



RESEARCH PAPER

Study of Social Factors Affecting Academic Achievement of Students at Higher Secondary Level

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how social factors affect the academic achievement of higher secondary students, focusing on parental attitudes, teacher support, and peer involvement. Main research objective was to determine the relationship between peer, parents and teachers' involvement and students' academic performance. Using a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 320 randomly selected students from three branches of Punjab College, Islamabad. Analysis through descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation revealed significant positive relationships between parental encouragement, teacher guidance, and peer collaboration with academic success. Findings indicate that achievement is shaped not only by individual effort but also by students' social environments. Constructive home-school partnerships, supportive teacher-student interactions, and cooperative peer relationships help in learning motivation and self-efficacy. Study provides empirical evidence from Pakistan's secondary education context, emphasizing that academic success should be understood as a socially influenced and collaboratively constructed phenomenon. It recommends promoting parent-teacher collaboration and integrating peer-support strategies into school improvement programs.

KEYWORDS Academic Achievement, Social Factors, Parental Involvement, Teacher Support, Peer Influence

Introduction

Academic achievement has been one of the most widely discussed topics in educational research because it serves as an indicator of individual competence, institutional quality, and national development also as it reflects the cumulative learning outcomes of students and shapes their future opportunities. In contemporary education, the pursuit of high academic performance is not limited to cognitive abilities or instructional techniques rather, it is deeply intertwined with students' social environments. These social contexts particularly the influence of parents, teachers, and peers form the foundation for intellectual growth, motivation, and emotional stability. Research consistently shows that social interactions are vital predictors of how well students perform academically (Rabgay, 2015).

While cognitive abilities and instructional quality are important, research increasingly highlights the influence of social factors particularly the attitudes and involvement of parents, teachers, and peers on student success. Social environments serve as scaffolding for learners, shaping their motivation, confidence, and engagement (Kapur,

2018). Education is both a personal and a social process. At the secondary level, where students transition from dependence to autonomy, social support becomes even more crucial. Adolescents experience significant psychological and emotional changes, and the nature of their social relationships often determines their ability to cope with academic challenges (Muzaffar, 2016).

Parents act as the primary socializing agents, teachers as facilitators of knowledge, and peers as companions who shape attitudes and behaviours toward learning. When these three social dimensions work harmoniously, students tend to develop confidence, motivation, and persistence in learning tasks (Al Husaini, 2022). Parental support has been consistently associated with higher academic achievement, as it fosters motivation, discipline, and self-efficacy among students (Kapur, 2018). Similarly, teacher behaviour including encouragement, timely feedback, and respectful communication enhances students' academic engagement and performance (Sibomana et al., 2021). Peer relationships also contribute significantly; positive peer interactions promote collaborative learning and persistence, while negative peer influence can hinder academic growth (Rabgay, 2015).

Globally, researchers have highlighted that academic success depends not only on the curriculum and school infrastructure but also on the social climate surrounding the learner. For example, Rabgay, (2015) found that teacher-student relationships and parental involvement together account for over 30% of the variance in academic performance. (Muzaffar & Javaid, 2018). Similarly, Ullah and Almani (2022) emphasized that collaborative peer networks improve learning outcomes and reduce dropout rates. In developing countries like Pakistan, these factors carry additional weight because educational success is often viewed as a family and societal responsibility rather than an individual endeavour.

In Pakistan, the secondary education stage plays a decisive role in shaping students' future academic directions. However, persistent issues such as socio-economic inequality, overcrowded classrooms, and limited teacher-student interaction often restrict effective learning experiences. Within the country's collectivist social framework, parents generally hold high academic expectations for their children, yet many lack either the time or adequate educational background to provide consistent academic guidance and support (Shah & Anwar, 2022; Muzaffar, Javaid & Sohail, 2017). Similarly, the attitudes and behaviours of teachers—ranging from highly supportive to more authoritarian exert a strong influence on students' self-confidence, engagement, and participation in class. Peer influence also differs widely, as friendship groups may either foster motivation and cooperative learning or, conversely, encourage disengagement and academic neglect depending on their social and academic orientations (Khan & Malik, 2021).

Literature Review

Parental Involvement and Academic Achievement

Parental participation has long been recognized as a significant determinant of students' academic success. Research consistently indicates that parental involvement in a child's early education is positively linked to the child's academic achievement (Kapur, 2018). Children whose parents actively engage in their learning tend to perform better academically compared to those with less parental involvement. According to Atchia and Chinapah, (2023) this relationship between parental engagement and academic success has been recognized not only by researchers but also by policymakers, who have incorporated initiatives to enhance parent participation within broader educational policies (Muzaffar,

Hussain, Javaid, Khan, & Rahim, 2020). Given the evidence that early academic performance tends to remain relatively stable beyond the early elementary years it becomes crucial to identify and focus on factors that support early academic achievement and are amenable to intervention (Al Husaini, 2022).

Studies have highlighted that parent-child interactions, particularly those that are stimulating and responsive, play a significant role in a child's academic growth (Rabgay, 2015). By exploring modifiable parenting behaviours, such as parental involvement, and understanding how these behaviours affect academic outcomes, targeted programs can be developed to enhance children's learning. Although parental involvement is associated with higher academic performance, the precise pathways through which it influences a child's learning are not yet fully understood (Kapur, 2018). Gaining insight into these mechanisms would help guide future research and policy development, and could support the design of more effective interventions aimed at improving children's academic outcomes.

Teacher Support and Student Performance

Teachers represent the most direct institutional influence on learners. A teacher's enthusiasm, fairness, and instructional competence can transform classroom experiences and determine students' academic orientation. Kapur, (2018) synthesized 97 international studies and concluded that positive teacher student relationships strongly predict student motivation, persistence, and achievement. In contrast, unsupportive or punitive teacher behaviour can generate anxiety and disengagement.

Empirical studies in developing countries provide similar evidence. Farooq et al., (2011) found that teacher encouragement mediates the relationship between students' self-belief and achievement. Likewise, Ahmed and Siddiqui (2022) demonstrated that students who perceive teachers as approachable and respectful show greater participation and higher grades. In a recent Pakistani study, Rafiq et al., (2021) reported that teacher communication skills and the ability to recognize individual learning needs significantly influence academic success in secondary schools.

Teachers' emotional intelligence also plays a decisive role. According to Kumar and Rahman (2022), emotionally intelligent teachers create inclusive classrooms that enhance students' social competence and academic confidence. Moreover, constructive feedback and formative assessment have been found to sustain academic improvement more effectively than high-stakes testing (Rabgay, 2015). In environments where teacher professionalism and empathy are integrated, students not only perform better but also exhibit stronger critical-thinking skills and self-motivation. Choudhry, I. A. (Muzaffar, & Javaid, 2016) In Pakistan, large class sizes and exam-oriented curricula often limit teacher student interaction. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that even small gestures such as acknowledging effort or offering personalized guidance can have a powerful motivational impact (Farooq & Shamim, 2023). Consequently, cultivating teacher attitudes that emphasize encouragement, fairness, and collaboration remains vital for improving academic outcomes.

Teachers' behaviour is not monolithic: recent research classifies support in terms of emotional support, instructional quality, feedback, acknowledgment of individual differences, and adaptive use of technology. A study in Islamabad/Rawalpindi, The Role of Support Systems in Shaping Academic Accomplishment Kapur (2018) included not only parental and peer support but also private tutor support, indicating that outside-school teacher/tutor influence is increasingly relevant in Pakistan. Students using private tuition

often report greater motivation and better exam preparation. Another angle is how schools as organizations and their culture affect parental and teacher attitudes. *Mediating Effects of Parental Involvement on Organizational Culture and Students' Academic Performance* shows that when school environment promotes participative decision-making and innovation, parental involvement increases, which in turn improves student outcomes. This suggests that teacher attitudes (often shaped by school leadership and institutional culture) are not just individual traits but systemic.

Digital/instructional tools are also part of teacher influence. Studies like *Influence of Digital Tools on Student Engagement and Academic Outcomes* show that classes using digital tools see higher student participation and better outcomes. Teachers who adopt and integrate technology thoughtfully can amplify their influence. Instructional styles matter: clear explanation, personalized feedback, formative assessments, teachers' sensitivity to students' emotional states. Teachers who create inclusive, responsive classrooms tend to see students with higher self-esteem and resilience, which mediate the effect of teacher support on achievement. (This connects to literature on mental health and resilience.)

Peer Influence and Academic Outcomes

Peers constitute an essential part of students' social learning environment, especially during adolescence. Positive peer interactions promote collaborative learning, enhance communication skills, and contribute to improved academic outcomes (Atchia & Chinapah, 2023). Group studies and peer mentoring have been found to increase student confidence and academic persistence (Ullah & Almani, 2022). However, peer pressure and disruptive behaviours can negatively affect classroom environments and lower academic performance (Sibomana et al., 2021). Recent studies from developing countries highlight that peer encouragement significantly predicts higher achievement in examination-oriented education systems (Khan & Malik, 2021).

Peers form the third major social dimension shaping academic performance. Adolescents spend a considerable portion of their time with peers, making these relationships a critical context for learning. In Pakistan, where collectivist cultural norms emphasize group belonging, peer taking holds important importance. Khan and Malik (2021) revealed that students reinforced by academically motivated peers performed better in board inspections than those influenced by less achievement-oriented friends. Conversely, peers who dishearten studying or glorify non-academic activities contribute to decreased performance (Rashid & Jamil, 2022). Therefore, structured peer mentoring and supportive projects can channel peer inspiration toward productive academic goals.

Mental Health, Self-esteem, Resilience, Emotional Distress, and Their Mediating Roles

Academic achievement is not just a function of social support; psychological factors mediate the relationship between social influences and outcomes. Resilience and self-esteem are often overlooked but recent work in Pakistan emphasizes them. The study *Influence of Self-Esteem and Resilience on Secondary School Students' Academic Achievement* by Rabgay, (2015) shows that students with higher resilience and self-esteem tend to perform better academically, even when parental or teacher support is moderate. Emotional well-being helps to buffer stress, anxiety, and negative peer pressure. Another study, *Impact of Socio-Economic Factors on Students Academic Performance and Mental Health* Farooq et al., (2011) connects low SES with emotional distress, educational challenges, and lower academic performance. Mental health issues can moderate or mediate the effect of social factors. Thus, to understand how parental, teacher, peer

influences work, one must also look at the student's psychological state: whether they feel supported, their level of self-esteem, resilience in face of adversity, anxiety or stress.

Digital Media, Technology, and Changing Peer/Teacher/Parental Dynamics

Digital advancements are transforming the ways in which social relationships influence students' learning experiences. Parents now have the opportunity to track their children's academic progress through mobile applications, online dashboards, and instant messaging platforms. In urban areas of Pakistan, communication between schools and families increasingly occurs through WhatsApp groups and digital portals, allowing parents to remain informed about assignments and classroom activities. These tools have introduced new and more immediate forms of parental participation that were previously unavailable.

Similarly, teachers' use of blended learning methods, online assessments, and interactive digital resources has redefined traditional classroom dynamics (Fareed, et. al., 2019). Research on blended learning in Sindh, Pakistan, suggests that technology-supported environments are perceived by students as more engaging and effective, encouraging greater participation and collaboration. Peer interactions have also evolved, as many students now connect through virtual study groups, shared documents, and online feedback platforms. While such digital collaboration can enhance engagement and accelerate learning, it can also lead to potential distractions if not managed appropriately.

Also, digital overload or overuse of social media can undermine academic performance: students may get distracted, lose focus, have sleep disruption, etc. Some studies suggest media habits (time spent online social media, gaming) negatively influence academic performance and peer interactions. For example, *The Impact of Teenage Media Use on Academic Performance, Peer Influence, Interpersonal Relationships, And Personality Development* (Huang & Chen) points to negative effects from excessive social media or video game use on academic performance and interpersonal relationships. Hence, technology is both enabling and complicating social influences. It can enhance parental/teacher/peer involvement but also introduce new sources of negative peer influence, distraction, stress.

Social Capital and Educational Achievement

An emerging body of research conceptualizes parental, teacher, and peer influences as forms of social capital resources embedded in social networks that facilitate learning and achievement. According to Coleman's theory of social capital, educational success depends not only on individual talent but also on the trust, norms, and relationships surrounding the learner. Recent evidence supports this perspective. Farooq et al., (2011) argued that students with strong social ties to parents and teachers exhibit greater perseverance and problem-solving ability. Likewise, Rabgay, (2015) demonstrated that schools fostering community trust and collaboration show higher achievement rates, even when controlling for socio-economic status.

In the Pakistani context, social capital operates through family cohesion, teacher accessibility, and peer solidarity. Students embedded in supportive networks are more likely to seek help, share resources, and maintain academic discipline. However, unequal access to social capital such as limited teacher availability or parental illiteracy can perpetuate educational disparities (Al Husaini, 2022). Strengthening these social connections is therefore essential for equitable educational improvement.

From reviewing recent literature, several gaps emerge that are relevant to the present study:

- **Simultaneous modelling of all factors plus mental health:** Many studies examine parental, teacher, or peer influence separately, but fewer integrate all three along with psychological mediators like self-esteem or resilience, especially in Pakistan.
- **Longitudinal versus cross-sectional data:** Most research uses cross-sectional surveys. Longitudinal studies could reveal how social effects evolve over time (e.g., effects of teacher attitudes in early vs final years).
- **Role of digital/social media:** How digital peer networks, online parental involvement, and teacher support via technology are changing social influences – both positively and negatively is underexplored in Pakistan’s secondary/higher secondary context.
- **Gender and rural/urban differences:** Whether social influences differ depending on gender, rural or urban setting, and cultural/linguistic backgrounds.
- **Cultural norms and parental expectations:** More detailed qualitative research needed to unpack how parental expectations under different cultural settings create both support and pressure, and how students interpret these.
- **Policy and institutional culture:** How school policies, teacher training, organizational culture moderate teacher attitudes and parental engagement.

The reviewed literature demonstrates a strong and consistent association between social factors and academic performance. Parental encouragement, teacher attitudes, and peer collaboration collectively shape students’ motivation, self-concept, and persistence. However, few empirical studies in Pakistan have explored these factors simultaneously within a unified framework. The present study therefore seeks to fill this gap by analysing the combined effect of social variables on the academic achievement of higher secondary students, thereby contributing to both local and international discourse on quality education and social support mechanisms.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated:

- H0₁:** There is no significant relationship between the mean score of parents’ attitudes and academic achievement of students.
- H0₂:** There is no significant relationship between the mean score of teachers attitudes and academic achievement of students.
- H0₃:** There is no significant relationship between the mean score of class fellows’ involvements with academic achievement of students.

Theoretical Framework

This study draws upon Walberg’s Theory of Educational Productivity (1981), which posits that academic achievement results from the interplay of aptitude, instruction, and environment. The environmental dimension represented here by parental, teacher, and peer influences remains particularly relevant. Contemporary research continues to validate

Walberg's framework, emphasizing that environmental supports can amplify or constrain the effects of cognitive ability (Farooq et al., 2011). Integrating this model allows the current study to examine how students' immediate social environments contribute to variations in academic performance.

Material and Methods

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative survey design to examine the relationship between social factors parental attitudes, teacher support, and peer interactions and the academic achievement of higher secondary students. This design was appropriate for collecting standardized data from a large sample to identify patterns and correlations among the studied variables.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised students from three branches of Punjab College, Islamabad. The total population was approximately 1,900 students, from which a sample of 320 students (both first- and second-year) was selected using a simple random sampling technique based on L.R. Gay's sampling table. This ensured adequate representation across the study sites.

Research Instrument

Questionnaires were used for data collection of the study. The questions aimed at electing relevant information concerning social factors affecting academic achievement of higher secondary students. There were 34 statements in the questionnaire. The questionnaires were about parents, teachers and class fellows' attitude and its effect on academic achievement.

Data collection

Data was collected through personal visit. Questionnaires were distributed among the students randomly and the researcher collects back the questionnaire within the given time frame.

Data analysis

Collected data will be analysed through mean, percentage and Pearson's co relation method.

Results and Discussion

The analysis revealed strong positive relationships among the key variables: parental attitudes, teacher attitudes, peer involvement, and academic achievement.

Table 1
Correlation Analysis of Social Factors and Academic Achievement

Variables	N	r	p-value	Interpretation
Parental Attitude ↔ Academic Achievement	320	0.60	0.000	Significant Positive Correlation
Teacher Attitude ↔ Academic Achievement	320	0.55	0.000	Significant Positive Correlation

Peer Involvement ↔ Academic Achievement	320	0.49	0.000	Significant Positive Correlation
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These results indicate that students who receive consistent parental encouragement, teacher guidance, and peer cooperation tend to achieve higher academic results. The strongest predictor of achievement was parental attitude, followed by teacher attitude and peer involvement. Additionally, descriptive statistics showed that 85% of students agreed their parents' involvement improved their academic outcomes, and 78% believed teacher encouragement increased their performance. Furthermore, 74% of respondents highlighted that positive peer interaction and cooperative class fellows contributed to higher achievement levels.

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and Percentage Distribution

Variable	Indicators	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean Score	Interpretation
Parental Attitude	Parents monitor homework, discuss progress, and motivate.	85%	10%	5%	4.32	High parental involvement improves achievement.
Teacher Attitude	Teachers explain lessons clearly and appreciate efforts	78%	15%	7%	4.10	Teacher support enhances motivation and results.
Peer Involvement	Classmates cooperate and help in learning	74%	18%	8%	3.95	Peer collaboration improves understanding

This table outlines the descriptive statistics reflecting students' perceptions of how parental attitudes, teacher behaviours, and peer involvement influence academic achievement at the higher secondary level. The findings demonstrate a consistently high level of agreement among participants, suggesting that these social dimensions collectively exert a substantial effect on student performance. Positive peer relationships encourage teamwork, exchange of ideas, and collective problem-solving. However, a minority of students reported distractions arising from competitive or disruptive peer behaviour, suggesting that peer influence can be both constructive and challenging depending on classroom dynamics.

The overall mean score ($M=4.12$) for all social factors combined indicates that students experience a generally supportive academic environment shaped by parents, teachers, and peers. This aligns with the correlation analysis, confirming that these social variables collectively exert a strong and positive influence on academic performance. In summary, the descriptive analysis underscores that students thrive in socially cohesive environments, where parents remain involved, teachers are encouraging and responsive, and peers collaborate constructively. These findings affirm that academic achievement at the higher secondary level is a socially constructed outcome, dependent on a network of interrelated human relationships.

Table 3
Results of Hypothesis Testing (Correlation Analysis)

Variables Tested	N	r	p-value	$\alpha=0.05$	Decision	Interpretation
Parental Attitude ↔ Academic Achievement	320	0.60	0.000	$p < 0.05$	Reject H_{03}	Significant Positive Relationship
Teacher Attitude ↔ Academic Achievement	320	0.55	0.000	$p < 0.05$	Reject H_{03}	Significant Positive Relationship

Peer Involvement ↔ Academic Achievement	320	0.49	0.000	$p < 0.05$	Reject H_{03}	Significant Positive Relationship
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All correlation coefficients were positive and statistically significant at the 0.05 level, suggesting that parental, teacher, and peer influences are meaningfully and positively associated with students' academic performance. Among these, parental attitudes had the most pronounced effect, highlighting the importance of family support in fostering educational success.

Discussion

Parental Attitudes and Academic Achievement

Parental attitude presented the sturdiest association with hypothetical presentation ($r=0.60$), representative that provision, reassurance, and lively participation from paternities can significantly advance students' results. This is steady with Al Husaini (2022), who found that pupils with involved paternities are more interested and tend to accomplish higher examination scores. Similarly, Choi et al. (2021) reported that parent contribution in educational events improves students' goal-setting capabilities and perseverance in learning. In the context of Pakistan's communist culture, parental assignation is especially significant, as it positively affects students' confidence and educational ambitions (Shah & Anwar, 2022)

Teacher Attitudes and Student Engagement

Teacher insolences were also completely correlated ($r=0.55$) with academic attainment, strengthening the knowledge that educator provision, admiration, and reaction play essential roles in pupil education. Scholars who apparent their teachers as amicable and obliging stated higher academic inspiration and improved presentation. These answers are reliable with (Sibomana et al., 2021) who established that optimistic educator-student associations improve appointment and decrease dropout propensities. Likewise, Demir and Akman (2020) originate that teacher direction intercedes the association between self-efficacy and achievement. In this study, students' gratitude for teachers' inspiration suggests that expressive support accompaniments cognitive training, especially at the teenage stage.

Peer Influence on Learning

Peer involvement demonstrated a moderate yet significant correlation ($r=0.49$) with academic performance. Students highlighted that cooperative classmate, group studies, and peer encouragement enhanced their confidence and academic outcomes. This resonates with Atchia & Chinapah (2023) who emphasized that peers shape motivation and effort through social learning processes. However, the findings also revealed that negative peer behaviours, such as classroom disruptions, hindered academic focus echoing (Kapur, 2018). Thus, while peers can serve as positive role models, excessive peer pressure may have the opposite effect.

Integrative Perspective

Collectively, the findings support Walberg's Theory of Educational Productivity (1981), reaffirmed by Farooq et al., (2011) which highlights environmental factors home, school, and peer networks as key determinants of learning. The results underscore that academic success is not solely dependent on individual effort or cognitive ability but also

on the quality of social relationships that students experience in their academic environment.

Conclusion

The study concludes that social factors significantly affect students' academic achievement at the higher secondary level. Parental attitudes emerged as the most influential factor, followed by teacher attitudes and peer involvement. The findings indicate that a supportive home environment, motivated teachers, and cooperative peers contribute collectively to students' academic success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Parental Engagement Programs:** Schools should organize workshops to guide parents on effective communication and motivation strategies to enhance student achievement.
- **Teacher Professional Development:** Teachers should be trained in student-centered pedagogy, emotional intelligence, and inclusive classroom practices to strengthen teacher-student relationships.
- **Peer Mentorship Initiatives:** Institutions should promote peer tutoring and group learning to foster collaboration and reduce academic anxiety.
- **Home-School Collaboration:** A continuous feedback system between parents and teachers can ensure consistent monitoring of students' academic progress.
- **Policy Implementation:** Education policymakers should recognize social factors as vital components of school quality and include them in teacher appraisal and curriculum development frameworks.

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