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In what ways students' socio-economic status affecting academic performance?

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ABSTRACT

Due to the rapid development and dynamics of education, parents are becoming increasingly focused and concerned about their children's education. Parents have a significant influence on students' academic performance (AP) based on various perspectives, one of which is socioeconomic status (SES). A systematic literature review is required to provide an overview for educators and policy makers in Indonesia to address problems that arise in students' AP due to SES factors. However, there are limited research studies that systematically review the literature on SES in regards to students' AP. This study was guided by the preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analysis (PRISMA) review protocol employing two databases: Scopus and Google Scholar, regarding students' SES and student AP. There were 316 articles were screened and 51 articles that met the predetermined criteria were obtained. This study performed content analysis to codify, organize categories, and develop themes. Based on the thematic analysis, this study grouped three main themes: SES based on student roles, SES based on teacher roles, and SES based on family roles. This review contributes to the existing literature by providing direction for further research and as a catalyst for developing new literacy related to SES in education.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Dynamic economic development globally has brought a significant impact on education in particular. It has affected parents whose children are still in school. Some parents have to work vigorously to pay for their children's education tuition. Parents perceive that the economic aspect is a determinant factor of success in education [1]–[4]. The different economic status of parents will directly cause different academic achievements of students. It may lead to educational disparities. Inequality among people with different socio-economic status (SES) is characterized as a long-term social phenomenon [5].

Socio-economic status is generally conceptualized as the social status or class of an individual or group and is frequently measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation [6]. Viewed from the educational perspective, one of the individuals attached to SES is student. Student SES is student's family background, which characterizes the level of income or poverty [7]. SES is a determinant of student academic performance (AP) at school. It is relevant to research finding that the SES of students generally affects their AP [8]–[10]. Students with high SES will have high AP. Conversely, those with low SES will have low AP [11]. Furthermore, students' SES will affect their literacy [12] and numerical skills [10].

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Researchers frequently study students' socioeconomic backgrounds in connection to academic success [13]–[17]. White [13] produced the first meta-analysis on this topic, taking into account nearly 200 research published prior to 1980. He focused his meta-analysis on the relationship between SES and academic performance, demonstrating that the relationship varies significantly depending on a variety of criteria, including the type of SES measure utilized and the academic performance metrics used.

Sirin [16] did another meta-analysis study to investigate the relationship between the two variables and to repeat White's [13] meta-analysis to see if the SES-AP connection has altered since White's review. Within a variety of moderators and the type of SES-AP measure, Sirin [16] discovered a medium to strong SES-AP relationship. In comparison to White's review, the research discovered a small drop in the average correlation [16]. Liu, Peng, and Luo [14] conducted a meta-analysis on the relationship between SES and AP in China, and they discovered a modest relationship between SES and AP in general. They also noted that the relationship between the two variables has deteriorated throughout the decades. The relationship between a child's achievement and his or her family's background is universal [18]. The intensity of such linkages, on the other hand, is dependent on the social setting and educational system. Beside, Selvitopu [15] conducted a meta-analysis on the relationship between SES and AP in order to find the strength of that relationship.

Researchers insinuated contra statements regarding the effect of SES on students' academic performance. There are many factors other than SES, such as student age and gender [19]. Moreover, Thompson [20] suggested that the propensity of teachers to associate low achievement with family and cultural factors is more robust than with socio-economic factors. However, the statement by previous researchers neglects the other side of the SES association from a broader perspective. According to Das and Sinha [10], SES includes many factors such as parent's education, occupation, and income. Fostering the relevant research arguments is essential to conduct a preliminary analysis of thematic associations on the articles used in this literature review using VOSviewer. Based on the results of the initial analysis of thematic associations in Figure 1, it indicates that academic performance has a very complex pattern of associations.

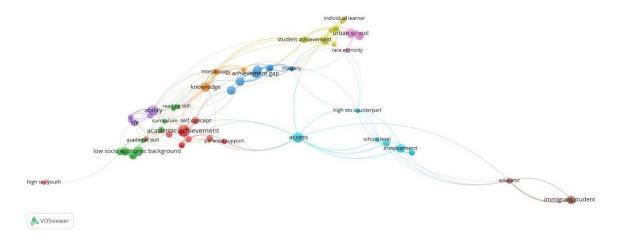


Figure 1. The preliminary network visualization

Figure 1 shows that the discussion and study of student SES are tightly connected to other study themes such as academic skill, academic achievement, low-income family, curriculum, reading skill, low-class family, parental support, motherhood, self-concept, and other themes that are interconnected indirectly. The relationship between the study themes of low SES background and academic achievement does not show a direct connection. In fact, the educator theme is still very far from being related to the two main issues of this research. It is possible because SES can affect student academic achievement individually through his perception of the teacher-student relationship [21]. Xuan's opinion implies that there are other factors between SES and teachers, namely perception and communication, both of which have rarely been studied before. Further, a study on students encompassing academic optimism, ability, and individual learner also represents an indirect relationship. Relevant previous studies appear to have shallow SES research from the students' standpoint and its factors, such as motivation to learn. Meanwhile, the study of the family also seems to be feeble in relation to the study of SES and student academic performance. However, compared to the two previous study themes (students and teachers), the family theme appears to be closer to SES and students' academic performance. In practice, studies have concluded that family conditions have a strong influence on SES and students' academic performance at school [8], [12], [22], [23].

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The results of the initial analysis show that educational problems related to SES cannot only be seen from an economic perspective. This is reinforced by the opinion of Norman [24] who stated that financial assistance from the government for students with low SES backgrounds actually caused debate from several academics. Government programs actually provide an opportunity for the community to rely on the government's abilities [25], [26]. In addition, simply providing financial assistance and fee waivers will not have a significant impact on the learning outcomes of students from poor families [27].

It is necessary to have literature review research that can reveal and expand the perspective of SES in relation to students' AP. Moreover, according to Medina and Suthers [28], several reasons such as the urgency of equality in education, namely personal or social circumstances such as gender, ethnic origin or family background, are not obstacles to achieving educational potential. This shows the urgency of taking appropriate action to accommodate students with low SES, not just providing material assistance. Therefore, this study chose a systematic literature review because it offers a detailed analysis of existing research in which the process is replicable and transparent as well as to improve the SES body of knowledge in the context of student academic performance. This study aims to synthesize literature and present the factors that affect students' academic performance from the perspective of SES. By preparing a systematic review, the results will facilitate academics, teachers, principals, researchers, and policy makers to formulate suitable strategies and actions to maximize students' academic performance from an SES perspective.

In general, this study aims to explore SES in influencing students' academic performance. The results are expected to provide a theoretical stance that facilitates teachers, principals, parents, policy makers, and other stakeholders in educational settings. This study is driven by the question: How does the current literature appraise us about SES in relation to students' academic performance? Specific research questions are: i) What are the most studied significant dimensions of SES in relation to student academic performance?; ii) What are the main challenges in accommodating students with low SES in an education setting?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses preferred reporting items for the systematic review and meta-analysis (PRISMA) [29]. Initially, PRISMA was developed for the medical setting but was widely adopted in various research fields, especially for evaluation and intervention studies [30], [31]. Systematic reviews have different characteristics compared to meta-analyses. In a systematic review, the study is guided by formulated questions to identify, select, and critically assess relevant research and collect and analyze data from studies included in the review without a statistical approach [31]. Following that, this review focuses on trends in SES research in regards to student academic performance.

2.1. Data sources

Some of the databases that are widely known by researchers are Scopus and Google Scholar. SES is frequently interchangeable with other terms, such as poverty and economic weakness, in particular, to describe the economic well-being of students. Therefore, this study utilized these keywords in each database using Publish or Perish software: "students' socioeconomic status," "students' socioeconomic status," "low SES Students," "Academic Achievement" "Academic Performance" and was limited to articles published between 2010 and 2020. This study found abundant scientific sources. Thus, determining the right keywords is imperative.

2.2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for selection of publications

This study limits the criteria in the database to determine that all articles included are appropriate to answer the research question "What do references say about digital citizenship in Indonesia?". This study applied the following limitations: i) Journal published between January 2010 and December 2020. The date selection is based on the findings of empirical research on student SES that began to be widely conducted following 2010; ii) Focus on the relationship between SES and student academic performance; iii) Published in academic journals and proceedings articles that have undergone a review process; iv) Research sites are in developing countries.

There are various reasons for applying the aforementioned criteria limitation. First, although the concept of SES in education is an issue that has emerged for a long time, articles explaining discussions from the side of students, parents, and teachers have only been found in the last decade. Second, Indonesian researchers likely discuss the issue of SES from a materialist perspective rather than an academic one.

2.3. Screening and eligibility assessment for data analysis

This research was conducted in several stages based on specific criteria. First, all articles that met the criteria were screened. Second, abstracts from the article sections were screened to ensure relevance to the research objectives. Third, this research conducted an in-depth reading of the full text of each article. In Table 1, the articles that met the criteria were grouped according to several codes: database, document type, publishing language, field of study, method, and year of publication. This study developed a thematic code for the article after it was confirmed with the determined criteria. The review process was continued by conducting a content analysis consisting of the main findings [32]. This stage aims to provide an overview of the general discourse on SES concerning student academic performance. This study elaborates the results to answer research questions that highlight SES from the standpoint of student academic performance.

Table 1. Characteristics of included studies (N=51)

Characteristics of	,
Characteristics	Number of articles
Database	11
Google Scholar	11
Scopus	40
Type	
Journal article	50
Proceeding article	1
Language	
English	40
Indonesian	11
Study Field	
Education	33
Economy	5
Social Science	13
Methods	
Interview	7
Document analysis	12
Survey	21
Observation	11
Year of publication	
2010	8
2011	5
2012	0
2013	8
2014	5
2015	6
2016	7
2017	2
2018	2 3
2019	2
2020	5

2.4. PRISMA flow diagram

The use of appropriate protocols is essential to maintain accountability, trust, and transparency in determining what is conducted, discovered, and reported [29], [31]. The PRISMA flowchart contains a checklist that assists researchers to guarantee that each step follows the guidelines. In addition, it is helpful to reduce bias in selecting and drawing conclusions. As previously mentioned, the information management flow consists of filtering and including various documents discovered. Given Figure 2, this study obtained 316 articles comprising journals and proceedings in most fields of study such as education, economics, and social sciences. Of the total articles, 149 were published in more than one database; thus, 167 articles were screened. The title and abstract were read, and 90 articles did not meet the criteria. Therefore, only 77 articles were eligible for the full-text screening process. As a result, this study examined 51 articles using content analysis based on several reasons: i) It contains a context regarding student SSE; ii) It contains SES element in education; iii) It is a peer-reviewed article. Then a quality assessment was carried out based on the quality of the articles as suggested by Petticrew and Roberts [33]. All articles were analyzed using NVivo 12 Plus software to categorize them into high, medium, and low groups. This process tagged 20 articles as high and 31 articles as medium. Thus, 51 articles deserved to be examined.

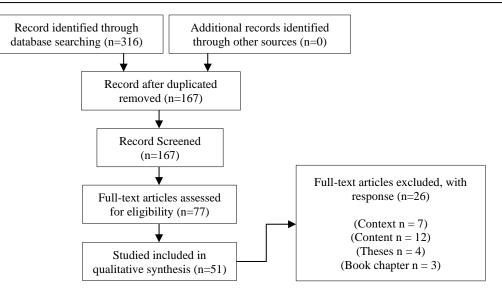


Figure 2. PRISMA flow diagram for systematic review

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study used qualitative content analysis to build an overview of how SES influences student academic performance. The investigation began by revealing the main concepts in each article. One article might contain more than one main concept, and there is no limit to the number of articles for each idea that appears. Each of the main concepts reflects the dimensions that are the scope of this research. Based on Table 2, there are nine dimensions of student SES regarding academic performance: academic achievement, background, education, school, social, status, student, and teacher. From these results, school (34 articles) is followed by status (31 articles) and followed by students (27 articles), then academic, achievement, background, social, education, and teacher.

Through thematic analysis, corresponding categories found in several articles were grouped to develop themes. The development of these themes helps to build a general picture of student SES trends with respect to academic performance. The results of the analysis emerged three major themes: i) SES from the student's perspective; ii) SES from the teacher's perspective; iii) SES from the family's perspective. Table 3 illustrates the distribution of articles included in each theme.

Citing the opinion of Hobbs that it will be useless regardless of great teacher and curriculum, students cannot study if they have a stomachache due to hunger, cannot sleep due to cold in a house with no heating, and cannot focus on study due to embarrassment of their broken shoes [34]. Hobbs's statement clearly illustrates that student academic performance when viewed from the SES must, at minimum, accommodate three aspects. They are condition of student's role, teacher's role, and family's role.

Table 2. The main concept of students' SES in affecting AP

Main concept	Number of articles
Academic	19
Achievement	16
Background	15
Education	12
School	34
Social	13
Status	31
Student	27
Teacher	9

Note: Some studies have more than one key concept

Table 3. Distribution of included articles in each theme

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	Theme	Number of articles
	SES based on student's role	9
	SES based on teacher's role	13
	SES based on family's role	19

Note: Some studies have more than one theme

3.1. SES based on student's role

The issues of students with low SES related to education have garnered attention from researchers, academics, and practitioners for at least the last decade. Various studies, both quantitative and qualitative, suggest that students with low SES appear to have lower learning performance compared to those with high SES [8], [35]–[37]. However, this study resulted in three elements that moderated the low academic performance of students due to low SES: self-concept, self-motivation, and communication perception.

3.1.1. Self-concept

The self-concept entails two significant parts: personal identity and social identity [38]. Students with low SES frequently understand self-concept that requires guidance. Children and adolescents begin to incorporate social identity into their self-concept in elementary school by measuring their situation among peers [38]. Personally and socially, they understand that they are unique, different from others in terms of SES. However, not all students with low SES can cope with their SES situation, particularly if external factors emphasize that they are different from other students, which is tuition assistance. According to research [39], students who receive tuition assistance tend to feel ashamed and different from other students. Indirectly, they have a self-concept as unique students in a negative sense. Without immediate attention and direction, such a self-concept will lead to pressure on students, which is likely to result in stress. The stressful state has a significant role in students' academic failure [19].

3.1.2. Self-motivation

Some researchers associate that low SES plays a role in the establishment of student motivation [6], [40], [41]. When perceived from a theoretical study, learning motivation can be regarded from several perspectives. One aspect related to academic performance is the cognitive perspective. Cognitive theorists believe that engagement and involvement in the classroom do not result from external pressure but rather from students' cognitive beliefs and interpretations of learning activities and events [42]. The theory of cognitive motivation close to students' SES is the theory of external cognitive attribution. According to Arends and Kilcher [42], external attribution occurs if students blame external causes or circumstances. In the context of this study, the external conditions referred to are students' SES. Not a few students who fail in their academic performance blame the economic needs of their families. Learning motivation is strongly affected by the family environment, primarily the socio-economic of parents [43]. This will be discussed further in the third part of the research results of this article (SES from a family perspective).

3.1.3. Communication perception with teachers

According to previous research, teachers in low SES schools indicate that their students are less teachable and have lower levels of confidence in their students [44], [45]. Therefore, the quality of the low SES teacher-student relationship can be deemed worse, which has a negative impact on student achievement [46], [47]. Students can also experience the negative quality of the teacher-student relationship. Feelings of underappreciated, neglected, and negative opinions of teachers towards students with low SES will result in negative perceptions from students' perspectives. This corresponds with the opinion [21] stated that SES can affect student academic achievement individually through his perception of the teacher-student relationship. This opinion is reinforced by the statement [48] that education is provided in society; any changes in the children's environment are more prone to affect their education or character. The change in this subject is the teacher's attitude towards students with low SES, which will influence students' attitudes towards teachers. For students from low SES backgrounds, developing a close and significant relationship with a teacher appears to be the cornerstone for academic success and students' early adaptation to school [49].

3.2. SES based on teacher's role

Ironically, the poorest children often attend schools that lack resources to provide them with the skills to get freed from poverty [3]. One of the resources that the school possesses is teachers. The teacher is a representation of parents at school. As the representation of parents, it is appropriate for teachers to understand the various backgrounds of their students, including the SES background. Teachers play a significant role in promoting equitable educational outcomes for marginalized students from low socioeconomic backgrounds [50]. Thus, based on the literature review, there are two elements of SES from the teacher's perspective: the teacher's perception of students and understanding of students' backgrounds.

3.2.1. Teachers' perceptions of students

Studies have found that teachers have a negative perception of students with low SES. These negative perceptions are in the form of low scores, unmanageable, delays in literacy development, troublemakers, deviant behavior, and other negative assumptions [6], [19], [21], [48]. The teacher's perception and inference are rather groundless. Teachers should not position students of low SES with

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negative perceptions and assumptions. Teachers should have high expectations for all students and understand that students from various backgrounds should be rewarded for their potential contributions [40]. Besides, teachers potentially reduce the negative impact of poverty and promote children's academic success with low SES [51]. Hence, it is reasonable for teachers not to establish negative judgment on students with low SES. Teachers must be confident that all students have abilities and that each can learn [42].

3.2.2. Understanding of students' backgrounds

It is essential for teachers and other school staff to know and understand the students' background, especially those brought from their families, such as economic conditions [52]. Understanding the relationship between poor grades and low SES cannot only facilitate teachers to identify students with low SES and realize that these students may encounter challenges at home related to their SES [53]. According to Arends and Kilcher, teachers cannot act freely on students' intrinsic factors. However, this is not an obstacle for teachers to accommodate students with low SES [42]. Conversely, teachers can be more effective if they concentrate on modifiable factors [42]. Teachers can change their attitudes towards children from disadvantaged backgrounds and understand how schools and learning should be viewed from students' standpoint. Teachers' understanding of the students' background will be endorsed as the teachers' initial capital in designing high-quality education. High-quality teaching is vital in a school located in a low socioeconomic setting, where most children exhibit more significant academic concerns [49].

3.3. SES based on family roles

Other external factors besides teacher performance and quality of education provided in schools can affect students' academic performance. An excellent example of such external factors is parents' SES [48]. The family's SES is based on the parent's income, level of education, occupation, and social status in the community, such as contacts in the community, group association, and AP of the family community [22]. The impact of family SES on parental involvement and children's education has been of great concern to many researchers [8]. In addition, according to Chen *et al.* [12], the relationship between family SES and AP has always been an essential issue in sociology, pedagogy, and psychology. In terms of pedagogy, parents as family members have a significant role in the success or failure of students' AP [9], [54]. Parents' SES affects students' academic achievement and prompts children from low socio-economic backgrounds unable to compete with their peers from high SES under the same academic environment [8]. Furthermore, home environment is the golden key of socialization and influences children's interest in school and aspirations for the future [9]. As a matter of fact, Rizkiana [55] added that parents' SES has a more dominant influence on student achievement than learning motivation and learning discipline. The results of the literature review on SES viewed from a family perspective resulted in three elements, comprising the availability of educational facility, parenting style, and parents' perceptions on education.

3.3.1. Availability of educational facility

The availability of facilities that support children's education is one indicator of family SES, the level of family income has a positive and significant relationship with the completeness of educational facilities at home [56]. Fundamental pressure, such as earning an insufficient livelihood, develops less-devoted and less attentive parents towards their children's education [57]. This state causes parents with low SES to prioritize their daily needs rather than providing adequate learning facilities for their children. Providing supplementary books sometimes becomes harder for parents with low SES [58]. Moreover, the number of family members also affects the quantity and quality of educational facilities at home [59]. More family members will force more daily needs to be met; thus, there is no adequate learning facility available.

3.3.2. Parenting style

Each family has different parenting styles. Yet, viewed from an SES perspective, it is found that there is almost the same parenting propensity in families with low SES. According to Puspitawati [56], parenting style can be seen from arranging children's study schedules, asking for test/exam results, giving rewards/praises, and discussing the learning process at school. To apply parenting elements as mentioned in a study [56], parents must spend more time. Whereas according to Ankrum [60], low SES families often work around the clock to take care of their family, and they do not have time to participate in their children's education. The importance of the parents' time availability in regards to parenting is also mentioned by Ardhiyah [61], which states parents' time availability may affect parenting at home. This is contrary to the parenting style of those with high SES. They devote more attention to educating their children and show more enthusiasm, providing children with emotional support and, in turn, improving their academic performance [12]. In addition, the higher the parents' education, the easier it is to assist their children who display learning difficulties [55]. The provision of learning assistance is sometimes overlooked by parents

with low SES on the pretext that it has become the duty of teachers in schools. Indeed, parents with low SES can prioritize their children's education, however, they do not have the experience and resources to help them adopt parenting styles that can encourage their children's motivation and learning [62].

3.3.3. Parents' perceptions of education

The parents' low education insinuates the prejudice that education is not that important; the most important thing is how their children can help meet the needs of daily life [63], [64]. It is not uncommon for parents with low SES to perceive that school is a mere routine without considering the long-term impact. This promotes a low level of parental participation in the children's education process. Parents from higher socio-economic backgrounds may demand more on teachers [65]. The high demand for teachers is not found in parents with low SES.

4. CONCLUSION

Socio-economic status is not as simple as perceiving that poverty has contributed to the success of students' academic performance in school. However, beyond the low SES of students, there are various complex things that directly or indirectly become a factor in the high and low students' academic performance. Based on the results of this literature review, it can be identified that academics, practitioners, and education policy makers should consider elements, such as student self-concept, student self-motivation, teacher-student communication perception, teachers' perceptions of students, teachers' understanding of students' backgrounds, availability of educational facility at home, parenting style, and parents' perception of education, that may help them to formulate suitable strategies and actions to maximize students' academic performance from an SES perspective. The results of this study are expected to be able to broaden the horizons of educators, academics, and educational stakeholders related to students' SES. Furthermore, the direction for the subsequent research is to develop a pedagogical model that can accommodate students with low SES to be able to improve their academic performance.

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