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The Effect Of Socioeconomic Status On Student's Academic Motivation And Academic Performance

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Abstract: Academic Performance has a significant influence on an individual's career and life. Academic Motivation and Socioeconomic Status (SES) are two internal and external factors respectively which could influence academic performance among other variables. This study aims to explore the impact of SES on academic motivation and its subsequent effect on academic performance among first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas of Tamil Nadu, India. A purposive sample of 310 students (89 males and 221 females) was selected using a correlational and predictive research design. Data was collected Utilizing standardized tools the Modified Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Scale, the Short Academic Motivation Scale (SAMS), and the Academic Performance Scale. The results indicated significant differences in academic performance between semi-urban and urban students, with semi-urban students outperforming their urban counterparts. A significant positive correlation was found among SES, academic motivation, and academic performance. The multiple linear regression model, which explained the variance in academic performance, revealed that SES had the strongest predictive influence, while intrinsic motivation subscales such as intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation, intrinsic motivation to know, and intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment, also contributed positively to academic performance.

***Keywords* – Socioeconomic Status, Academic Motivation, Academic Performance.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Students aged 18 to 20 years old, typically in their first year of college, are transitioning from late adolescence to emerging adulthood (Santrock, 2018; Arnett, 2000). Late adolescence (15–19 years) is marked by identity exploration, increasing autonomy, and the development of long-term goals, while emerging adulthood (18–25 years) represents a period of greater independence, self-exploration, and responsibility. Socioeconomic status (SES) is defined by considering a family's income, level of education and occupation of head of the household (Radhakrishnan M and Nagaraja S, 2023). Academic motivation is often defined as the internal drive or external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain students' behaviors toward achieving academic goals (Robert J Vallerand, 1992). Academic motivation is described as the process that "influences the direction, initiation, intensity, and persistence of learning behaviors" (Schunk et al., 2010). Academic Performance is defined as the measurable outcomes of the students' learning, typically represented through grades, standardized test scores developed by Birchmeier, Grattan, Hornbacher, and McGregory, which assesses students' academic behaviors and attitudes.

SES is one of the strongest predictors of student success. Students from lower SES backgrounds face multiple barriers to academic achievement, including: Limited access to quality education and learning materials (Sirin, 2005). Poorer nutritional and health conditions, which affect cognitive function (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Less parental involvement in academics due to financial or time constraints (Fan & Chen, 2001). Higher stress levels, leading to decreased motivation and engagement (Evans & Schamberg, 2009).

Socioeconomic status significantly influences students' academic motivation and performance, particularly in India and Tamil Nadu. SES encompasses factors such as family income, parental education, and occupation, which collectively affect a student's access to educational resources and opportunities. Students from higher SES backgrounds often benefit from better educational materials, supportive learning environments, and extracurricular activities, leading to enhanced academic performance. Conversely, those from lower SES backgrounds may face challenges like limited access to quality education, inadequate learning materials, and less parental involvement, adversely impacting their academic outcomes.

In Tamil Nadu, a study involving 764 higher secondary school students in Salem District revealed that the educational levels and occupations of parents, especially mothers, significantly influence their children's academic performance. The study found that higher parental education levels correlate with better student performance, highlighting the critical role of family background in educational attainment. Invariably parental education correlate with SES and family (Rani S, 2020).

Several initiatives at the national and state levels aim to promote equitable access to education for students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. Nationally, the Ishan Uday Special Scholarship Scheme by the UGC supports students from the northeastern region, while the Pradhan Mantri Vidya Lakshmi Karyakram facilitates scholarships and education loans through a digital platform. The Central Sector Interest Subsidy (CSIS) Scheme provides full interest subsidy on education loans during the moratorium period for students from families earning up to ₹4.5 lakh annually. Additionally, the Ministry of Education offers various scholarships for underprivileged students to promote basic and higher education.

In Tamil Nadu, state-specific programs such as the Tamil Pudhalvan Scheme (₹1,000 monthly support for boys pursuing higher education) and the Pudhumai Penn Scheme (financial aid for girls to reduce dropout rates and early marriage) encourage higher education enrollment. Initiatives like the Sky Classroom enhance digital learning for middle school students, and the Namma School Foundation mobilizes CSR funds to improve school infrastructure. Collectively, these programs aim to bridge educational disparities and foster socio-economic mobility.

Urban areas in India typically exhibit higher levels of industrialization, infrastructure, employment opportunities, and income levels compared to semi-urban regions. Urban centers attract large investments in sectors like information technology, manufacturing, finance, and services, contributing to higher per capita income and better access to education, healthcare, and housing. In contrast, semi-urban areas (also known as peri-urban or transitional zones) are characterized by a mix of rural and urban features. They often rely more on agriculture, small-scale industries, and informal employment, with limited infrastructure and slower economic growth (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, 2021).

While urban areas benefit from economies of scale and concentrated development, semi-urban regions often face challenges such as underemployment, migration to cities, and inadequate public services (Reserve Bank of India, 2022). These disparities contribute to socio-economic inequality and shape policy efforts aimed at inclusive regional development (NSSO, 2019).

Jane et al (2024), investigated the effects of poverty on the academic performance of undergraduates at Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe using survey research The population comprised 3,394 year 2, year 3, and final-year B.Ed students, and a proportionate random sampling technique was used to select 300 students. The findings highlighted that poverty has a positively significant impact on the academic performance and well-being of undergraduates, indicating a strong and direct relationship between poverty and adverse outcomes in these areas.

Cooper and Miralay (2022), examined how the low socio-economic status of parents affects the academic performance of children in low-income countries, focusing on its role in continuing poverty across generations. A qualitative approach was used, with open-ended questionnaires distributed to a sample of 15 teachers and 6 administrators, randomly selected from public and private schools in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and Afghanistan, during the second semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The findings revealed that children from low-income families often experience cognitive deficits, developmental delays, and emotional challenges due to limited resources and physiological stress.

The objective of the study is to understand how socioeconomic status has an effect on the academic motivation and its influence on students' academic performance. Specifically this study had is following objectives:

To investigate the relationship between socioeconomic status and academic performance, as well as the relationship between academic motivation and academic performance among first-year college students.

To determine the effect of socioeconomic status and academic motivation on academic performance among first-year college students.

The following hypotheses were framed for the present study

H01. There will be no significant difference in socioeconomic status (SES) among first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas.

H02. There will be no significant difference in academic motivation among first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas.

H03.. There will be no significant difference in academic performance among first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas.

H04. There will be no significant relationship between socioeconomic status, academic motivation, and academic performance among first-year college students.

H05.There will be no significant influence of socioeconomic status and academic motivation on academic performance among first-year college students.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study is to understand how socioeconomic status has an effect on the Academic motivation and its influence on students' academic performance.

2.1 – Objectives

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2.2 – Hypotheses

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H03.. There will be no significant difference in academic performance among first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas.

H04. There will be no significant relationship between socioeconomic status, academic motivation, and academic performance among first-year college students.

H05.There will be no significant influence of socioeconomic status and academic motivation on academic performance among first-year college students.

3.1Population and Sample

The sample for this study consisted of 310 first-year college students selected through a Purposive sampling method. Among them, 89 were male and 221 were female. The participants Were from semi-urban and urban areas of Tamil Nadu, representing students from both Engineering and arts & science colleges. Their ages ranged from 17 to 20 years, with a mean age

Reflecting the typical entry-level college demographic. This diverse sample provided insights into the academic motivation and performance of students from varying educational streams and Socioeconomic backgrounds within the state.The sample consisted of 310 first-year college Students selected through a purposive sampling method. Among them, 89 were male, and 221Were females.

Inclusion criteria

1. First year college students, age group 17 to 20 years target age range.
2. Enrolled in a full time course in a recognized university.
3. Includes students from both government and private colleges.

Exclusion criteria

1. Excludes the distance learning students.
2. Excludes the students who have prior college experiences and students who Dropped out.

3.2Statistical tools and econometric models

The Modified Kuppuswamy Socioeconomic Scale, developed by Radhakrishnan M and Nagaraja S.B., in 2023, updates the original scale to reflect changes in India's economy and society, incorporating new occupation and education categories, with education assessed through 7 items, occupation through 10 items, and income through 12 items, and has demonstrated high reliability and good validity, accurately measuring socioeconomic status and categorizing populations into five classes such as upper, upper-middle, lower-middle, upper-lower, and lower, based on a score range of 3-29.

The Short Academic Motivation Scale (SAMS) was developed by Kotera, Conway, and Green in 2020, as a concise alternative to the original 28-item Academic Motivation Scale established by Vallerand et al. in 1992. The original scale comprised seven subscales such as Intrinsic Motivation to Know, Intrinsic Motivation toward Accomplishment, Intrinsic Motivation to Experience Stimulation, Identified Regulation, Introjected Regulation, External Regulation, and Amotivation. The SAMS demonstrated good reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.83) and good validity, with scoring calculated by averaging each subscale's items. The Short Academic Motivation Scale (SAMS), adapted from the original Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), has been tested for its psychometric properties.
The Academic Performance Scale (APS) demonstrated strong reliability, with an internal consistency of 0.89 and a test-retest reliability of 0.85. This 8-item scale utilized a 5-point rating system and was developed in the year of 2015 and assessed by researchers Carson Birchmeier, Emily Grattan, Sarah Hornbacher, and Christopher McGregory at Saginaw Valley State University.

3.2.1 Procedure

The study employed purposive sampling method to recruit first-year college students aged 17 to 20 years, who were enrolled in full-time courses at recognized universities, including both government and private colleges. Distance learning students, those with prior college experience, and students who had previously dropped out were excluded from participation. Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire, a structured research tool designed to gather information directly from respondents about their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, or experiences.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Differences in Socioeconomic Status between Semi Urban and Urban Area students from first year of college.

Variables	**Areas**	**No of Students**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**t value**	**Sig.**
Socioeconomic Status (SES)	Semi Urban	110	13.64	6.453	.491	.624 NS

ns no significant difference was found

Table 4.1 presents the differences in socioeconomic status (SES) between first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas. The mean SES scores for semi-urban and urban students are 13.64 (SD = 6.453) and 14.07 (SD = 8.951), respectively. The t-value (0.491) and p-value greater than 0.05 (0.624) indicate no significant difference. This suggests both groups share similar financial and social backgrounds, likely due to comparable income levels, educational opportunities, and parental influence. Thus the null hypothesis stating that, "There will be no significant difference in socioeconomic status (SES) among first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas" is accepted. Overall both semi urban and urban groups belong to the lower middle category.

4.2 Differences in Academic Motivation Scale in the subscales between Semi Urban and Urban Area students from first year of college.

Variables	Areas	No of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t value	Sig.
Intrinsic Motivation to Know	Semi Urban	110	3.79	1.643	0.76	.938
	Urban	200	3.78	1.825		
Intrinsic Motivation towards Accomplishment	Semi Urban	110	3.34	1.552	1.522	.129
	Urban	200	3.62	1.603		
Intrinsic Motivation to Experience Stimulation	Semi Urban	110	3.67	1.586	.983	.183

	Urban	200	3.49	1.530		
Extrinsic Motivation to Identified	Semi Urban	110	3.13	1.719	-3.538	.000
	Urban	200	3.85	1.690		
Extrinsic Motivation to Introjected	Semi Urban	110	3.63	1.664	-.239	.811
	Urban	200	3.68	1.719		
Extrinsic Motivation to External Regulation	Semi Urban	110	3.75	1.516	-.533	-.100
	Urban	200	3.86	1.708		
Amotivation	Semi Urban	110	3.19	1.651	-1.191	-.234
	Urban	200	3.43	1.667		

Note: ($p < 0.05$) in Extrinsic motivation to identified.

The results indicate no significant differences ($p > 0.05$) between semi-urban and urban students in six subscales of academic motivation: intrinsic motivation to know, intrinsic motivation toward accomplishment, intrinsic motivation to experience stimulation, extrinsic motivation - introjected, extrinsic motivation - external regulation, and amotivation. However, extrinsic motivation - identified shows a significant difference ($p = 0.000$), with urban students (M = 3.85, SD = 1.690) scoring higher than semi-urban students (M = 3.13, SD = 1.719). This suggests that urban students may be more influenced by external recognition, rewards, or social pressures, aligning with prior research (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Sirin, 2005; Jeynes, 2007). Thus, the null hypothesis stating that, "There will be no significant difference in academic motivation among first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas" is partially accepted.

4.3 *Differences in Students' Academic Performance between Semi Urban and Urban Areas*.

Variables	Areas	No of Students	Mean	Standard Deviation	t value	Sig.
Academic Performance	Semi Urban	110	26.52	6.183	3.910	.000
	Urban	200	23.22	8.534		

Note: ($p < 0.05$)

Semi-urban students (M = 26.52, SD = 6.183) show significantly higher academic performance than urban students (M = 23.22, SD = 8.534), $t(308) = 3.910$, $p = 0.000$. This suggests that semi-urban students may benefit from more structured academic routines and fewer distractions, while urban students face greater social and recreational influences (Jeynes, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Despite better access to educational resources, urban students may not always utilize them effectively due to competing distractions (Lepp et al., 2014). Thus the null hypothesis stating that, "There will be no significant difference in academic performance among first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas" is not accepted.

4.4 Represents the relationship between the socioeconomic status, academic motivation, and academic performance among first-year college students.

Variables	SES	IMK	IMA	IMES	EMI	EMIJ	EMER	AM	AP
SES	1								
IMK	.693**	1							
IMA	.603**	.602**	1						
IMES	.466**	.496**	.504**	1					
EMI	.576**	.594**	.536**	.369**	1				
EMIJ	.573**	.574**	.456**	.408**	.556**	1			
EMER	.574**	.578**	.481**	.357**	.591**	.601**	1		
AM	.475**	.390**	.482**	.441**	.420**	.435**	.421**	1	
AP	.758**	.631**	.580**	.506**	.493**	.499**	.502**	.438**	1

**p < 0.01, Note: SES = Socioeconomic Status, IMK = Intrinsic Motivation to Know, IMA = Intrinsic Motivation Towards Accomplishment, IMES = Intrinsic Motivation to Experience Stimulation, EMI = Extrinsic Motivation to Identified, EMIJ = Extrinsic Motivation to Introjected, EMER = Extrinsic Motivation to External Regulation, AM = Amotivation, AP = Academic Performance. The Pearson Product moment correlation to determine the relationship between the Socioeconomic Status, Academic Motivation and Academic Performance.

The mean SES score (M = 13.92, SD = 8.145) places students in the lower-middle-income category, aligning with national data (Manya Rathore, 2024). Academic performance averages 24.39 (SD = 7.930), with semi-urban students scoring higher. A strong positive correlation exists between SES and academic performance ($r = 0.758$, $p < 0.01$), highlighting the role of financial stability in student success (Sanjib Kumar Haldar, 2024). Among academic motivation subscales, intrinsic motivation to know ($r = 0.631$), toward accomplishment ($r = 0.580$), and to experience stimulation ($r = 0.506$) show significant positive correlations with performance. Extrinsic motivation - identified ($r = 0.493$), introjected ($r = 0.499$), and external regulation ($r = 0.502$) also correlate positively, though to a lesser extent. Amotivation ($r = 0.438$) has the weakest correlation, indicating lower academic performance among unmotivated students. These findings emphasize that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation drive academic success, with intrinsic motivation playing a stronger role. Addressing financial hardships can further support student achievement.

4.5 Represents the model summary of regression association between Academic Performance on Socioeconomic scale and subscales of Academic Motivation.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F value	Sig.	t value
1	.788[a]	.622	.612	62.017	.000b	11.433

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Amotivation, Intrinsic Motivation to Know, Intrinsic Motivation to Experience Stimulation, Extrinsic Motivation to External Regulation, Extrinsic Motivation to Identified, Extrinsic Motivation to Introjected, Intrinsic Motivation towards Accomplishment, Socioeconomic Status

Table 4.5 regression model shows an R value of .789, indicating a strong positive correlation between the predictor variables such as Amotivation, Intrinsic Motivation to Know, Intrinsic Motivation to Experience Stimulation, Extrinsic Motivation to External Regulation, Extrinsic Motivation to Identified, Extrinsic Motivation to Introjected, Intrinsic Motivation towards Accomplishment, Socioeconomic Status and academic performance. The R^2 value of .622 suggests that approximately 62.2% of the variance in academic performance is explained by the independent variables: socioeconomic status and the various types of academic motivation. The adjusted R^2 value of .612 accounts for the number of predictors and indicates a slight decrease, meaning the model still explains a significant proportion of variance.

The overall regression model is statistically significant and indicates that the independent variables collectively have a significant effect on academic performance.

The regression coefficients provide insights into the individual contributions of each predictor: Socioeconomic Status ($\beta = .532$, $p < .001$): This is the strongest predictor, suggesting that students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have significantly higher academic performance.

Intrinsic Motivation to Know ($\beta = .114$, $p = .044$) and Intrinsic Motivation towards Accomplishment ($\beta = .105$, $p = .038$) positively influence academic performance, but their effects are moderate.

Intrinsic Motivation to Experience Stimulation ($\beta = .131$, $p = .003$) has a significant impact, indicating that students who find enjoyment in learning perform better academically.

Extrinsic Motivation to Identified, Introjected, and External Regulation have very small and statistically non-significant effects ($p > .05$), suggesting that external rewards or pressures do not significantly influence academic performance in this model.

Amotivation ($\beta = .024$, $p = .535$) has a negligible effect and is non-significant, implying that students who lack motivation do not show a significant variance in academic performance.

Discussion

The study explored differences in socioeconomic status (SES), academic motivation, and academic performance between first-year college students from semi-urban and urban areas, and examined how these variables are related and contribute to academic performance.

The results showed no significant difference in SES between students from semi-urban and urban areas. This suggests that students across these regions share similar financial and social conditions, possibly due to improved access to education and government support programs that aim to reduce regional disparities.

In terms of academic motivation, only one subscale extrinsic motivation to identified showed a significant difference, with urban students scoring higher. This may reflect greater emphasis on external recognition and societal expectations in urban settings, the lack of difference in other subscales implies that motivational patterns are largely similar across both groups.

Semi-urban students outperformed urban students in academic performance. This could be attributed to more focused academic environments, fewer distractions, and a stronger emphasis on education in semi-urban contexts, whereas urban students may face more competing influences despite having better resources.

The findings also indicated significant positive relationships between SES, academic motivation, and academic performance. Notably, intrinsic motivation emerged as a stronger factor in academic success compared to extrinsic forms. This supports previous research highlighting the lasting impact of internal motivation on academic achievement (Kusurkar et al 2013).

Regression analysis confirmed that SES and intrinsic motivation are key predictors of academic performance, while extrinsic motivation and amotivation contributed little. These results emphasize the importance of both financial stability and internal drive in shaping students' academic outcomes.The purpose of the study is to measure the effect of socioeconomic status on academic motivation and its influence on students' academic performance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that semi-urban students demonstrate significantly higher academic performance compared to their urban counterparts. Among the subscales of academic motivation, only extrinsic motivation - identified shows a significant difference, favoring urban students. Socioeconomic status does not differ notably between the two groups. Overall, there is a significant positive correlation between socioeconomic status, academic motivation, and academic performance, regression analysis shows that SES has a strong positive predict on academic motivation and performance.

This study was limited to first-year undergraduate (UG) students. Future research can include second- and third-year UG students, as well as postgraduate (PG) students and include more representation from semi urban students.

The findings highlight the importance of enhancing intrinsic motivation particularly the desire to learn and achieve through strategies like task breakdown and challenge-based activities. Hence learning is more engaging and thereby help improve academic performance. Institutions should address financial barriers by offering scholarships and resources to students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Integrating motivation-enhancing methods such as project-based learning, autonomy-supportive teaching, and recognition of student efforts into the curriculum can foster deeper engagement. Since extrinsic motivation and amotivation were not significant predictors, educators and counselors should focus on promoting self-driven learning over external rewards.

III. Acknowledgment

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