

## **A Study of Effects of Psycho-Social Elements on the Students' Academic Achievement at Secondary Level in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this research paper was based on to analyze the effects of six (06) psycho-social elements on academic achievement of students in grade 9<sup>th</sup>. The present study used mix method research design to collect data. Self-developed students' psycho-social elements questionnaire (Cronbach alpha 0.73) was used for data collection. The tool was based on six major psycho-social elements. The sample was consisted on 798 urban area boys and girls students from secondary schools (SSC). The sample was choosen by using systematic simple random sampling technique. Additionally, for qualitative analysis, twenty two (22) parents were selected by using convenience sampling technique. The quantitative data was analyzed by using multiple regression analysis technique while thematic appreciation method was used to analyze qualitative data. The results of the study showed that psycho-social elements such as students' life skills development (students' constructive and critical approach, learning environment of classroom, control over educational stress and emotions), health risk behaviors (unbalanced furniture of classroom, students' bad health by using unhygienic things and corporal punishment by the teachers), drug abuse (uses of drugs and drug addiction), self-esteem (students' capabilities and distinct qualities of learning), family adjustment (parents' encouragement and helps in learning) and academic anxiety affected students' academic achievement in grade 9<sup>th</sup>. Similarly, qualitative data results showed that parents' illiteracy, poorness, no proper time given to children at home, students' domestic responsibilities, academic anxiety, students' worries about educational objectives, class fellows competitions, tough course of the study, examination phobia, helplessness in educational achievement, students' inferiority complex and difficulties in study significantly affected students' educational attainment in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. In conclusion, quantitative and qualitative results confirmed that students' academic anxiety, drug abuse and health risk behaviors affected academic achievement negatively while students' self-esteem, life skills development and family adjustment had positive effects on students' learning.*

**Keywords:** Effects, psycho-social elements, anxiety, students' academic achievement, secondary level, Pakistan.

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## **Introduction**

Psycho-social is a combination of two words: psychological and social in which psychological means attitude, thoughts, spirits and feelings of person's life while social are the relationship between individuals and social environment. Psycho-social discusses individual's mental improvements in an association with a social situation (Fong & Asera, 2010). The features of psycho-social describe the effects of social relations on person's psychological attainment and well-being. Hayward (2012) was the man who invented psycho-social field and he explained the link between psychological and social elements. Historically, Erickson (1984) gave the concept of psycho-social in his theory of social development. Erikson's theory of psycho-social improvement is exceptionally important and significant in human development (Franz & White, 1985). It expresses that psycho-social elements essentially influence human behavior (Ochse & Plug, 1986). This approach looks at individuals in the framework of combined effects of psychological elements and integrating social condition on their physical and emotional well-being and their ability to work (Casillas et al., 2012). It describes psychological and social techniques that occur among people or group of people. A few psychological and social perspectives may influence individual's lives (Bouffard, Boisvert, Vezeau, & Larouche, 1995). In addition, psycho-social assessment is an evaluation of an individual's mental well-being and social prosperity.

Moreover, it was the fact that the progress of nations depends upon students' academic achievement and improvement. The advancement of any nation is directly linked to students' educational accomplishment (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). In addition, students' academic achievement takes responsibility in upbringing qualitative personnel who will strengthen the nation in an appropriate way (Ali et al., 2009). That is the reason, each country emphasizes on students' academic achievement. Similarly, education is an integral element in upgrading financial development, decreasing poverty, improving private incomes, constructing viable economy, empowering individuals and promoting a healthy environment (Afzal et al., 2010). Essentially, education is a main element for economical, political, social and moral development of nations (Mahmood, Zahid, & Muhammad, 1999). Likewise, progress in students' educational attainment is directly related to psycho-social elements. Similarly, Durlak et al. (2011) defined the requirement of psycho-social abilities in learning programs to increase students' educational success.

The prior studies showed that there are numerous elements that affect students' learning at school level (Coles, 1970; Jeynes, 2003). Some researchers had investigated the associations between different psycho-social elements and educational learning. The researcher realized that it was extremely needed to find some specific additional psycho-social elements which will help to investigate the impacts of psycho-social elements on students' educational accomplishment. The identification of additional elements will help the students to enhance their educational learning. These elements

will provide information about necessities and difficulties of students' learning in secondary schools (SSC). It is predictable that additional psycho-social elements will assist and support students and teachers in their efforts to enhance students' educational attainment. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct this important study to see the effects of six (06) psycho-social elements on students' educational achievement at secondary level.

### *Statement of the Problem*

Most of the students received their secondary level education during teenage years in our country. This education is a basic necessity and extremely needed for every individual. It provides base and eligibility to attain further higher education. In addition, students face many difficulties for getting secondary level education. It has been observed that some elements such as locus of control, self-efficacy, attitude towards learning, depression, motivation and stress affect students' learning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Some other psycho-social elements may also influence students' academic achievement. In this regard, the study was designed to observe the effects of psycho-social elements on students' educational success at SSC level.

### *Objective*

The main focus of the present research study was to analyze the effects of six (06) psycho-social elements on students' educational attainment in grade 9<sup>th</sup> at secondary level.

### *Research Question*

What are the effects of six (06) psycho-social elements on students' educational attainment in grade 9<sup>th</sup>?

### **Significance**

The results of this present research may be helpful to identify students' basic necessities, difficulties and hurdles in their learning. It was also noted that psycho-social elements were directly linked with academic achievement of SSC students. Therefore, these results may be helpful for teachers, head teachers and parents to control these psycho-social elements for the better results of these students in their future life and academic achievement. Moreover, the study may also be helpful for educational program managers to enhance their knowledge about the prevalence of psycho-social elements and their influences on students' educational success. Additionally, the current study may be valuable for those teachers who are facing difficulties in their professional career.

### **Literature Review**

Psycho-social elements play key roles in students' learning at secondary level. Various studies have been discussed the influences of psycho-social elements on students' educational attainment. Hence, the results of few studies have been discussed in the review of the literature section. Therefore, Kolo, Jaafar, and Ahmad (2017) state

that two psycho-social elements had considerable impacts on students' education. Similarly, Kuo (2011) have described about the influences of psycho-social elements on classroom achievement of high school students. He described that motivation and social control considerably affected specifically female school students. Furthermore, Higgins (2011) shows positive relationships among family resources, parental involvement and academic achievement while negative correlation was found between family rules and academic attainment. Likewise, some additional psycho-social elements were identified and included in literature review.

Firstly, life skills development as psycho-social element was identified by the researcher. Life skills are adaptive and positive psycho-social capabilities to make individuals to deal positively with the demands and challenges of everyday life (World Health Organization, 2000). The relationship between life skills development and educational attainment was introduced by Lindsey and Mabie (2012) in which they state that life skills improve students' educational performance. Similarly, Currie et al. (2012) show significant effects of health care skills and physical fitness on high school students' educational attainment. In addition, a research study conducted by Amirian (2012) found that self-awareness, teaching with problem solving techniques and coping with stress skills significantly affected students' educational success. Similarly, Prajina and Prem Singh (2015) found considerable positive link between life skills and students' educational accomplishment. Further, Rasnack (2011) found no considerable relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of athletes students. Similarly, Ayaz and Sekerci (2015) determine positive impacts of students' constructivist knowledge on their educational attainment.

Secondly, students' health risk behavior was recognized as psycho-social element. The links between health risk behaviors and educational success of secondary school students were described by Rasberry (2017) in the United States. The results of his study reveal significant relationships among substance use, physical inactivity, violence-related attitudes, sedentary behaviors, suicide based behaviors, sexual risk behaviors, dietary behaviors and academic outcomes. Similarly, Bradley and Greene (2013) prove inverse relationship between health risk behaviors (insufficient physical activity, sensual activities, drug abuse, unnatural dietetic behaviors and smoking), academic attainment. In addition, Busch et al. (2014) state that healthy students perform better in academics while smoking and drug abuse negatively affected students' educational attainment. Moreover, Eisenberg, Golberstein, and Hunt (2009) describe that depression and anxiety contributed the cause of students' lower academic achievement and directly related to students' dropout from schools. These findings showed negative association between health risks and students' academic achievement.

In addition, students' drug abuse was used in the study as third psycho-social element. The relationship between drug abuse and academic achievement was described by So and Park (2016) in which they state that smoking, physical inactivity, irregular

diet, alcohol consumption were directly related with students educational learning. A study instigated by Amadi and Onyinyechi (2018) shows that students usually abuse drugs like tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and hot drinks recorded poor educational attainment at secondary level. Additionally, Chukwu et al. (2017) state that low educational attainment is one of the causes of drug abuse. Similarly, Akanbi, Augustina, Theophilus, Muritala, and Ajiboye (2015) reported considerable differences between academic achievement of those students who use drugs and do not use drugs. In addition, King, Kmeehan, Trim, and Chassin (2006) describe that substance abuse reduces the educational pursuits. Further, Okari (2018) states that school dropout; absenteeism and low attention are causes of substance and drug abuse which create nervousness, misperception and difficulties in students' academic achievement. Additionally, Brady, Insler, and Rahman (2017) identify negative impacts of bigger bad peer group and positive effects of smaller peer group on students' academic success.

Fourthly, students' self-esteem was identified as psycho-social element and Mirzaei-Alavijeh, Rahimi, Matin, and Jalilian (2018) show positive relationship between self-esteem and students' learning. Similarly, Doodman, Zadeh, and Changizi (2017) reveal that weaker academic achievement is a main cause of lower self-esteem and higher self-esteem cause better educational success. Similarly, Noronha, Monteiro, and Pinto (2018) state that high self-esteem resolves the conflicts and enable students to perform better in educational accomplishment. In addition, Kalouti (2012) identifies high correlation among students' self-esteem, social relations and educational commitment. Furthermore, Sangeetha (2017) demonstrates considerable relation between students' self-esteem and educational attainment. Similarly, Booth and Gerard (2011) reveal consistent relation between students' self-perceptions and their educational success.

The fifth psycho-social element used in the study was family adjustment of the students. Hampden-Thompson and Galindo (2017) describe that family with school strong relationship and school contentment enhance children's educational success. In addition, DeFauw, Levering, Msipa, and Abraham (2018) state that family adjustment (mother' help, father financial support, family spiritual advices and parental education) influence children's education. Moreover, Roksa and Kinsley (2019) state that family passionate care and financial funding facilitate low income students in their academic achievement. Further, Mahuro and Hungi (2016) indicate that family contribution significantly increase students' grades. Furthermore, Otani (2017) denotes considerable relationship between family involvement and students' learning. Similarly, Topor, Keane, Shelton, and Calkins (2010) describe significant relationship between parental involvement and teacher's observation about students' learning. In addition, Abou (2016) indicates that students' domestic responsibilities significantly affected female SSC students.

Lastly, the psycho-social element which is used in the study was students' academic anxiety. Therefore, Das, Halder, and Mishra (2014) found considerable link between academic anxiety and educational achievement of SSC students. Additionally, Safeer and Shah (2019) found significant negative effects of examination pressure on 9<sup>th</sup> grade male students' educational attainment. Moreover, Shakir (2014) specifies negative correlation between educational anxiety and students' learning outcomes. In addition, Mirawdali, Morrissey, and Ball (2018) describe negative relationships among academic anxiety, tough course of study, test anxiety, family history and students' educational success. Further, Khemka and Rathod (2016) stated that every student has academic anxiety in which female students of private schools have more academic anxiety than public girls' school students. In the literature review, it is found that psycho-social elements play an important role in students' educational attainment (Bandura, 1986).

## **Methodology**

### *Research Design and Participants*

A mixed method research approach was considered for data collection. Population of this research study was consisted of three lac, one hundred and thirty four (300134) 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls school students. The same numbers of students' parents were also considered as population of the study. The sample size was selected by using sampling table of (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013) for random samples. The total sample size was comprised on 798 secondary school students and 22 students' parents. For the sample of this study, systematic random sampling method was applied to select students while parents of these students were also chosen by convenience sampling technique.

### *Tool Development*

For quantitative part of the research, a self-structured psycho-social elements questionnaire was developed for secondary school students. This questionnaire was consisted on forty eight (48) statements based on Likert-type scale. The reliability of tool was calculated by applying Cronbach's alpha using SPSS which was 0.73 and the validity was checked by Pearson's product moment correlation and also got expert opinion from senior professors. For qualitative part of the research, face to face interviews were conducted on students' parents. The main interview questions were about six psycho-social elements. Parents' interviews were analyzed by thematic appreciation method which is generally used for examining qualitative data (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

The questionnaire was distributed among grade9<sup>th</sup> students by personal visits of researcher to collect data. These personal visits improve the response rate of the respondents. The collected data was entered in to SPSS grid sheet. Data was analyzed

by using multiple regression analysis technique. Furthermore, with the help of thematic appreciation method, qualitative data was analyzed. By using this method, interviews were transcribed and themes were taken.

### **Data Analysis**

An analysis of regression that contains more than one explanatory variable is called multiple regression analysis (Uyanık & Güler, 2013). So, the multiple regression analysis technique was used to predict the effects of independent variables on dependent variable.

**Table 1**

*Students' gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Urban area boys school students	479	60.0
Urban area girls' school students	319	40.0
Total	798	100.0

Table 1 shows that the participants were from both categories of gender. From each type of gender, boys were 479 (60%) while girls were 319 (40%), who responded to the questionnaire.

**Table 2**

*Effects of life skills development on grade 9<sup>th</sup> students' academic achievement*

Gender		N	$\beta$	SE	Beta	t	p
Urban area boys school students	(Constant)			271.409	34.0787	.964	.000
	Life skills development	479	2.003	.990	.092	2.022	.044
Urban area girls school students	(Constant)			476.632	43.90310	.856	.000
	Life skills development	319	-2.914	1.261	-.129	-2.311	.021

Dependent Variable= Marks in 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Table 2 expresses that multiple regression analysis was carried out to see the influences of life skills development on the academic achievement of students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The p-value of urban area boys 9<sup>th</sup> grade students ( $p = .044$ ) denotes that life skills development pointedly affected students' academic attainment. Similarly, the p-value of urban area girls 9<sup>th</sup> grade students ( $p = .021$ ) indicates that life skills development such as students' constructive and critical approach, learning environment, control over educational stress and emotions have significant effects on students' learning.

**Table 3**

*Effects of health risk behaviors on grade 9<sup>th</sup> students' academic achievement*

Gender		N	$\beta$	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Urban area boys	(Constant)			284.48	21.717	13.112	.000
school students	Health risk behaviours	479	2.218	.858	.1182	.586	.010
Urban area girls	(Constant)			327.967	27.630	11.870	.000
school students	Health risk behaviours	319	1.977	1.127	.098	1.754	.080

Dependent Variable= Marks in 9<sup>th</sup> grade

The aforesaid table 3 describes the influences of health risk behaviors on students' learning. The *t* and *p* values of urban area boys 9<sup>th</sup> grade students were 2.586 and .010 respectively. Multiple regression analysis reveals that health risk behaviors (use of unhygienic things, unbalanced furniture and bad environment of the class room, students' bad health and corporal punishment by the teachers) significantly affected students' educational success in grade nine. In contrast, the *t* and *p* values of urban area girls' school students were 1.754 and .080 in the order. The results of multiple regression analysis show that there were no significant effects of health risk behaviors on urban area girls' school students' academic achievement.

**Table 4**

*Effects of drug abuse on grade 9<sup>th</sup> students' academic achievement*

Gender		N	$\beta$	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Urban area boys	(Constant)			257.978	24.934	10.347	.000
school students	Drug abuse	479	2.715	.815	.15	3.331	.001
Urban area girls	(Constant)			451.443	27.832	16.220	.000
school students	Drug abuse	319	-2.502	.908	-.153	-2.757	.006

Dependent Variable= Marks in 9<sup>th</sup> grade

The aforesaid table 4 shows the influences of drug abuse on students' educational accomplishment in grade nine. The *t* and *p*-values of urban area 9<sup>th</sup> grade students' academic achievement were 3.331 and .001 respectively. The analysis shows that drug addiction significantly influenced students' learning. Similarly, the *t*-value of urban area 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls school students was -2.757 and *p*-value was .006 which shows that health risk behaviors negatively affected students' educational achievement.



**Table 5**

*Effects of self-esteem on grade 9<sup>th</sup> students' academic achievement*

Gender		N	$\beta$	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Urban area boys	(Constant)	479	2.474	1.088	.1042	.274	.023
school students	Self esteem						
Urban area girls	(Constant)	319	1.028	1.992	.045	.795	.427
school students	Self esteem						

Dependent Variable= Marks in 9<sup>th</sup> grade

The above table 5 shows the influences of self-esteem on students' learning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The values of 479 urban area 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys school students ( $t=2.274$  and  $p = .023$ ) indicated that the self-esteem has considerable impacts on academic achievement of 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys school students. Similarly, multiple regression analysis was conducted on 319 urban area 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls' school students and  $t$  and  $p$  values were .795 and .427 respectively. The results show that there were no significant effects of self-esteem on students' learning.

**Table 6**

*Effects of family adjustment on grade 9<sup>th</sup> students' academic achievement*

Gender		N	$\beta$	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Urban area boys	(Constant)	479	3.747	.784	.2144	.782	.000
school students	Family adjustment						
Urban area girls	(Constant)	319	.433	.947	.026	.457	.648
school students	Family adjustment						

Dependent Variable= Marks in 9<sup>th</sup> grade

The above table 6 describes that multiple regression analysis was carried out to analyze the influences of family adjustment on students' learning in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. This table shows that family adjustment ( $p=.000$ ) such as parents' encouragement in learning and parents' help positively affected urban area boys school students' academic achievement. In contrast, the ( $p=.648$ ) value of urban area girls 9<sup>th</sup> grade students shows that there were no significant effects of family adjustment on students' educational attainment.

**Table 7**

*Effects of academic anxiety on grade 9<sup>th</sup> students' academic achievement*

Gender		N	$\beta$	SE	Beta	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Urban area boys	(Constant)	479	.586	1.114	.024	.526	.002
school students	Academic Anxiety						
Urban area girls	(Constant)	319	.630	1.238	.029	.509	.611
school students	Academic Anxiety						

Dependent Variable= Marks in 9<sup>th</sup> grade

Table 7 indicated the influences of academic anxiety on students' educational attainment. The multiple regression analysis was conducted on 479 urban area 9<sup>th</sup> grade boys' school students. The *t* and *p* values were .526 and .002 in the order. The results reveal that academic anxiety significantly affected students' academic achievement. In contrast, the *t* and *p* values of urban area 9<sup>th</sup> grade girls school students were .509 and .611 respectively. The analysis shows no significant effects of academic anxiety on students' learning.

#### *Thematic Analysis and Interpretation*

The researcher conducted face to face interviews with 22 students' parents. After this, the researcher transliterated the interviews questions conducted on student's parents and extracted themes. The detailed description of themes was given below.

1. No awareness of life skills
2. Unhygienic things use
3. irregular nutritional behaviors
4. Punishment from teachers
5. Internet use
6. Drug addiction
7. Familial poverty
8. Parents' illiteracy
9. Academic stress and anxiety
10. Mental disorder

The most of the parents who were participated in the study were uninformed about life skills development and neglect this element for children's academic achievement. Parents further added that children's emotions and stress affected negatively their academic achievement. Moreover, parents agreed that physical inactivity, corporal punishment and uses of unhygienic things were the major sources of decreasing their knowledge. In addition, themes supported that use of smart phone, mental illness and students' smoking and use of drugs negatively affected students' educational success. Additionally, parents' views provide information that parents' illiteracy, educational anxiety, familial conflicts and tough course of study has negative impacts on students' educational accomplishment.

## **Discussion**

The present study revealed many important findings and one of it from quantitative part showed that six psycho-social elements has considerable influences on students' educational attainment. Multiple regression analysis of the present research study showed that life skills development, students' learning environment, critical and constructive approach, educational stress and emotions significantly affected their learning. The results of the current study were similar with the findings of prior studies (Shamaki, 2015; Kamaruddin, Zainal, Aminuddin, & Jusoff, 2009; Duruji, Azuh, & Oviasogie, 2014; Lata & Sharma, 2013; Ayaz & Sekerci, 2015; Khan, Altaf, & Kausar, 2013; Saqib & Rehman, 2018). In addition, the findings disclosed that students' bad health, use of unhygienic things, corporal punishment from teachers and unbalanced furniture negatively influenced students' educational attainment. The previous research studies proved that corporal punishment, physical punishment and sit-stand furniture considerably influenced students' academic achievement (Akhtar & Awan, 2018; Naz, Khan, Daraz, Hussain, & Khan, 2011; Castellucci et al., 2017).

Furthermore, the findings of the current study showed that smoking and drug abuse has negative effects on students' learning. The findings of prior researches revealed that lower educational achievement is one of the influences of students' drug abuse, hot drinks, alcohol and marijuana (Amadi & Onyinyechi, 2018; Chukwu et al., 2017). Another important finding revealed that students' self-esteem, distinct qualities of learning and educational capabilities has positive effects on their educational attainment as stated in prior researches (Mirzaei-Alavijeh, Rahimi, Matin, & Jalilian, 2018; Thomas, Iventosch, & Rohwer Jr, 1987; Hemati-Alamdarloo & Moradi, 2013). Additionally, another finding exposed that parents' help and encouragement in students' learning has positive while parents' illiteracy, poorness, no proper time to children negatively affected students' educational attainment. The findings of current study were similar with the results of previous research studies (Hasan, 2016; Chohan & Khan, 2010; Kaur, 2013; McKenzie, 2019). The results further divulged that academic anxiety, students' inferiority complex, helplessness in academic attainment, examination fear, tough course of study and students' concerns about educational objectives significantly affected their academic achievement. The results of most research studies were similar with the findings of present study. The study of Das, Halder and Mishra (2014) found negative link between students' educational achievement and educational anxiety. Similarly, the results also point out that boys' school students have more helplessness in studies than girls' school students (Valas, 2001). In contrast with the present research finding, the Kalaivani's (2017) study showed negative correlation between students' inferiority complex and academic achievement in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The findings of previous research studies indicated that test anxiety produced negative effects on students' educational accomplishment (Balogun, Balogun, & Onyencho, 2017). The findings of Boeding's (2016) study showed that

students' academic achievement is higher in short courses than compressed courses. Furthermore, the findings of thematic analysis indicated that students' stress, physical inactivity, smoking, corporal punishment, parents' illiteracy and poverty, tough course of study, mental illness, inferiority complex and uses of unhygienic things significantly affected students' academic achievement.

### **Conclusion**

The present study has provided evidences and showed that life skills development, students' critical, constructive and learning approach significantly affected their educational success. Moreover, the study has shown that students' bad health and corporal punishment from teachers negatively affected students' learning. Furthermore, the study concluded that the causes of poor academic achievement were students' smoking, hot drinks, marijuana and other drug abuse. Additionally, the present study has found positive correlation among students' self-esteem, educational capabilities, distinct qualities of learning and their educational accomplishment. As stated in the findings, it was concluded that parents' encouragement and help of their children has positive while academic anxiety negatively affected students' educational success. Similarly, the qualitative results of the present research were consistent with quantitative findings. Based on results, it was concluded that six (06) psycho-social elements significantly affected students' academic attainment at secondary school level.

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