

The Impact of Social Capital on Educational Attainment: Evidence from Rural Areas of Pakistan

Muhammad Abrar-ul-haq⁴¹, Farheen Akram², Rana Muhammad Adeel Farooq³

¹School of Economics, Finance and Banking, Universiti Utara Malaysia

²Department of Commerce, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

³Department of Economics, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Pakistan

Abstract

This study investigate the impact of social capital on child's educational achievement and personality development by using primary data of Southern Punjab (Bahawalpur and Bahawalnagar District). Through multi stage cluster sampling a total of 600 hundred household head were selected as sample size for this study. The educational production function was used.in this study. This approach (educational achievement) was measured as output and other elements (Social capital) that have direct link with education was studied as inputs. The results indicate that while taken into account other variables, social capital resources have direct and indirect effects on their personality development and their educational achievement. Moreover, human and social capital do not exist in seclusion from each other. These two are connected in complex ways and to some extent, feed into each other. In other words, social capital promotes the development of human capital (education) and human capital take part in generating future human capital (education). This research helpful for educational policy makers in making better policies that are socially acceptable.

Keywords: Social Capital, Educational attainment, southern Punjab, Pakistan,

Introduction

Social capital is a term that draws attention not only to appealing and earnest feelings, but also to numerous benefits allied with social networks and is followed by mutual co-operation, reliance, and information. Social capital sometimes creates significance for those peoples who are connected through it and for a moment or two for the passerby as well. Social capital is impalpable resource to produce efficient human capital; here human capital refers to the education, skills, talent and abilities of individuals. Social capital resources like family, friends, networking and bonding with society influence educational achievements of individuals. So there is a positive relationship between social and human capital. Therefore students with high social capital are able to act more effectively and have winning strategies. People having strong social capital and are wealthy in social norms, values, and ethics are socially more responsible towards the society. Socially wealthy human capital is the crucial aspect of economic growth and development. Different aspects of social capital play vital role in personality development, learning skills, motivation and perceiving skills of people. Mostly, socially rich societies have less corruption, crime, and have good health and rapid economic growth rate as compared to less social societies. As social capital take part in the creation of human capital, human capital also contribute in creating social capital (Halpern, 2009). So, a contrary link exists between education (Human Capital) and social capital. Moreover, education (human capital) gives more awareness about social rights and duties to individuals (Khan et al., 2015). Many prior studies argued that education is a strategic factor in generating future social capital which leads the society to development (Putnam, 1995, 2001). Therefore many pragmatic studies scrutinize the relationship between education and social capital and found positive association among them (Alesina & La Ferrara, 2000; Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Putnam, 1995, 2001).

On the contrary side, many previous empirical studies examine how social capital contribute to educational achievements (Abdul Hakim, Ismail, Razak, & Azam, 2012; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; James Samuel Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). These studies investigate social capital with a combination of human capital and financial capital of society or families. According to Coleman (1988), human capital refers to parent's education, and financial capital means parents income and social capital refers to interaction, networking and bonding among students and parents. Jay D. Teachman (1997), argued that parent's financial and human capital have great contribution towards student's educational achievements. Also a direct link between education and financial capital cited by Khan, Mahtab and haq (2012). Khan et al., (2012) aslo argued that education is focal point of human capital and

Corresponding Author: Muhammad Abrar ul haq, Ph.D Scholar, School of Economics, Finance and Banking, Universiti Utara Malaysia.

have direct link with escalation of financial capital of individuals, this financial capital play a vital role in development and in achieving better living standards. According to human capital approach education is investment good and this investment has return and this return is further reinvested to attain high education. So, students who have well educated and financially strong parents, tend to have more higher education as compared to those students whose parents have low financial and human capital (Teachman et al., 1997). Although parent's financial capital is important in acquiring higher educational facilities and parent's human capital motivate students towards high accomplishments. But we can't flout other important factors that influence student's educational achievements. This question arouses the interest of researcher's to find out those factors that affect student's success other than human and financial capital of parents. Many studies carried out with this intent around the globe (Abdul Hakim et al., 2012; Alesina & La Ferrara, 2000; Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Teachman et al., 1997). According to Abdul Hakim (2012) student's success is based on demographic variables of the family. Family social activities persuade student's curiosity to discover more ways of socializing, accepting and solving challenges. Students from socially strong (with great networking within or outside the family, with more membership of social groups) families are ambitious to become admired by the family network. As networking, socializing, attachment, and relationships increases individuals are more able to perceive things and information from their networks. People can also learn from the environment in which they live and also the positive and negative aspects of the society affect the individual's skills.

While keeping in mind the importance of social capital in educational achievements, this study is specially designed to examine the association between social capital and education in Pakistan. Statistics shows drastic picture of education in Pakistan especially in rural areas. This situation is especially alarming in rural areas due to social and cultural obstacles. Also the literacy rate in Pakistan varies among age groups, groups having age between 55–64 had a literacy rate of almost 38%, those having age 45–54 had a literacy rate of nearly 50.20%, and from 25–34, had a literacy rate of 57%, and those who lies among 15–24 had a literacy rate of 72%. Pakistan produces about 445,000 university graduates and 10,000 computer science graduates per year. Despite of these statistics, Pakistan still has one of the highest illiteracy rates in the world and the second largest out of school population (5.1 million children) after Nigeria. Due to such depraved situation of education in Pakistan this study tries to investigate the education with respect to demographic characteristics of households by using primary source of data from two districts named, Bahawalpur and Bahawalnagar of Southern Punjab Pakistan. Aim of this paper is to explore the relationship between social capital and education from a Pakistani perspective.

Social Capital

The term social capital firstly used in early nineteen's by Hanifan. It took long time to become popular and with the passage of time different researchers added in literature (Jane Jacobs; 1961; Pierre Bourdieu, 1983; Coleman, 1988) investigate social capital with respect to education and in this way the term social capital become critical issue in academic researches. Social capital refers to within and outside families' interaction, Networking, belongingness, membership of social groups, and underlying attributes of individuals. Social capital has concealed benefits that can't be realized directly as it works as backbone of human and financial capital. Also social capital enlighten those factors that are important for a society to function efficaciously (Fine, 2002). According to Ben Fine "Social capital is defined as a norm and social relations embedded in social structures of society that enables people to co-ordinate action and to achieve desired goals". In high social capital areas public spaces are cleaner, people are friendlier, kindlier and the streets are safer. Social capital strongly affects child growth. Trust, networks, and norms of mutuality within a child's family, school, peer group, and bigger community have life time effects on their opportunities, choices, educational achievement, and hence on their behavior and development (Smith, M. K., 2000-2009).

Social capital exists in three foremost practices as informational channels, as social norms, and as obligations and expectations. Obligations and expectations have more liquidity, people can use (cash) them whenever it is essential. Social norms refer individual action, ethics, bonding and engagement with the society and information channels refers the ways through which the people are able to get the proper and reliable information. Parents obligations and expectations, and social networking with family, friends and with rest of the society have great effect on student's academic achievements (Coleman & Hoffer, 1987). As well as social capital in the form of information channel generate a flow of information stream that is much supportive in attaining our ends (Putnam, 2001). Many studies argue that social capital is such an important type of capital that increase with the passage of time and appreciated with more use rather than other type of capitals (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Glaeser, Laibson, & Sacerdote, 2002).

People from socially stable societies are more active, efficient, trustable, more readily to help each other and act according to rules and ethics. Moreover people from socially rich societies interject more in economic

augmentation and development (World Bank 1999). World Bank also used this hypothetical notion to resolve economic challenges (Liou & Chang, 2008). Social capital is intangible and important factor behind business success and personal achievements (Baker, 2000). Moreover social capital is also important for organization's human capital (i.e. Employee's Skills and Knowledge) because socially strong people are rich in social norms and ethics and are more passionate towards achievements (Baker, 2000). Also more social people are less involved in scams.

In recent decade several empirical studies found social capital as a critical factor for education, business, health, economic growth. Policy makers found social capital as a key factor for making socially acceptable and beneficial policies (Lang & Hornburg, 1998). Some of them argue that social capital work as pillar for educational success (Abdul Hakim et al., 2012; Liou & Chang, 2008; Lopez, 1996; Teachman et al., 1997). Existing literature also found that social capital is base for the creation of future human capital (James Samuel Coleman & Hoffer, 1987), as well as societies rich in social capital contribute more to economic growth and development (Fukuyama, 1996). Nations with brilliant and enormous stock of social capital have robust ability to fight against economic crises (Moser, 1996; Narayan-Parker & Pritchett, 1997). The absences of social capital have many adverse effects on society.

Social Capital and Education

Several studies investigate the importance of social capital for educational success. However Coleman (1988) investigate association between social capital and education for the first time and concluded that a student's networking, affection with family, friends, and school are those elements that influence their educational success and also important as human capital and financial capital. There are series of studies of Coleman that examine the role of social capital in educational attainment (James S Coleman, 1988; James Samuel Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Epstein & Lee, 1995). Coleman also cited that students of religious schools are more close to social norms, ethics have strong social values and have trustworthiness behavior to the society. The social connection of families and communities works as a driving force for children's social and educational development.

Social bonding with school community have absolute impact on its functions and communities where social capital (child's and parents attraction, student and teacher bonding, affection with school etc.) is strong, the process of educational development become simple and have much effects on educational ends (Fukuyama, 1996). Social ties with school work as energetic force for their members to improve their lives, as well as people involved in social ties have more chances of self- recognition and success (Bryk & Schneider, 2002).

In the education perspective, social capital in the forms of parental expectations, responsibilities, and social linkages that exist inside the community, school, and family, are essential elements that boost the student's success. Disparities in academic success can be credited to parents' expectations and obligations for educating their children; to the network and associations between families of the community in which the school operates; to the school qualities and academic environment; and to the cultural norms and ethics that stimulate student efforts. In other words, social capital is a critical term to assess the educational achievements of students across different societies or nations.

Etchevery, Clifton, and Roberts (2001) investigate how social capital influence undergraduate university students knowledge, skills, and academic success. Their results show that students social capital stock influences directly and indirectly their educational attainment. They also found that students 'connections with other students have direct and positive effect on their academic grades and on self-identification motivation.

Propose of discussing all these studies here is to enlighten the importance of social capital in educational achievement and this study cannot ignore this dynamic term. We summarize, that social capital varies across nations and have important role in academic success. Societies with intense social capital are tending to generate more efficient and energetic human capital than those societies having low bank of social capital. At the family level, child's affection and linkage with their parents is important and also the financial and cultural capital of parents is available to children only if they have strong association with parents. At the institutional level, disciplinary environment and academic norms invested by the school community and the communal relationship between families and school community generate high level of social capital. And at community level, strong socializing, networking, having trustable relations and easiness with social ethics and norms, all these three (family, institution, and community) are main factors that enable children to produce winning strategy and become more motivated towards educational achievement (Epstein & Lee, 1995).

Research Methodology

This research was conducted to analyze the relationship among social capital and educational attainment. The unit of analysis of this study was rural household head. The data used in this study was primary source which was collected through multi staged cluster sampling technique from southern Punjab, Pakistan. The southern Punjab consist of three division named, Bahawalpur division, Multan division and Dara Gazi kahn division. These three divisions further comprises of eleven districts. At first stage, one district from each division was selected (Bahawalpur, Vehari, Layyah). In second stage one Tehsil from each district was selected (Hashilpur, Vehari, and Fathy-Pur). In third stage, two union counsels from each tehsil and than two villages from each union counsel were selected. In fourth and last stage, equal number of household heads was selected for sampling. A total of 600 hundred household head were selected as sample size for this study.

Measurement of Social Capital

Social capital is a complex term and it is hard to measure it directly like physical capital and financial capital. Social capital refers to the inherent qualities of a society. So, there is a challenge for the researchers how to approach these inherent qualities. Different researchers use different methods to measure the social capital. A study of New South Wales indicate eight factors of social capital were: involvement in local community, pro activity in social context,

Feelings of trust and safety, neighborhood connections, family and friends connections, tolerance of diversity, value of life, and work links(Onyx & Bullen, 1997). However we are going to adopt Grootaert et al. (2004) who present six comprehensive dimensions of social capital to measure social capital. These dimensions are: 1) Group and networks, 2) trust and solidarity, 3) collective actions and cooperative, 4) information and communication, 5) social unity and attachment, 6) authorization and political action. Table comprising of six dimensions and their thirteen items to measure social capital index. This table includes explanation of each dimension and its items and their measurement. Each item of these domains is a Dichotomous (Yes or No) type question. A value of 1 is assigned to “Yes” and 0 assigned to “No”. To calculate the social capital index for individual house hold the percentage of “Yes” answers is calculated and this percentage is transformed into scale 1 to 10 using following equation

$$Y = h(X) = 1 + \left(\frac{9}{100}\right)X$$

Where, x is the percentage score of ‘Yes’ and Y is the social capital index score.

Table 1: Social Capital Index Measurement, Dimensions and Items

Social capital Dimensions	Items	Measurement
Groups and Networks	Membership in formal or informal organizations or associations	Yes or No
	Ability to get support from those other than family members and relatives in case of hardship	Yes or No
Trust and solidarity	Most people in the community can be trusted	Yes or No
	Most people in the community often help each other	Yes or No
Collective action and cooperation	More than half of the community contribute time or money towards common development goals	Yes or No
	High likelihood that people in the community cooperate to solve common problems	Yes or No
Information and communication	Frequently listen to radio	Yes or No
	Frequently read newspapers	Yes or No
	Frequently watch television	Yes or No
Social cohesion and Inclusion	Strong feeling of togetherness within the community	Yes or No
	Feeling safe from crime and violence when alone at home	Yes or No

Empowerment and political action	Have control in making decisions that affect everyday activities.	Yes or No
	Vote in the last general election	Yes or No

Regression Model

According to Wilson (2001) there are three major approaches to measure educational achievement used in the previous studies. First approach is human capital approach, the cohorts of this approach argued that education is an investment asset and economic growth due to education yields on such investment asset. This approach assumes that return on educational investment is again invested in education to acquire higher education. But there are many other notable factors (school and family traits) that have direct impact on educational achievements. Such important factors are ignored by the human capital approach. Second approach is education production function approach. In this approach, two important terms inputs and output are used. According to this approach, inputs means those factors that affect the education practices directly and out refers to the educational attainments. Inputs that influence educational process are parents, teacher's characteristics and school qualities. Educational production approach is more comprehensive approach as it deals with educational environment (inputs) that have significant important in educational success and educational achievement (outputs). However, this approach ignores the importance of return to educational investment. Third approach is based on these two (human capital & educational production) approaches. This approach simply investigates the association between independent variables and dependent variable without paying much attention to the underlying phenomena. This approach considered both return to education and inputs (school, family and teacher qualities) and output (education achievement).

We follow the educational production function in this paper as many prior studies used (Abdul Hakim and Adul Razak, 2012; Michaelowa and Wechtler, 2009; Glewwe, and Kremer, 2006; Todd and Wolpin, 2003; Hanushek, 2003; Pritchett and Filmer, 1997; Hedges, Greenwald and Laine, 1994). This approach educational achievement is measured as output and other elements (parents, community) that have direct link with education is studied as inputs. The equation form this relation is as follow,

$$EDUA = \beta_0 + \beta_1 HINC + \beta_2 NCHILD + \beta_3 REEDU + \beta_4 HEAD + \beta_5 BORD + \beta_6 SCI + \beta_7 FEDU + \beta_8 MEDU + \beta_9 MHEAD + \mu_i$$

Educational achievement is considered as dependent variable and measured by the years of schooling of the student who are at the age of 20 or above. Environmental factors that influence the educational process is considered as inputs or independent variables these variables are Household income, Number of children, Ratio of education expenditure to total expenditure, Ratio of student to teacher, Ratio of student to juvenile cases, Student gender, Birth order, Social capital index, Father's education, Mother's education and Marital status of the head of household. Table 2 comprises of dependent and independent variable used in this study.

Table 2: Variables and Measurement

Variables	Measurement	Alpha (α)
Dependent variable: Educational attainment (EDUA)	years of schooling of the student who are at the age of 20 or above	0.73
Independent variables		
Household income (HINC)	Monthly household income	0.89
Number of children (NCHILD)	The number of children in the household	0.65
Ratio of education expenditure to total expenditure (REEDU)	Monthly expenditure on education /total monthly household expenditure	0.77
Gender of head of household (HEAD)	Dummy variable (1= male; 0 = female)	0.85
Social capital index (SCI)	Index of household social capital (Index value of 1 to 10)	0.83
Father's education (FEDU)	Years of schooling of the father	0.80
Mother's education (MEDU)	Years of schooling of the mother	0.86
Marital status of the head of household (MHEAD)	Dummy variable (0= Married; 1= Single parent/divorced)	0.78

Results and Discussion

This study used principle component analysis to allocate weights to indicators of social capital index. This method first standardizes the indicator variables (calculating z-scores); then factor coefficient scores (factor loadings) are calculated and at last for every household the indicator values are multiplied by the factor loadings and summed to generate the social capital index (Table 3). The value of this social capital index is used as an independent variable in regression analysis.

Table 3: Factor Analysis of Social Capital Index

Social capital Dimensions	Items	Factor loading
Groups and Networks	Membership in formal or informal organizations or associations	0.71
	Ability to get support from those other than family members and relatives in case of hardship	0.75
Trust and solidarity	Most people in the community can be trusted	0.82
	Most people in the community often help each other	0.69
Collective action and cooperation	More than half of the community contribute time or money towards common development goals	0.85
	High likelihood that people in the community cooperate to solve common problems	0.67
Information and communication	Frequently listen to radio	0.65
	Frequently read newspapers	0.76
	Frequently watch television	0.84
Social cohesion and Inclusion	Strong feeling of togetherness within the community	0.81
	Feeling safe from crime and violence when alone at home	0.61
Empowerment and political action	Have control in making decisions that affect everyday activities.	0.68
	Vote in the last general election	0.78

The maximum likelihood results have been shown in Table 4 with proper statistical pacifications.

Table 4: Parameter Estimates

Location	Coefficient	Std. E	t-value
HINC	0.0046	0.0085	0.5411*
NCHILD	-0.0998	-0.0731	-1.3652**
REEDU	0.3622	0.1396	2.5945*
HEAD	0.1176	0.0733	1.6043*
SCI	0.3061	0.1467	2.0865*
FEDU	0.1207	0.0441	2.7369**
MEDU	0.1084	0.0564	1.9219*
MHEAD	1.8414	0.7531	2.4450*
Constant	-2.114	-0.5631	-3.7542
R² = 0.52		DF = 08	-2 Log Likelihood = 329.27
N = 600	Sig. = 0.000	Chi-Square = 24.9	

** 5 percent level of significance;

* 10 percent level of significance

In this analysis educational attainment is taken as dependent variable and influenced by various demographic independent variables. Statistical results shows significant and expected signs of independent variables according to existing literature. The household income directly and positively associate with educational attainment. It shows that the financially strong parents are able to provide better educational facilities to their children. Students having financially strong parents achieve more higher education. Similarly statistical results shows negative relationship between educational achievements. As increases the number of children the educational achievement decreases that shows inverse relationship among number of children in household and education enrolment. Results also confirms the positive and significant relation among educational expenditure and educational attainment. Gender of household head also have positive correlation with educational achievement which shows that the households have higher educational enrolment whose head is male. Fathers and mother's education have strong and positive link with child educational attainment. This study considered the parent's education as human capital and results shows that parent's human capital have strong and positive effects on

children education. Students with highly educated parents tend to achieve more high education than those students whom parents are not highly educated. Similarly the parent's marital status matter much in educational achievement, students from divorced or single parents relatively low educational achievements. Marital status of households head also shows the expected sign according to existing literature.

Although, four under observed independent variables contribute more to educational attainment. These variables are ratio to educational expenditure, father's education, marital status of household head and the final and most important variable around which the whole study is circulated is social capital shows great and strong association with educational achievement. Family networking, communication, friends, bonding, link with informational channels plays a vital role in educational attainments of students and it is also proved statistically significant. Many prior studies documented the similar results as our research found (Abdul Hakim, 2012; Roberts, 2001; Lopez, 1996; Downey, 1995; Lillard, 1994; Coleman, 1988).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Education is the most crucial problem of the developing countries like Pakistan. Condition of education is severe in Pakistan due to several reasons. Social capital is one of the major reason that influence educational achievements. This study trying to fill the literature gap that exist due to researcher's ignorance to social capital. Most of the researches focus on the educational policies in the country without concerning much about the demographic variables of households and social capital. This research investigate the importance of social capital to educational achievements in rural areas of Southern Punjab Pakistan.

Educational achievements not only varies across boarders but also varies within country in rural and urban areas. Mostly students from urban areas are more educated and have wide vision, large stock of information due to easy access to information and communication than students from rural areas. There are some other factors that influence the educational achievements if we look in deep inside of these factors. It is not false to say that the urban areas are rich in social capital, provider greater security, better community, modern informational channels, good employment opportunities increase the parent's financial capital. On the other hand people in rural areas have limited access to information channels, financial resources are also limited, parents human capital (education) relatively low and people are strict to their culture. These factors play important role in educational achievements of urban and rural areas students. All such factors statistically proved significant and positively correlated in this research. This study also found that the social capital is more important than financial and human capital. There are also some evidence that shows education is important factor in generating future social capital. This study not only add in social capital literature but also much helpful for policy makers. While making educational policies the importance of social capital must keep in mind and make such policies that socially acceptable and increase social capital among people and societies. Education plays critical role in development and economic growth of the country. But in Pakistan education condition is desperate and there is need to revise the educational policies. While making educational policies not only focus on financial capital and tangible assets but also put close consideration to hidden or intangible factors that plays key role in education development and economic growth. These intangible factors seems irrelevant to educational achievements but have great consequences indirectly.

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