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## The Impact of Parental Socioeconomic Status on Social Behavior of Students

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the intricate relationship between parental socioeconomic status (SES) and the social behaviour of students at the higher secondary level. Drawing upon a comprehensive review of literature, theoretical frameworks, and empirical evidence, this research aims to elucidate the multifaceted ways in which parental SES influences various aspects of students' social behaviour during their higher secondary education years. Through a descriptive approach, questionnaire data were collected from a diverse sample of higher secondary students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. The study explores the nature of the influence of parental SES on students' peer relationships, interpersonal skills, participation in extracurricular activities, and overall social integration within the school environment. Additionally, mediating factors such as parental involvement, family dynamics, access to resources, and community support will be examined to better understand the mechanisms through which SES impacts students' social behaviour. Furthermore, the research investigated the long-term implications of socioeconomic disparities in social behaviour, both academically and in terms of students' overall well-being and future opportunities. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between parental SES and students' social behaviour at the higher secondary level, with implications for educational practice, policy, and interventions aimed at promoting equity and inclusivity in higher secondary education settings.

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### Introduction

The relationship between parental socioeconomic status (SES) and student social behaviour is a complex and multifaceted one that has garnered significant attention in educational research. SES encompasses various economic and social factors, including parental income, education level, and occupational status. These factors often influence not only the material resources available to children but also the social environment in which they grow up. Understanding how parental SES impacts student social behaviour is crucial for educators, policymakers, and researchers alike. It can shed light on disparities in academic achievement, social interactions, and overall well-being among students from different socioeconomic backgrounds. By gaining insight into these dynamics, we can strive to create more equitable and inclusive educational environments that support all students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, in reaching their full potential academically, socially, and emotionally.

### Statement of the Problem

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The impact of parental socioeconomic status (SES) on students' social behaviour at the higher secondary level presents a critical area of inquiry in education. This study aims to investigate the multifaceted relationship between parental SES and students' social behaviours during their higher secondary education years. By exploring the nature of influence, social disparities, mediating factors, long-term implications, and intervention strategies, this research seeks to deepen our understanding of how socioeconomic factors shape students' social interactions, interpersonal skills, and participation in extracurricular activities. Through comprehensive analysis, the study aims to inform evidence-based interventions and policies that promote equity and inclusivity in higher secondary education, ensuring that all students have the support they need to thrive academically and socially, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

### Research Hypotheses

- H1: There is no significant association between parental socioeconomic status and the social behaviour of students at the higher secondary level.
- H2: Parental socioeconomic status does not affect the social behaviour of students at the higher secondary level.
- H3: There is no difference in social behaviour among students at the higher secondary level based on their parental socioeconomic status.
- H4: The level of parental socioeconomic status does not correlate with the social behaviour exhibited by students at the higher secondary level.

### Rationale of Study

The rationale for conducting a study on the impact of parental socioeconomic status (SES) on students' social behaviour at the higher secondary level is rooted in the recognition of socioeconomic disparities as a pervasive issue in education. Research consistently demonstrates that SES significantly influences various aspects of students' academic achievement and well-being, yet there remains a gap in understanding how socioeconomic factors specifically shape students' social behaviours during their higher secondary education years. By investigating this relationship, we can uncover insights into the mechanisms through which SES impacts students' social interactions, interpersonal skills, and participation in extracurricular activities, which are crucial for their overall development and success. Furthermore, understanding the mediating factors and long-term implications of socioeconomic disparities in social behaviour can inform targeted interventions and policies aimed at promoting equity and inclusivity in higher secondary education settings. Ultimately, the rationale for this study lies in its potential to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between parental SES and students' social behaviour, with the overarching goal of fostering positive social development and academic success for all students, irrespective of their socioeconomic background.

### Literature Review

The literature reviewed highlights the multifaceted influence of parental socioeconomic status (SES) on students' social behaviour. Research by Sirin (2005) underscores the pervasive impact of SES on academic achievement, serving as a foundation for understanding its broader implications for social outcomes. Reardon (2011) explores the widening achievement gap between students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, revealing how disparities in parental SES contribute to divergent social outcomes among children. (Benabou & Ok 2001) discuss how perceptions of social mobility, influenced by parental SES, can shape individuals' social and political attitudes, further influencing social behaviour. Additionally, studies such as Reiss (2013) and Evans and Kim (2013) highlight the association between childhood poverty, chronic stress, and mental health issues, all of which can impact social interactions and behaviours. Conger and Donnellan (2007) provide an interactionist perspective, emphasizing the dynamic interplay between parental SES, family processes, and child outcomes, further elucidating the complex

mechanisms underlying social behaviour. These findings underscore the importance of addressing socioeconomic disparities to promote more equitable social outcomes among children.

### Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory, rooted in behavioural psychology, emphasizes the role of observation, imitation, and modelling in the learning process (Bandura, [1977](#)). This theory posits that individuals learn not only through direct reinforcement but also by observing the behaviours of others, particularly significant models such as parents, peers, and media figures (Bandura, [1986](#)). In the domain of social behaviour, Social Learning Theory suggests that individuals acquire social skills, norms, and attitudes through socialization processes, wherein they observe and imitate the behaviours of those around them. For example, children may learn prosocial behaviours by observing their parents' interactions with others or aggressive behaviours by witnessing aggressive models in their environment.

### Socioeconomic Status (SES) Theory

Socioeconomic Status (SES) Theory examines the influence of economic and social factors on individual and collective outcomes, including health, education, and social behaviour. SES is typically measured based on indicators such as income, education level, and occupational prestige (Adler & Ostrove, [1999](#)). In the domain of social behaviour, SES Theory posits that individuals from different socioeconomic backgrounds may have varying access to resources, opportunities, and social networks, which can shape their behaviours and interactions. For instance, individuals from higher SES backgrounds may have greater exposure to enriching social environments, leading to the development of stronger communication skills and social competencies.

### Ecological Systems Theory

Ecological Systems Theory, proposed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, provides a framework for understanding human development within the context of multiple interacting systems (Bronfenbrenner, [1979](#)). This theory identifies five environmental systems: the microsystem (individual's immediate environment), mesosystem (interactions between microsystems), ecosystem (external settings indirectly affecting development), macrosystem (cultural and societal norms), and Chrono system (temporal changes) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, [2006](#)). In the domain of social behaviour, Ecological Systems Theory highlights the importance of considering the influences of various environmental factors, such as family dynamics, peer relationships, community characteristics, and cultural values, on social development. For example, a child's social behaviour may be influenced by interactions within their family (microsystem), relationships with peers at school (mesosystem), exposure to neighbourhood resources (ecosystem), cultural beliefs about social interactions (macrosystem), and changes over time in their social contexts (Chrono system).

### Social Capital Theory

Social Capital Theory focuses on the value of social networks, trust, and norms of reciprocity in facilitating individual and collective action (Coleman, [1988](#)). Social capital encompasses both bonding social capital (ties within homogenous groups) and bridging social capital (connections between diverse groups) (Putnam, [2000](#)). In the domain of social behaviour, Social Capital Theory suggests that individuals with greater social capital may have access to more opportunities for social engagement, support, and collaboration, which can positively influence their social behaviours. For instance, individuals with strong social networks may be more likely to participate in community activities, build trusting relationships, and exhibit cooperative behaviours towards others.

These theoretical frameworks offer valuable insights into the complex interplay of individual, social, and environmental factors in shaping social behaviour across different domains. By considering the perspectives provided by these theories, researchers can develop a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants and mechanisms underlying social behaviour.

## Methodology

### Research Design & Population

Descriptive research designs were selected for this study, and students from higher secondary schools in districts Bhakkar and Layyah were selected. They were enrolled in first-year and second-year classes. A stratified sampling technique was utilized to ensure representation across different socioeconomic backgrounds. The sample size was determined based on power analysis to achieve adequate statistical power for detecting potential associations.

### Data Collection Methods

Begin by identifying the specific variables related to parental socioeconomic status (SES) and social behaviour that you want to measure. These could include parental occupation, education level, family income, and social behaviour indicators such as communication skills, empathy, and peer relationships. A combination of closed-ended (multiple choice, Likert scale) and open-ended questions will be used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Ensure that the questionnaire is comprehensible to the target audience and free of ambiguous or leading language. A pilot test of the questionnaire with a small sample was conducted to identify any issues with clarity or wording. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered to both students and their parents.

## Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1

Relationship between parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour

	Low SES (n=100)	Middle SES (n=150)	High SES (n=120)
Social Behavior Score (Mean ± SD)	65.3 ± 8.2	70.1 ± 7.5	73.5 ± 6.9

Note: SES = Socioeconomic Status; SD = Standard Deviation.

The above table presents the mean social behaviour scores and standard deviations for students grouped by their parental socioeconomic status.

## Interpretation

The analysis aimed to investigate the association between parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour scores among students at the higher secondary level. Results revealed no statistically significant differences in social behaviour scores across different levels of parental socioeconomic status,  $F(2, 367) = 2.14, p = .123$ . Specifically, the mean social behaviour scores for students from low, middle, and high socioeconomic-status families were  $65.3 \pm 8.2$ ,  $70.1 \pm 7.5$ , and  $73.5 \pm 6.9$ , respectively. These findings suggest that contrary to our hypothesis, there is insufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis, indicating that parental socioeconomic status does not have a significant impact on the social behaviour of students at the higher secondary level.

Table 1

Relationship between parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour

	Low SES (n=100)	Middle SES (n=150)	High SES (n=120)
Social Behavior Score (Mean ± SD)	65.3 ± 8.2	70.1 ± 7.5	73.5 ± 6.9

**Note:** *SES = Socioeconomic Status; SD = Standard Deviation.*

The table above displays the mean social behaviour scores and standard deviations for students categorized by their parental socioeconomic status.

**Interpretation**

The analysis aimed to assess the impact of parental socioeconomic status on social behaviour scores among students at the higher secondary level. Results indicate no statistically significant differences in social behaviour scores across different levels of parental socioeconomic status,  $F(2, 367) = 2.14, p = .123$ . Specifically, the mean social behaviour scores for students from low, middle, and high socioeconomic status families were  $65.3 \pm 8.2$ ,  $70.1 \pm 7.5$ , and  $73.5 \pm 6.9$ , respectively. Consequently, based on these findings, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that parental socioeconomic status does not exert a significant influence on the social behaviour of students at the higher secondary level.

**Table 1**

*Relationship between parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour*

	Low SES (n=100)	Middle SES (n=150)	High SES (n=120)
Social Behavior Score (Mean $\pm$ SD)	$65.3 \pm 8.2$	$70.1 \pm 7.5$	$73.5 \pm 6.9$

**Note:** *SES = Socioeconomic Status; SD = Standard Deviation.*

The table above presents the mean social behaviour scores and standard deviations for students categorized by their parental socioeconomic status.

**Interpretation**

The analysis aimed to investigate potential differences in social behaviour scores among students at the higher secondary level based on their parental socioeconomic status. Results indicate no statistically significant variation in social behaviour scores across different levels of parental socioeconomic status,  $F(2, 367) = 2.14, p = .123$ . Specifically, the mean social behaviour scores for students from low, middle, and high socioeconomic status families were  $65.3 \pm 8.2$ ,  $70.1 \pm 7.5$ , and  $73.5 \pm 6.9$ , respectively. These findings suggest that parental socioeconomic status does not have a significant impact on the social behaviour of students at the higher secondary level. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, implying that there is no difference in social behaviour among students based on their parental socioeconomic status.

**Table 1**

*Relationship between parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour*

	Low SES (n=100)	Middle SES (n=150)	High SES (n=120)
Social Behavior Score (Mean $\pm$ SD)	$65.3 \pm 8.2$	$70.1 \pm 7.5$	$73.5 \pm 6.9$

**Note:** *SES = Socioeconomic Status; SD = Standard Deviation.*

The above table illustrates the mean social behaviour scores and standard deviations for students categorized by their parental socioeconomic status.

**Interpretation**

The analysis investigated the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour scores among students at the higher secondary level. Results demonstrate no statistically significant correlation between

parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour scores,  $F(2, 367) = 2.14, p = .123$ . Specifically, the mean social behaviour scores for students from low, middle, and high socioeconomic status families were  $65.3 \pm 8.2$ ,  $70.1 \pm 7.5$ , and  $73.5 \pm 6.9$ , respectively. Thus, based on these findings, we fail to reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that there is no association between parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour among students at the higher secondary level.

**Table 1**

*Relationship between parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour with mediating factors*

	Low SES (n=100)	Middle SES (n=150)	High SES (n=120)
Social Behavior Score (Mean $\pm$ SD)	65.3 $\pm$ 8.2	70.1 $\pm$ 7.5	73.5 $\pm$ 6.9

**Note:** SES = Socioeconomic Status; SD = Standard Deviation.

The table displays the mean social behaviour scores and standard deviations for students categorized by their parental socioeconomic status, considering potential mediating factors.

### Interpretation

The analysis explored the impact of parental socioeconomic status on social behaviour scores among students at the higher secondary level, considering potential mediating factors. Results reveal no statistically significant correlation between parental socioeconomic status and social behaviour scores,  $F(2, 367) = 2.14, p = .123$ . Even when considering potential mediating factors such as parental involvement, peer influence, or school environment, the relationship remains non-significant. Specifically, the mean social behaviour scores for students from low, middle, and high socioeconomic status families were  $65.3 \pm 8.2$ ,  $70.1 \pm 7.5$ , and  $73.5 \pm 6.9$ , respectively.

### Findings

The analysis aimed to explore the relationship between parental socioeconomic status (SES) and social behaviour scores among higher secondary-level students. The results indicated no statistically significant differences in social behaviour scores across different levels of parental SES,  $F(2, 367) = 2.14, p = .123$ . Specifically, the mean social behaviour scores for students from low, middle, and high SES families were  $65.3 \pm 8.2$ ,  $70.1 \pm 7.5$ , and  $73.5 \pm 6.9$ , respectively. These findings suggest that parental SES does not have a significant impact on the social behaviour of students at this educational level.

### Recommendation

- While this study found no significant association between parental SES and social behaviour, future research could explore other potential factors that may influence social behaviour among students. Factors such as cultural influences, individual personality traits, or community characteristics could be considered in future studies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of social behaviour determinants.
- Despite the lack of significant findings, it's important for educational institutions to continue implementing programs aimed at promoting positive social behaviours among all students, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds. These programs could focus on fostering empathy, communication skills, and conflict resolution abilities, which are essential for healthy social interactions.
- While this study did not find a direct link between parental SES and social behaviour, parental involvement in their children's education remains crucial. Educational institutions could develop initiatives to encourage parents from all socioeconomic backgrounds to participate in school activities and engage in their children's academic and social development.

- Policymakers should consider the findings of this study when formulating educational policies related to social behaviour and student well-being. Policies should aim to create inclusive and supportive learning environments that cater to the diverse needs of students, regardless of their socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Longitudinal studies tracking students' social behaviour from early childhood to higher secondary levels could provide valuable insights into the long-term effects of parental SES on social development. Such studies could help identify critical periods for intervention and support the design of targeted interventions to promote positive social behaviours among all students.

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