

The Effect of Social Factors on Students Academic Performance: Case of EFL learners at Tlemcen University

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Abstract:

This paper explores how social environment affect students' performance. It shows the different problems faced by learners while studying, with the view of supportive environment which is closely related to positive learning outcomes. The environment where the entire family lives represents the universe in which the child can make friends. Therefore, family and educators in general require the necessary insights to change someone's behaviour. The purpose of this study is to analyse the socio – educational environment factors upon school activities. A questionnaire and an interview were used to collect data. The findings of this research allowed to reach the intended purpose by identifying a correlation between the social environment and students' academic performance.

Keywords: Learning, Students' Performance, Socio – Educational Environment Factors

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1. Introduction:

Schools have no value without students. They are the most valuable asset of any educational institution. The academic performance of students is linked with the social development of the country. In fact, students' academic success has a significant impact on producing high quality graduates. In the teaching / learning process, the teacher is regarded as the source of information, as well as the role model whose attitudes, behaviour and ways of thinking influence his students learning. However, many students relate their academic failure to several social factors such as their daily habits, families and teachers.

The present study focuses on investigating the factors affecting the academic performance of students through exploring students, family and teachers related factors. A survey was conducted to collect data and responses of students, regarding factors affecting their performance. This study endeavours to find an answer for the general research question: Does students' performance depends on different social factors? In order to answer this question, two research questions are asked:

1. Do personal related factors affect students' academic performance?
2. Is there a direct relationship between institution's learning environment and student's performance?

From the above mentioned questions, the following hypothesis are raised:

1. Personal related factors such as personality and daily habits as well as family may affect students' academic performance.
2. There is a direct relationship between institution's leaning environment and student's performance as teachers may use a variety of strategies to help pupils improve their academic performance.

2. Learning Process

Learning can be seen as a permanent change, since it is brought by a teacher through techniques such as developing certain abilities, changing attitudes or understanding specific scientific laws operating behind a learning environment. (Sequera, 2012).

According to Michael, and Modell, 2003, active learners in higher education expect to be treated as adult learners with some control over the learning environment, such as the ability to raise questions and clarify doubts.

Attention, memory, language, processing and organizing, graph motor (writing), and higher order thinking are the six interactive components of the learning process. These processes interact with emotions, school climate, behaviour, social skills, teachers, and family, among other things.

Teachers must comprehend the learning process in general, understand and respond to students' specific emotional and cognitive profiles, and adopt instructional strategies and tactics that are appropriate for varied learners in order to engage, motivate, and teach all learners at optimal levels.

2.1. Main Learning Theories

According to the office of learning and teaching, 2004. Melbourne: department of education and training; OECD, 2010, there are fine main learning theories:

- ❖ The Behaviourists (behaviourism: Stimulus Response)
- ❖ The Cognitivism (flow of knowledge)
- ❖ The Constructivism (mental models)
- ❖ The Experimentalism (learning of experience)
- ❖ Social and Contextual (learn from and with others)

2.2. Learning models

In order to answer questions such as “how to teach?”, “how students learn?”, learning models are used. These models are used by teachers depending on the context. Learning models describe how learning takes place.

2.3. Learning Needs

Some of the most common learning needs are:

- ❖ Learners expect to be taught.
- ❖ Learners are expected to work hard.
- ❖ Learners expect to be treated as adults.

Learners vary in age, sex, background, etc.; so it is important to treat them as individuals. This is why teachers must relate students' needs with their leaning in order to improve learning.

3. Academic Performance

The good academic performance of students at the senior high school is important in every educational system. For the present, many factors influence the academic performance of students.

3.1. Influence of Truancy on Academic Performance in Secondary Schools:

The act of being absent from schools above the allowable period without permission is considered as obstinate truancy. It was worthy to note that it is not only detrimental to the individual and his / her vision but affects other students by way of impeding the advancement of teaching, and causing damage to the general performance of the school. Consequently, truancy among teachers also messes up with the academic output of students.

3.2. Influence of Parent's Levels of Education on Students' Academic Performance

One other factor that has the propensity to influence the academic output of the students is the natural surroundings he / she belongs to. However, such environment that could impact the academic performance of students can be given by their parents. Parents can also profit from sessions, guidance and counselling from school leaders to help intensify the academic work of students at home.

For students to achieve a higher level of academic excellence, many researchers have posited that learners reaching this fate mainly rely on the academic influence of their parents. This has led to the fact that students who have literate parents exceed those who have illiterate parents in a standardized exam. This because, literate parents have the ability to help their children in their homework's.

3.3. Influence of teachers on students' academic performance:

The number of teachers which is proportionally small than students is another factor that impact students' academic performance. Despite the small number of these teachers in public schools, they additionally engage in other menial jobs or hold personal ventures to help them make a living. This is due to the inadequate salary paid by the government. These unsatisfactory conditions of service have led to the increase level of truancy, declined efficacy in class, lower motivation and work fulfilment in schools. However, increased motivation, collaboration and receipt of duties exist where the conditions of service are of high value. Therefore, the above consequences of ineffectiveness on the part of teachers depict how they affect student's education.

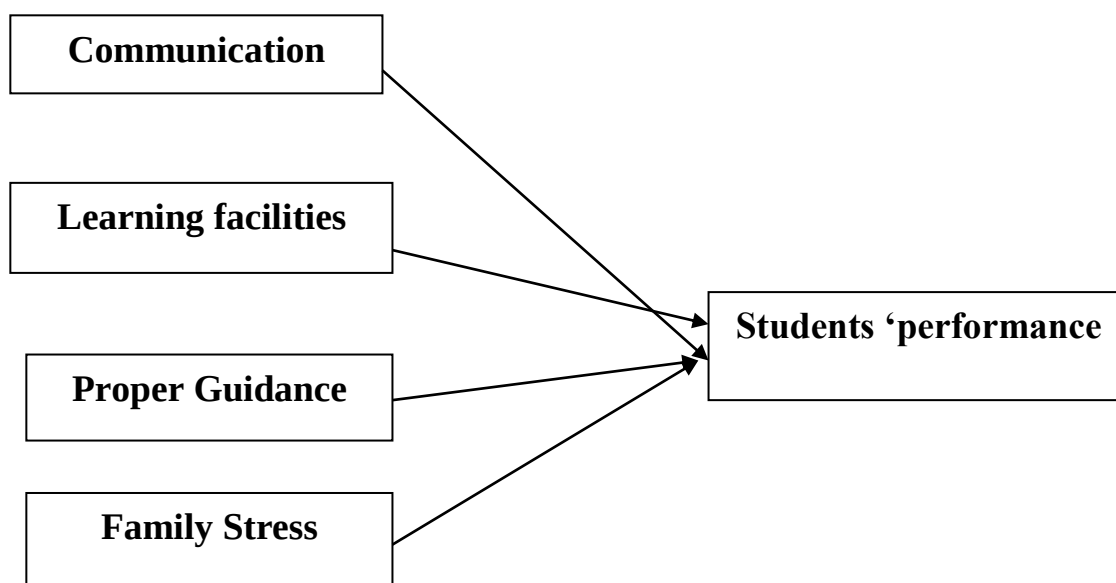


Figure 1. Factors Affecting Students 'Performance (Adopted from Research Gate)

4. Social Factors

There are several social factors that motivate learning and influence the academic performance of students; students related factors, family related factors as well as teachers related factors may impact learner's performance.

4.1. Students related Factors:

Students personality, daily habits as well as academic motivation, affect students' performance.

4.1.1. Students 'Personality

There is a proof that personality characteristics can anticipate academic performance (Costa & McCare,1992). O'Connor and Paunonen (2007), consider three assessment of personality characteristics as indicators of students' academic achievement.

First, there are behavioural inclinations reflected in identity traits that can influence certain propensities that impact the academic performance such as perseverance and conscientiousness. Second, though cognitive capacity reflects what a person can do, identity characteristics reflects what a person will do. Third, personality as well as cognitive capability would foresee consequent execution better in more seasoned understudies, particularly motivation – related identity factors.

4.1.2. Daily habits

The most common impediment to students' performance in all contexts, according to Mark and Howard (2009), is a lack of effective or positive (excellent) study habits. They also believe that if students can create a positive attitude toward learning, they will be able to achieve their goals.

They will be successful if they develop a decent study habit and maintain good discipline. According to Husain (2000), a key study problem among students at all levels is a lack of effective or positive (excellent) study habits.

4.2. Academic Motivation

Deci and Ryan (2000, p. 69) in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) propose three types of motivation: intrinsic, extrinsic and autonomous motivation. "This theory focuses on types, rather than just amount, of motivation, paying particular attention to autonomous motivation, controlled motivation, and motivation as predictors of performance, relational, and well-being outcomes" (Deci & Ryan, 2008). People who are intrinsically driven experience curiosity and pleasure, as well as a sense of competence and self-determination. Extrinsically motivated people, on the other hand, see their actions as a result of external circumstances.

Extrinsic utility value, according to Mori and Gobel (2006), relates to the work's usefulness in terms of an individual's future goals, whereas intrinsic value refers to the happiness that task engagement brings. Autonomous motivation, the third sort of motivation, is defined as a discernible divergence between acts and consequences.

Autonomous motivated people don't think about the connection between effort and achieving a goal. They credit success to chance or natural qualities, and come to the conclusion that achievement is not a result of hard work (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

4.3. Academic Stress

Due to the multiple internal and external expectations placed on students' shoulders, stress has become a component of their academic lives. Adolescents are especially prone to the problems linked with academic stress since they are going through personal and social transitions.

For a long time, people assumed that students were the least impacted by stress or troubles. Stress is widely recognized as a lifestyle crisis (Masih & Gulrez, 2006), impacting people of all ages and stages of development (Banerjee & Chatterjee, 2016). Students were just expected to study, and studying was never seen as a burdensome activity.

The expectations that parents had for their children proved to be burdensome, as these expectations turned into heavier responsibilities that these youngsters could no longer bear. According to Lee and Larson (2000), academic stress is caused by a combination of environmental stressors, student appraisals, and responses to those stressors. It has now evolved into a severe reality known as a "career stopper"

5. Research Design

This study analyzes the factors that impact the academic achievement of secondary school students; and experiences of each student related to each factor. From this regard, this study applied the case study because it is one of the most effective ways to collect data.

5.1. Case study

It is a research method that allows the researcher to make generalization and draw conclusions about a certain problem. This method enables the researcher to explain the reasons behind a specific issue and provide suggestions. It deals with the study of behaviors and attitudes of people.

In fact, this method is used for several reasons:

- ❖ It looks for the origin of the problem.
- ❖ It gives much details.

- ❖ This method helps the researcher to deal with the problem from different angles.
- ❖ It investigates the problem and seeks the way of improving the existing situation.
- ❖ It is valid and accurate.
- ❖ It helps making generalization.

5.2. Questionnaire to students

Brown (2001) defines the questionnaire as a written tool in which participants are provided with a set of questions to be answered or asked to choose from the given propositions. Using the questionnaire enables to have answers to questions related to the problematic issue. *“Questionnaires are effective way of gathering information about the effective aspects, such as beliefs, attitudes, motivation and preferences”* (Onel: 1997, 57)

This questionnaire was designed for the sake of investigating the learners ‘view about the impact of various social factors on their academic performance. It was administered to 23 students who have experienced different social factors that impacted their academic performance.

It contained twelve questions involving close – ended, open – ended and multiple choice questions. The questionnaire was divided into two parts. The first part dealt with students ‘profile while the second part was about students ‘s perception towards the learning process. The aim of each question is explained as follows:

Table 1. The Objectives of Students Questionnaire

Questions	Objectives
1 to 3	Concerned with students ‘profile
4 to 8	Explored students ‘ perception towards the learning process
9 to 11	Examined the perception of students towards their families
12	Asked about students ‘ personality

5.3. Interview with teachers:

The interview is another way of collecting data. It is composed of a set of questions concerned with the problematic issue. These questions aim at investigating the different points concerning the field studied.

This interview was designed to get information about the teaching situation as far as learners and teachers are concerned. It is a semi – structured interview containing seven open – ended questions. The semi – structured interview was chosen in order to allow the discussion with the interviewees. This qualitative data collection procedure provided time and scope for the respondent to talk about their opinions on the subject. The aim of each question is explained as followed:

Table 2. The Focus Area of Teachers ‘Semi – Structured Interview

Questions	Focus area
1	Teachers’ degree
2	The number of years the teacher has been teaching
3	The learning process
4	Teachers ‘ role in classroom
5	The influence of teachers on their students ‘ academic performance
6	Teachers role in promoting interaction among students
7	Teachers’ opinion about ELT in Algeria

6. Discussion and Interpretation of the main results:

For the sake of testing the two hypothesis that were formulated at the beginning of this work, the researcher will try to discuss and interpret the results obtained from students ‘questionnaire and teachers ‘interview. The data obtained supply a large amount of reactions.

In this case study, two instruments were used to collect data in order to draw conclusions on the validity of the hypothesis formulated in the first chapter. Based on data analysis, the majority of students who took part in providing their views to fulfill the questionnaire proposed, showed their awareness about the importance of the time spend every day at home works. Likewise, the results attained from the questionnaire revealed that all students are supported from their families in order to succeed. Additionally, teacher’s role in encouraging students to succeed is crucial for a better academic performance.

The first hypothesis denotes that “*personal related factors such as personality and daily habits as well as well as family may affect students’ performance*”, the results obtained from the questionnaire show that students personality (calm, nervous, sometimes nervous) really affect the academic achievement. Also, the daily routine that learners follow everyday like the amount of time spend on home works has a positive and a negative impact on student’s achievement. In addition to that, the relationship that each student has with her family plays a crucial role. This is because, if these students have supportive parents and a great atmosphere of study at home, their academic achievement will be high, and vice versa.

Regarding the collected data from teachers ‘interview, the results revealed that only two of them are experienced teacher, while the rest of them are novice teachers. The second hypothesis indicates that “*there is a direct relationship between institution’s learning environments and student’s performance as teachers may use a variety of strategies to help pupils improve their academic performance*”. The questionnaire showed that the majority of learners have supportive classmates. Thus, this encourage them to perform better.

From the other hand, the interview revealed that experienced teachers are more effective in raising student’s achievement than their less experience counterparts. This is because, experienced teachers try to fulfill their learners needs by using the mixed method in order to motivate students and encourage them to interact in classroom.; This pave the way for learners to improve themselves academically. However, novice teachers declared that not having a pre – service training made them somehow unprepared to fulfill all the needs of the learners. In fact, they are still learning from experienced teachers by attending their courses. Thus, this has a negative impact on the academic achievement of students. It can be said that this hypothesis is confirmed.

7. Conclusion

A student's academic performance is greatly influenced by their external surroundings. Numerous societal elements and characteristics have an impact on a student's academic career. Most of these might indirectly affect how well they do in college. These elements include the social environment, which includes peers, family, and participation in clubs and organizations. Students need to know how to keep sociological variables from influencing their academic achievement in college. Parents and teachers need to be actively involved as well. Parents need to make sure that social circumstances don't negatively affect their children's academic achievement and study habits. These sociological factors will negatively affect the students' academic performance if they are not given enough attention.

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