

Investigation of Factors and Their Influence on Academic Learning and Well-Being of University Students

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Abstract

This study investigates the factors influencing academic learning and well-being among university students, focusing on socio-economic status (SES) and the learning environment. A quantitative correlational research design was employed, involving 218 students from four universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. The results reveal that both SES and the learning environment significantly impact academic performance and well-being, underscoring the need for comprehensive strategies to enhance educational outcomes by addressing socio-economic disparities and fostering supportive learning environments.

Keywords: Academic Learning, Well-Being, Socio-Economic Status, Learning Environment, University Students

Introduction:

University life is a critical period of development for students, marked by numerous opportunities and challenges that can significantly impact their academic learning and well-being. Academic success in higher education is shaped by various factors, including socio-economic status (SES), the learning environment, and mental health (Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Strayhorn, 2018). Understanding the interplay of these factors is essential for

developing effective strategies to improve educational outcomes and promote holistic student well-being.

Socio-Economic Status (SES) has been identified as a major determinant of academic performance and well-being. Research indicates that students from higher SES backgrounds generally have better access to educational resources, financial stability, and social support, which positively influence their academic success (Sirin, 2005; Cox et al., 2017). Conversely, students from lower SES backgrounds may face financial pressures, leading to decreased academic focus and poorer mental health outcomes (Means et al., 2020).

The **learning environment** is another critical factor that influences academic performance and well-being. A positive environment, characterized by supportive teaching practices, adequate resources, and a collaborative atmosphere, enhances student engagement and learning outcomes (Brown & Adler, 2008; Kuh et al., 2010). Additionally, access to mental health resources and support networks is crucial, given the high prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression among university students (Eisenberg et al., 2016; Beiter et al., 2015).

This study aims to explore the factors influencing academic learning and well-being among university students, focusing on socio-economic status and the learning environment. By understanding these relationships, the study seeks to inform strategies that can improve both academic performance and well-being in higher education.

Objectives:

1. To determine the academic learning and well-being of university students.
2. To identify the factors influencing academic learning and well-being.
3. To assess the impact of these factors on academic learning and well-being.

Literature Review:

Socio-Economic Status (SES) and Academic Learning:

Socio-economic status is a well-documented factor influencing academic success. Studies have shown that students from higher SES backgrounds often have access to better educational resources, such as private tutoring, quality schools, and a conducive learning environment, which positively

affects their academic performance (Sirin, 2005). Financial stability allows these students to focus more on their studies, free from the stress of financial concerns (Cox et al., 2017).

Conversely, students from lower SES backgrounds may face financial pressures that necessitate part-time work, reducing their study time and academic focus (Jenkins, Hytten, & Schwartz, 2020). Research indicates that financial difficulties can also contribute to poor mental health outcomes, such as increased levels of stress and anxiety, which further hinder academic performance (Beiter et al., 2015). Scholarships, grants, and financial aid have been shown to mitigate these effects, improving retention rates and academic success among low-income students (Cox et al., 2017).

Learning Environment and Academic Learning:

The learning environment significantly affects academic performance and well-being. A positive environment, characterized by supportive teaching practices, adequate resources, and a collaborative atmosphere, enhances students' ability to learn and succeed academically (Brown & Adler, 2008; Kuh et al., 2010). Effective teaching methods, clear communication, and engaging content have been linked to better understanding and retention of course material (Kahu & Nelson, 2018).

Curriculum design also plays a crucial role in academic success. Well-structured curricula that align with students' interests and career goals can enhance motivation and engagement (Tinto, 2017). Flexible curricula, including elective courses and practical components such as internships and laboratory work, help students connect theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, thereby improving their academic performance (Brown & Adler, 2008).

Mental Health and Well-Being:

Mental health is a critical component of student well-being and significantly influences academic performance. High levels of stress, anxiety, and depression are common among university students and can adversely affect their ability to concentrate, retain information, and perform academically (Beiter et al., 2015). Studies have shown that the availability of mental health resources, such as counseling services, mental health awareness programs, and peer support networks, is essential for promoting student well-being (Eisenberg et al., 2016).

Research indicates a strong correlation between mental well-being and academic performance. Optimal mental health enhances concentration, stress management, and overall academic success (Garcés et al., 2024). Conversely, stressful academic settings can exacerbate mental health issues, necessitating institutional support for student well-being (Garcés et al., 2024).

Integrated Approach to Academic Success and Well-Being:

An integrated approach that considers socio-economic status, learning environment, and mental health support is essential for fostering a conducive environment that promotes both academic success and well-being (Strayhorn, 2018; Kuh et al., 2010). Universities should focus on creating inclusive and supportive educational settings that address the diverse needs of students, including financial support, quality teaching, and mental health resources.

Methodology:

A quantitative descriptive research design was employed to investigate the relationships between socio-economic status, learning environment, academic learning, and well-being among university students.

Population and Sample:

The study targeted students from four universities in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, Pakistan. A sample of 218 students was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure a diverse representation.

University Name	Male	Female	Total
International Islamic University Islamabad	7	52	59
Air University Islamabad	6	42	48
National University of Modern Languages Islamabad	8	53	61
Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi	17	33	50
Total	38	180	218

Research Instruments:

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data on:

- **Socio-Economic Status (SES):** Parental education, household income, financial support.
- **Learning Environment:** Quality of classroom facilities, learning resources, and teacher support.
- **Academic Learning:** Study habits, academic performance (GPA), feedback on assignments.
- **Well-Being:** Social interactions, support networks, overall life satisfaction.

Data Analysis:

Data were analyzed using multiple regression analysis and Pearson correlation to determine the strength and significance of relationships between the variables. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the sample characteristics.

Results:

1. Socio-Economic Status (SES) and Academic Learning:

The results indicate that socio-economic status significantly influences academic learning. Students from higher SES backgrounds showed better academic performance due to greater access to resources and support.

Model Summary	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.476	0.227	0.190	0.526

The model shows that 22.7% of the variance in academic learning can be explained by socio-economic factors.

2. Learning Environment and Academic Learning:

A supportive learning environment was found to have a significant positive impact on academic performance. Variables such as classroom quality and teacher support showed a strong correlation with student outcomes.

ANOVA	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	15.491	10	1.549	5.482	0.000
Residual	58.490	207	0.283		
Total	73.982	217			

The significant p-value (<0.001) indicates that the learning environment is a crucial determinant of academic success.

3. Socio-Economic Status and Well-Being:

The study found a significant relationship between socio-economic status and well-being. Higher SES was associated with better well-being outcomes, likely due to reduced financial pressures and greater access to resources.

4. Learning Environment and Well-Being:

The learning environment was also found to significantly affect well-being, with students in supportive settings reporting higher levels of well-being.

Discussion:

The findings reveal that socio-economic status and the learning environment are critical determinants of academic success and well-being among university students. Students from higher SES backgrounds benefit from greater access to resources, financial stability, and supportive networks, which contribute to improved academic performance and well-being. The results also highlight the importance of a positive learning environment in fostering both academic success and well-being, suggesting that universities should focus on creating inclusive and supportive educational settings.

Conclusion:

This study confirms the significant influence of socio-economic status and the learning environment on academic learning and well-being among university students. Universities should consider implementing policies that provide financial support to students from lower SES backgrounds, enhance the quality of the learning environment, and expand mental health services. A holistic approach that integrates these elements is essential to fostering a supportive academic experience that promotes both learning and well-being.

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