288	.877	-
Pseudo R Sqaure					
Cox and Snell (CP&S)	-	-	-	-	.395
Nagelkerke (NK)	-	-	-	-	.415
McFadden (MF)	-	-	-	-	.167

Model Information about Goodness of Fit

Likewise, the model information about Goodness-of-Fit in table 2 also showed that at 5% CI and 288 degrees of freedom (v), which leads to rejection of the goodness of fit model because the CV Chi-square was higher than the TV. Consequently, Ho is also rejected, stating that there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on students' access to resources.

Pseudo R-Square

A Pseudo-R-Square (post-hoc treatment) was performed to confirm the rejection of our null hypothesis. There was a moderate rise in the result of the post-hoc treatment of Ordinal Regression Analysis (ORA), which showed a moderate fit. Thus, based on these results, the rejection of the model, which is used for testing of our null hypothesis, could be accepted.

Theme 2: Impact of Family Support and Parental Education

This theme has 7 items related to family support and parental education of students from various backgrounds, which are under as:

Table 3

Impact of family support and parental education

S. No.	Statements	Responses	N	Marginal %
1.	Family support is crucial for motivating students toward higher education.	SDA	28	18.4%
		DA	15	9.9%
		N	6	3.9%
		SA	52	34.2%
		A	51	33.6%

S. No.	Statements	Responses	N	Marginal %
2.	Less supportive learning environments at home negatively affect students' performance.	SDA	13	8.6%
		DA	20	13.2%
		N	25	16.4%
		SA	50	32.9%
		A	44	28.9%
3.	Financial aid encourages students to pursue higher education.	SDA	13	8.6%
		DA	21	13.8%
		N	27	17.8%
		SA	44	28.9%
		A	47	30.9%
4.	Low-income families offer less academic support to their children.	SDA	19	12.5%
		DA	23	15.1%
		N	20	13.2%
		SA	41	27.0%
		A	49	32.2%
5.	High-income families provide greater assistance to their children in learning.	SDA	13	8.6%
		DA	20	13.2%
		N	30	19.7%
		SA	46	30.3%
		A	43	28.3%
6.	A high level of parental education is necessary for the active participation of students in learning.	SDA	8	5.3%
		DA	29	19.1%
		N	30	19.7%
		SA	43	28.3%
		A	42	27.6%
7.	Parents from low socioeconomic backgrounds may lack the confidence, motivation, and knowledge to support their children's education.	SDA	16	10.5%
		DA	26	17.1%
		N	29	19.1%
		SA	34	22.4%
		A	47	30.9%

The above table 3 indicates 28 (18.4%) respondents were of the notion of SDA, 15 (9.9%) respondents were DA, 52 (34.2%) respondents were SA, and 51 (33.6%) respondents were A, to the statement "Family support is crucial for motivating students toward higher education". While only 6 (3.9%) respondents agreed with the statement.

Table 3 indicates 13 (8.6%) respondents were SDA, 20 (13.2%) respondents were DA, 50 (32.9%) respondents were SA, and 44 (28.9%) respondents were A, to the statement "Less supportive learning environments at home negatively affect student's performance". However, 25 (16.4%) respondents were impartial with the statement from the total respondents.

The above table 3 further depicts 13 (8.6%) respondents were SDA, 21 (13.8%) respondents were DA, 44 (28.9%) respondents were SA, and 47 (30.9%) respondents were A, to the statement "Financial aid encourages students to pursue higher education". As 27 (17.8%) respondents were N with statement.

Similarly, the above table 3 also indicates 19 (12.5%) respondents were SDA, 23 (15.1%) respondents were DA, 41 (27%) respondents were SA, and 49 (32.2%) respondents were A, to the statement "Low income

families offer less academic support to their children". However, 20 (13.2%) respondents were impartial with the statement among the total respondents.

Furthermore, the table 3 reveals 13 (8.6%) respondents were SDA, 20 (13.2%) respondents were DA, 46 (30.3%) respondents were SA, and 43 (28.3%) respondents were A, to the statement "High income families provide greater assistance to their children in learning". 30 (19.7%) respondents agreed with the statement from the total respondents.

The table 3 also presents that shows 8 (5.3%) respondents were SDA, 29 (19.1%) respondents were DA, 43 (28.3%) respondents were SA, and 42 (27.6%) respondents were A, to the statement "A high level of parental education is necessary for the active participation of student in learning". However, 30 (19.7%) respondents were impartial with the statement out of the total respondents.

The above table 3 further reveals 16 (10.5%) respondents were SDA, 26 (17.1%) respondents were DA, 34 (22.4%) respondents were SA, and 47 (30.9%) respondents were A to the statement "Parents from low socioeconomic background may lack confidence, motivation, and knowledge to support their children's education". However, 29 (19.1%) respondents remained N with the statement out of the total respondents.

Information regarding Model Fitting

Table 4 below shows the model fitting information where the CV (76.37) of Chi-square was higher than the TV (21.03), which indicates that the model of fit was rejected with CI at 5% and 12 degrees of freedom.

Table 4

Model Fitting Information, Goodness of Fit, and Pseudo-R-Square

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	x^2	v	α	
Intercept	339.777		12	-	-
Final	263.404	76.373		-	-
Goodness of Fit					
Pearson	-	273.816	268	.390	-
Deviance	-	209.448	268	.997	-
Pseudo R Sqaure					
Cox and Snell (CP&S)	-	-	-	-	.395
Nagelkerke (NK)	-	-	-	-	.420
McFadden (MF)	-	-	-	-	.179

Model Information about Goodness of Fit

Likewise, the model information about Goodness-of-Fit in table 4 also showed that CI at 5% and 268 degrees of freedom (v), which leads to rejection of the goodness of fit model because the calculated Chi-square value was higher than the estimated value. Consequently, Ho is also rejected, stating that there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on family support and parental education.

Pseudo R-Square

A Pseudo-R-Square (post-hoc treatment) was performed to confirm the rejection of our null hypothesis. There was a moderate rise as per ORA, showing a moderate fit. Thus, based on these results, the rejection of the model, and hence our null hypothesis, could be accepted.

Theme 3: Emotional & Psychological Impact of Socioeconomic Status

This theme has 7 items related to the emotional & psychological impact of socioeconomic status of students from various backgrounds, which are under:

Table 5

Emotional & psychological impact of socioeconomic status

S. No.	Statements	Responses	N	Marginal %
1.	Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds often feel isolated in the school environment.	SDA	35	23.0%
		DA	27	17.8%
		N	17	11.2%
		SA	26	17.1%
		A	47	30.9%
2.	Students from low socioeconomic status experience anxiety about their financial future and education.	SDA	9	5.9%
		DA	38	25.0%
		N	22	14.5%
		SA	39	25.7%
		A	44	28.9%
3.	Students from low socioeconomic status experience low self-esteem and low confidence, which leads to poor relationships with peers.	SDA	21	13.8%
		DA	21	13.8%
		N	40	26.3%
		SA	31	20.4%
		A	39	25.7%
4.	The financial burden of education negatively impacts the overall mental well-being of students.	SDA	10	6.6%
		DA	18	11.8%
		N	32	21.1%
		SA	46	30.3%
		A	46	30.3%
5.	Students with poor mental health often discontinue their studies earlier than their peers.	SDA	20	13.2%
		DA	22	14.5%
		N	23	15.1%
		SA	36	23.7%
		A	51	33.6%
6.	Economically disadvantaged students often show low academic performance.	SDA	17	11.2%
		DA	25	16.4%
		N	34	22.4%
		SA	31	20.4%
		A	45	29.6%
7.	Economically advantaged students often demonstrate higher academic success.	SDA	24	15.8%
		DA	20	13.2%
		N	34	22.4%
		SA	31	20.4%
		A	43	28.3%

The Above table 5 indicates that 35 (23.0%) respondents were SDA, 27 (17.8%) respondents were DA, 26 (17.1%) respondents were SA, and 47 (30.9%) respondents were A, to the statement "Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds often feel isolated in the school environment". However, 17 (11.2%) respondents were N from the total respondents.

The Table 5 indicates 9 (5.9%) respondents were SDA, 38 (25.0%) respondents were DA, 39 (25.7%) respondents were SA, and 44 (28.9%) respondents were A, to the statement "Students from low socioeconomic status experience anxiety about their financial future and education". While 22 (14.5%) respondents remained N with the statement out of the total respondents.

The table 5 further presents 21 (13.8%) respondents were SDA, 21 (13.8%) respondents were DA, 31 (20.4%) respondents were SA, and 39 (25.7%) respondents were A, to the statement "Students from low socioeconomic status experience low self-esteem and low confidence, which leads to poor relationships with peers". While 40 (26.3%) respondents remained N with the statement among the total respondents.

Furthermore, the table 5 reveals 10 (6.6%) respondents were SDA, 18 (11.8%) respondents were DA, 46 (30.3%) respondents were SA, and 46 (30.3%) respondents were A, to the statement "The financial burden of education negatively impacts the overall mental well-being of students". However, 32 (21.1%) respondents remained N with the statement among the total respondents.

Similarly, the table 5 reveals 20 (13.2%) respondents were SDA, 22 (14.5%) respondents were DA, 36 (23.7%) respondents were SA, and 51 (33.3%) respondents were A, to the statement "Students with poor mental health often discontinue their studies earlier than their peers". 23 (15.1%) respondents remained impartial with the statement among the total respondents.

Moreover, table 5 indicates that 17 (11.2%) respondents were SDA, 25 (16.4%) respondents were DA, 31 (20.4%) respondents were SA, and 45 (29.6%) respondents were A, to the statement "Economically disadvantaged students often show low academic performance"., 34 (22.4%) respondents have remained N with the statement among the total respondents.

Also, the above table 5 indicates 24 (15.8%) respondents were SDA, 20 (13.2%) respondents were DA, 31 (20.4%) respondents were SA, and 43 (28.3%) respondents were A, to the statement "Economically advantaged students often demonstrate higher academic success". While 34 (22.4%) respondents were remained impartial with the statement among the total respondents.

Information regarding Model Fitting

Table 6 below shows the model fitting information where the CV (100.60) of Chi-square was higher than the TV (21.03), which indicates that the model of fit was rejected with CI at 5% and 12 degrees of freedom.

Table 6

Model Fitting Information, Goodness of Fit, and Pseudo-R-Square

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	x^2	v	α	
Intercept	372.914		12	-	-
Final	272.320	100.594		-	-
Goodness of Fit					
Pearson	-	243.775	248	.564	-
Deviance	-	210.509	248	.960	-
Pseudo R Sqaure					
Cox and Snell (CP&S)	-	-	-	-	.484
Nagelkerke (NK)	-	-	-	-	.507
McFadden (MF)	-	-	-	-	.213

Model Information about Goodness of Fit

Likewise, the model information about Goodness-of-Fit in table 6 also showed that at 5% CI and 248 degrees of freedom (v), which leads to rejection of the goodness of fit model because the CV Chi-square was higher than the TV. Consequently, Ho is also rejected, stating that there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on a student's emotional & psychological abilities.

Pseudo R-Square

A Pseudo-R-Square (post-hoc treatment) was performed to confirm the rejection of our null hypothesis. There was a moderate rise as per ORA, showing a moderate fit. Thus, based on these results, the rejection of the model, and hence our null hypothesis, could be accepted.

Theme 4: Access to Quality Higher Education

This theme has 7 items related to access to quality higher education to students from diverse socioeconomic status, which are under as:

Table 7

Access to quality higher education

S. No.	Statements	Responses	N	Marginal %
1.	The socioeconomic status of a student's family is crucial for accessing higher education.	SDA	34	22.4%
		DA	20	13.2%
		N	25	16.4%
		SA	30	19.7%
		A	43	28.3%
2.	Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds often struggle to continue higher education.	SDA	7	4.6%
		DA	32	21.1%
		N	27	17.8%
		SA	43	28.3%
		A	43	28.3%
3.	Students with high socioeconomic status often attend more well-known institutions for higher education.	SDA	11	7.2%
		DA	33	21.7%
		N	29	19.1%
		SA	39	25.7%
		A	40	26.3%
4.	Students generally have equal access to fair opportunities.	SDA	16	10.5%
		DA	32	21.1%
		N	37	24.3%
		SA	34	22.4%
		A	33	21.7%
5.	Economically disadvantaged students receive special support.	SDA	25	16.4%
		DA	25	16.4%
		N	30	19.7%
		SA	28	18.4%
		A	44	28.9%
6.	Family support facilitates access to higher education.	SDA	8	5.3%
		DA	15	9.9%
		N	21	13.8%
		SA	49	32.2%
		A	58	38.2%
7.	Parental educational levels impact student achievement and their access to higher education.	SDA	14	9.2%
		DA	27	17.8%
		N	25	16.4%
		SA	34	22.4%
		A	52	34.2%

The above table 7 reveals that 34 (22.4%) respondents were SDA, 20 (13.2%) respondents were DA, 30 (19.7%) respondents were SA, and 43 (28.3%) respondents were A, to the statement "The socioeconomic status of a student's family is crucial for accessing higher education". While 25 (16.4%) respondents had N from the total respondents.

Table 7 indicates that 7 (4.6%) respondents were SDA, 32 (21.1%) respondents were DA, 43 (28.3%) respondents were SA, and 43 (28.3%) respondents were A, to the statement "Students from low

socioeconomic backgrounds often struggle to continue higher education". However, 27 (17.8%) respondents were N with the statement among the total respondents.

Furthermore, the above table 7 indicates 11 (7.2%) respondents were SDA, 33 (21.7%) respondents were DA, 39 (25.7%) respondents were SA, and 40 (26.3%) respondents were A, to the statement "Students with high socioeconomic status often attend more known institutions for higher education". As 29 (19.1%) respondents were N with the statement.

Table 7 indicates that 16 (10.5%) respondents were SDA, 32 (21.1%) respondents were DA, 34 (22.4%) respondents were SA, and 33 (21.7%) respondents were A, to the statement "Students generally have equal access to fair opportunities". However, 37 (24.3%) respondents were N with the statement among the total respondents.

Table 7 further indicates that 25 (16.4%) respondents were SDA, 25 (16.4%) respondents were DA, 28 (18.4%) respondents were SA, and 44 (28.9%) respondents were A, to the statement "Economically disadvantaged students receive special support". While 30 (19.7%) respondents have remained N with the statement among the total respondents.

Moreover, table 7 indicates 8 (5.3%) respondents were SDA, 15 (9.9%) respondents were DA, 49 (32.2%) respondents were SA, and 58 (38.2%) respondents were A, to the statement "Family support facilitates access to higher education". As, 21 (13.8%) respondents were N with the statement.

Also, the table 7 depicts 14 (9.2%) respondents were SDA, 27 (17.8%) respondents were DA, 34 (22.4%) respondents were SA, and 52 (34.2%) respondents were A, to the statement "Parental educational levels impact student achievement and their access to higher education". While 25 (16.4%) respondents did not answer the statement out of the total respondents.

Information regarding Model Fitting

Table 8 below shows the model fitting information where the value (65.66) of Chi-square was higher than the computed value (21.03), which indicates that the model of fit was rejected with CI at 5% and 12 degrees of freedom.

Table 8

Model Fitting Information, Goodness of Fit, and Pseudo-R-Square

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	x^2	v	α	
Intercept	387.417		12	-	-
Final	321.761	65.657		-	-
Goodness of Fit					
Pearson	-	307.402	260	.023	-
Deviance	-	259.194	260	.502	-
Pseudo R Sqaure					
Cox and Snell (CP&S)	-	-	-	-	.351
Nagelkerke (NK)	-	-	-	-	.366
McFadden (MF)	-	-	-	-	.137

Model Information about Goodness of Fit

Likewise, the model information about Goodness-of-Fit in table 8 also showed that at 5% CI and 260 degrees of freedom (v), which leads to rejection of the goodness of fit model because the CV Chi-square was higher than the TV. Consequently, Ho is also rejected, stating that there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on students' access to quality higher education.

Pseudo R-Square

A Pseudo-R-Square (post-hoc treatment) was performed to confirm the rejection of our null hypothesis. There was a moderate rise as per ORA, showing a moderate fit. Thus, based on these results, the rejection of the model, and hence our null hypothesis, could be accepted.

Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings of the Study

The findings of the current study are as follows:

i) The hypothesis that "there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on student's access to resources." is rejected as the model fitting information at 5% CI and 12 degree of freedom (v) shows rejection of the model of fit because of the CV (76.36) of Chi-square which was higher than the TV (21.03).

ii) The hypothesis that "there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on family support and parental education" access to quality education" is rejected due to the model fitting information at 5% CI and 12 (v), which shows rejection of the model of fit because of the CV (76.37) of Chi-square which was higher than the TV (21.03).

iii) The hypothesis that "there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on student's emotional & psychological abilities" is rejected due to the model fitting information at 5% CI and 12 (v), which shows rejection of the model of the fit because of the CV (100.60) of Chi-square which was higher than the TV (21.03).

iv) The hypothesis that "there is no significant impact of socioeconomic status on student's access to quality higher education" is rejected due to the model fitting information at 5% CI and 12 (v), which shows rejection of the model of the fit because of the CV (65.66) of Chi-square which was higher than the TV (21.03).

Conclusion

The findings of the current study revealed that socioeconomic status significantly affects student's access on resources at higher education level. These results are in line with the findings from the study of Baker and Logan (2006), showed that students from low income families often face difficulties to access educational due to financial constraints, family condition, and cultural backgrounds

Similarly, the results of study showed that at higher education level family support and parental education significantly influence students' access to resources and their academic performance. These findings align with the findings Li & Qiu (2018), claimed that students' academic achievement is often shaped by the parental education and their participation throughout their academic journey. Moreover, findings form their study indicated that parental involvement has a direct impact on students' academic performance and success as they play an important role in shaping students behavior and their learning attitudes.

Finally, the results of the current study also revealed that socioeconomic status has a significant emotional and psychological impact on student's access to higher education and their performance. Likewise, Shogren et al. (2018) found that students' from low socioeconomic status often experience various challenges such as low self-esteem, lack of motivation, and limited independence. Ultimately, these psychological challenges affect students' ability to make educational choices and achieve their academic goals.

On the whole, results of the current research study concludes that socioeconomic status of student' has a significant impact on access to quality higher education. Furthermore, family's socioeconomic status in a society has a strong impact on their children's educational goals and their academic performance at higher education level in Islamabad. Similarly, emotional and psychological abilities of students is also affected by their socioeconomic status, which in turn impacts their academic success, resulting in low motivation to pursue higher education.

The current study was primarily focused on the factors related to socioeconomic status of students that impacts their access to quality higher education. These factors include students' access to resources, family support, and parental education, emotional and psychological abilities of students. The current study does not explore other factors that may impact students' access to quality higher education such as students' personal academic interests and goals. Furthermore, the study was conducted in the urban area of Islamabad. Hence, for future researchers it is recommended that to explore these factors in diverse cultures of rural areas along with the students' personal interests and academic goals to analyze how socioeconomic status impacts access to quality education in dynamic cultures.

Recommendations

Following recommendations were proposed on the basis of results, discussions, and conclusions, for increasing the rate of student's enrollment in higher education specifically from low socioeconomic status.

Financial Aid to Access Resources: Government and policy maker's needs to provide more financial assistance to students from disadvantaged backgrounds to make their access to resources easy. So that they easily access educational materials such advanced technology and be able to participate in co-curricular activities.

Awareness Programs: Policymakers need to work on awareness campaigns to inform students and their parents about financial aid and how it would help them in accessing higher education, as well as the benefits of higher education.

Counselling Services: The government ought to make policies that address students' emotional and psychological issues, especially those coming from low-income families.

Parental Involvement: Such programs ought to be introduced for the parents of low socioeconomic students that inform them about their role in children's academic achievement and the support they needed to cope up with the emotional and mental challenges.

Importance of Higher Education: The government ought to make policies that help to spread awareness in rural areas about the benefits of higher education. They need to provide extra support to those living in economically disadvantaged families to access higher education and be productive members of society.

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