

## **PARENT'S CULTURAL CAPITAL AND ITS EFFECTS ON CHILDREN ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

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Academic performance is the functioning of students at school. A high quality functioning leads to educational success and contribute in rising the literacy rate of the country. Pakistan with a literacy rate of 52 percent is ranked very lower globally. Pakistan is ranked at 136<sup>th</sup> position in global human development index. This study has identified the role of cultural capital in the way of educational attainment. The main objective was to assess the effects of cultural capital on academic performance of students. A cross sectional study was conducted in the rural and urban areas of district Faisalabad and Lahore. A random sample of 600 students was taken to assess the research objectives. Mother's education, parent's interest in the academic activities of their children, reading activities of both parent and children were found highly significant in explaining dependent variable, which is academic performance of children. It is suggested that a focus should be given on female education at governmental level. Media campaigns should be launched to motivate parents regarding taking interest in their children education. Emphasis on early child hood education by Government is also recommended so that the pre requisites of schools can be learned and the cultural difference between home and school environment can be filled.

**Keywords:** Cultural Capital, Academic performance, Parent involvement

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Academic performance is described as functioning of students in school. When children performed well and pass every level of their educational career, they succeed academically. Thus educational attainment depends upon academic performance. Education plays an important role in the socio economic development of a country. It builds up the human capabilities, bring into use the human potential and speed up the process of economic growth which benefit individual in particular and country in general. It is one of the important indicators of Human Development index. Pakistan is ranked at 136<sup>th</sup> position in global human development index which is very low in position. About two decades ago, Pakistan had only 34 percent literacy rate. Population Census 1972 and 1981 data shows that in the 1960s and 1970s, literacy rate improved by 0.5 percent per annum. However, the 1998 Census revealed a growth rate of 1.07 percent per annum during 1981 to 1998 when the literacy rate of population rose from 26.2 percent to 43.9 percent. Adult literacy rate (age 15 and above) has also increased from 50 percent in 2004-05 to 52 percent in 2006-07. Being a developing country Pakistan is passing through the stage of transition. The change is

obvious in last decades but to compete at global level and to meet the international standards the process of change must be faster then ever so that Pakistan can become an effective member of the global society. At this time of transition, the most important role is the role of educational institution. There is a dire need to accelerate the process of education in the country and to remove all the hurdles which slower down the process of educational attainment. Pakistan is a country with cultural diversity; most of the people reside in rural areas with minimum exposure. The environment of home some time is not compatible with the environment of educational institutions. This unfamiliarity with the environment of educational system is one of the hindrances students face in their way of academic achievement. It is a sociological concept which was first articulated by Pierre Bordieu, a French sociologist. Cultural capital is the knowledge, experience or connection one has had through the course of his life and that enables him to succeed. Cultural capital is defined as different forms of knowledge, skills, and acquaintances of education, expectations and any privilege which rank a person high in the society. These are mainly the parents which provide cultural capital to their children. This capital is mainly provided by the parents, which includes

attitudes and knowledge, makes educational system harmonious to the children so they can succeed easily. Bordieu and Passeron (1977) gave an academic standard definition of cultural capital as competence of linguistics, previous academic culture, and attitudes towards school, manners and personal style. As far as parents' Cultural capital is concerned, it is viewed in different ways in previous researches. Sullivan (2001) measures the parents' stock of cultural capital by the quantity of beaux art object or participation in cultural activities. Eitle and Eitle (2002) operationalized stock of parents' cultural capital by educational resources at home. De Graaf, De Graaf, and Kraaykamp (2000) defined Cultural Capital as "widely shared high status cultural signals (behaviors, tastes, and attitudes)" and operationalized it as parental cultural capital and beaux arts (museum, music and dance performances, plays) and said that children who have more Cultural Capital feel more comfortable in school, communicate with teachers easily and do well in school. Existing study aimed to assess the effects of cultural capital on academic performance of students as well as to explore whether this capital passed down from parents to children.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was designed to assess the cultural capital and its effect on academic performance of the students. A cross sectional survey carried out to explore the research objectives. Study was carried out from two randomly selected districts of province Punjab. From each district, three urban and three rural localities were selected. From each locality two schools were selected. From each school 25 respondents were selected randomly and a data of 600 respondents was collected. A questionnaire consisting of open-ended and close ended questions was prepared in the light of research objectives. Pre testing of the questionnaire with 10 respondents was conducted to examine the workability and suitability of the questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the data. Inferential statistics were carried out to examine the association between independent and dependent variables. Multivariate analysis was carried out to identify relative importance of independent variable in explaining dependent variable.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Education and Academic Performance

Education is an important sociological indicator. Education gives rise to the consciousness, responsive-

ness, forbearance, lenience, self-worth and confidence, which make people powerful to shield their rights. Benefits of this achievement are not only cramped to the people but it also gives fruit to the national economy. It is an important determinant of the status of an individual.

Data show that 10.7 percent fathers were illiterate, 26.2 percent were up to primary level. 30.5 percent were from middle to matric and 32.6 percent were above matric. According to Pakistan Social and Living Measurement (PSLM) Survey data (2006-07), the overall literacy rate (age 10 years and above) is 55 percent (67 percent for male and 42 percent for female) and there were 69 percent males and 49 percent females who ever attended school. Parent's education plays an important role in the academic achievements of their children. Low educational level of parents or any of the parents affect the academic activities of children which in turn affect the academic achievement of children. Data show that 23.3 percent mothers were illiterate whereas 10.7 percent fathers were illiterate, 33.7 percent mothers had acquired education up to primary, 21.3 percent were up to middle and metric only 21.7 percent were above metric. According to the data 32.7 percent fathers were above matric. Comparison of mothers and fathers education shows the gender disparity in the educational achievements in Pakistani society. A good deal of research emphasized mother's involvement in academic activities of children. Mother's educational level makes this involvement effective.

Table 2 and Table 3 indicate Pearson's Chi-square values of 329.018 and 225.605 which show a highly significant association between education of mothers, fathers and the grades of students, respectively. Gamma values are also showing a positive relationship between parent's education and grades of children. Data showed that 107 children who acquired good grades had mothers with the education above matric. On the whole, there were 140 respondents whose mothers were illiterate among those 140 only 1.4 percent took good grades. Bradley and Crowyn (2002) reviewed a number of studies reporting a link between low level of parental education and lower levels of school achievements in children. Zappala and Parker (2000) found that even with in the low socioeconomic group parents' educational level was strongly associated with student academic outcome. Parental educational factors affect parenting and thus children academic outcome.

**Table 1. Distribution of respondent's parents according to their educational level**

Education of Parents	Fathers		Mothers	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	64	10.7	140	23.3
Up to primary	157	26.2	202	33.7
Middle to Matric	183	30.5	128	21.3
Above Matric	196	32.6	130	21.7
Total	600	100.0	600	100.0
Mean value	8.31		6.23	
Std. Deviation	5.10		5.26	

**Table 2. Bivariate Analysis showing the relationship between mother education and children academic performance**

Grades of children	Mother's education				Total
	Illiterate	Up to primary	Middle to Matric	Above Matric	
Poor	107	46	52	5	210
Medium	31	114	47	18	210
Good	2	42	29	107	180
Total	140	202	128	130	600

Chi Square 329.018, significance level=0.000, Gamma 0.662

**Table 3. Bivariate Analysis showing the relationship between father education and children academic performance**

Grades of children	Father's education				Total
	Illiterate	Up to primary	Middle to Matric	Above Matric	
Poor	45	30	97	38	210
Medium	13	93	70	34	210
Good	6	34	16	124	180
Total	64	157	183	196	600

Chi Square 225.605, significance level=0.000, Gammas 0.374

**Table 4. Distribution of respondent's parents according to their visit to school**

Parents	Never		Occasionally		Monthly		Weekly		Total	
	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age	Freq.	%age
Father	286	47.7	199	33.2	98	16.3	17	2.8	600	100.0
Mother	296	49.3	137	22.8	158	26.3	9	1.6	600	100.0

**Table 5. Bivariate Analysis for showing the relationship between parent visit to school and children academic performance**

Grades of children	Parent's visit			Total
	Rare	Sometime	Frequent	
Poor	92	111	7	210
Medium	50	99	61	210
Good	21	57	102	180
Total	163	267	170	600

Chi Square 145.849, significance level=0.000, Gammas 0.374

**Table 6. Distribution of respondent's parents involvement in their studies**

Parents	Never		Sometimes		Often		Total		$\bar{X}$	S.D.
	F.	%age	F.	%age	F.	%age	F.	%age		
Father	63	10.5	279	46.5	258	43.0	600	100.0	2.32	.66
Mother	66	11.0	149	24.8	385	64.2	600	100.0	2.53	.69

**Table 7. Bivariate Analysis showing the relationship between parent involvement and children academic performance**

Grades of children	Parent interaction			Total
	Poor	Medium	Good	
Poor	126	74	10	210
Medium	71	103	36	210
Good	32	95	53	180
Total	229	272	99	600
Chi Square 90.307, Significance level=0.000, Gamma 0.521				

### Parent Visit to school and Academic Performance

Parents visit to school is an important indicator of parent's interest in the academic activities of their children. These visits bridge the gap between the environment of home and school. Coleman (1988) expressed social capital as a mean by which parents can improve the educational performance of their children. Social capital is acquired through school visits. These visits to schools give information about the activities of school such as upcoming school events and activities. These visits impart skills to parents about parenting and tips for children's school and home work. Parents visit to school promote social control by an agreement between school and home about expectation from children and educational values.

The aspect of school visit was found weak in the existing data as 47.7 percent fathers and 49.3 percent mothers never visited school. About 16.3 percent fathers monthly and 33.2 percent fathers occasionally visited the school. In case of mothers 26.3 percent mothers monthly and 22.8 percent mothers occasionally visited the school.

A significant association was found between parent visit to school and grades acquired by the children with the value of chi-square 145.84. Gamma value was also showing a positive relationship between parent visit to the school and grades of students. Parents who gave frequent visits to their children's school enjoy good grades of their children as compare to the parents who rarely visit their children school. Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994) discussed three different dimensions of parental involvement as behavioral, personal and intellectual involvement. Behavioral involvement is attending school activities and visiting schools, personal involvement is judged by children's positive feeling which is conveyed by the parents by participating and interacting in all aspects of schooling, cognitive involvement is giving child a learning stimulating environment. Hill and Craft (2003) found

that the parents who are involved in the schools or visit school regularly value the education of their children and it is associated with the higher teacher's ratings of student's academic achievements.

### Parent Involvement in Studies of children and Academic Performance

Parent involvement in the studies of their children is an important determinant of their children's performance at school. Emon (2002) found that parental involvement in educational affairs of their children plays a mediating role between poverty, race, ethnicity and academic achievements of children. Parent involvement in the studies of children reduces the achievement gap.

In the present data, mothers seemed more involved in their children's academic activities. 43 percent fathers often showed their involvement in the studies of their children and 64.2 percent mothers often involved in their children academic activities.

Parent interaction was also found significantly associated with the grades of students. Both variables had a positive type of relationship as well. Among the 229 children whose parents had a poor interaction with them only 14 percent were able to take good grades on the other hand among 99 children whose parents had good interaction 35.5 percent students were taking good grades. Parent involvement has been shown to be positively related to children's educational performance (Barnard, 2004; Feuerstein, 2000; Jeynes, 2003).

### CONCLUSION

Cultural capital is found an important indicator in explaining academic performance of children. It is found in the study that congruence between the child habits (dispositions) and field (school) is important for good academic performance. Parents play a very crucial role in building and maintaining this similarity

between home and school environment. The wider the gap between home and school environment the poorer will be the performance. Cultural capital possessed by the parents, transferred to their children helps their adjustment in school.

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