

Factors Contributing to Students' Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English at Secondary Level

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Abstract

The poor academic performance in English is commonly observed among secondary school students in public sector which is a big challenge for the teachers, educational administrators, educationists, policymakers and Ministry of Education. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that contribute to students' unsatisfactory academic performance in English at Secondary Level in Kohat Division (Pakistan). A sample of 180 male secondary school teachers was selected from sixty secondary schools through simple random sampling technique. The study was quantitative and descriptive in nature and survey design was used for gathering information. A self-developed structured questionnaire based on five point likert's scale was used to seek the responses of the respondents regarding factors contributing to students' unsatisfactory academic performance in English. Statistical analysis was done on the basis of descriptive statistics i.e., mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that a number of factors contribute to students' unsatisfactory academic performance in the subject of English at secondary level. These factors were; ineffective curriculum, incompetency of English teachers, under-staffing, unfavorable classroom environment, lack of professional training, unawareness of modern teaching methods, and inadequate teaching learning materials. Based on findings, it was recommended that curriculum should be revised and designed according to the emerging needs of the students. Competent and qualified teachers should be recruited through transparent competitive examination purely on merit basis. English teachers should be trained professionally in modern teaching methodologies.

Keywords: Student-Related Factors; Classroom-Related Factors; School-Related Factors; Teacher-Related Factors; Family-Related Factors, Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement, Secondary Level

Introduction

The academic performance of the students is the outcomes of socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors that's why its assessment has gained importance in the education. Throughout the last twenty years, education in Pakistan is increasingly gaining its position as profitable business through driving goals to maximize the benefits through high quality education which can produce skillful, knowledgeable, mannered students as per needs and necessities of the progressively developing market (Tahir and Naqvi, 2006). Students' academic performance has been an important issue for institutions and the role of the English dialect for enhancing educational achievement through improved communication cannot be over emphasized. If the learner is debilitated in the language of education, classroom interaction will be troublesome and learning may not be occurred (Malekela, 2003). Students who experience issues with English dialect may not work successfully, not only in English as a subject but in all their academic attempts. The impact of English as a medium of communication has on the various subjects of the educational modules perpetually indicate the way that students' performance in the English dialect impacts their overall performance in other subjects (Amua-Sekyi & Nti, 2015).

Academic performance is the capability of an individual to study and remember actualities and being able to communicate his knowledge orally or on paper. In other words, academic performance refers to how learners deal with their studies and how they accomplish various assignments assigned to them by instructors (Jam, 2009). Generally, academic performance alludes to how well a student is completing his or her assignments or studies. There are different factors that determine the level and quality of students' academic performance (Scottk, 2002). There are two sorts of factors that influence the academic performance of the learners i.e., internal and external classroom factors. These factors mainly affect the students' performance. Internal classroom factors are comprised of learners' ability in English, class plans, class size, English reading materials, class test outcomes, instructional facilities, assignment, classroom environment, complication of the course material, teachers' performance in the class, utilization of technology and examinations systems. External classroom factors consist of extracurricular practices, domestic problems, financial issues, social and other problems. Research studies reveals that students' performance relies on many factors for example, learning facilities, gender and age variances, etc. that can influence student performance (Hansen, 2000).

Poor and disappointing students' academic performance is due to the falling standard of students below a normal standard and quality (Aremu & Sokan, 2003). student's scholastic dissatisfaction is not just exasperating

for the students and the guardians, rather it additionally impacts the community since it contributes to incompetent and unskilled manpower in all fields of the economy and governmental issues (Aremu, 2000). Secondary school students in government funded schools often come from economically poor and normal income families. These families confront different issues causing emotional disturbance among their children which causes serious damage to the achievement status to secondary school students (Hussain, 2006). The quality of tutoring is connected with the educational programs, instructors' capabilities, teaching techniques, educational resources, and physical facilities. Learners' performance is influenced by several factors e.g., teachers' competencies, learning environment, management, educational facilities, examination systems and so forth. Academic achievement refers to a cumulative function of present and prior family, community and school experiences which takes place at any point (Amua-Sekyi & Nti, 2015). The school environment, which comprises the classrooms, libraries, technical workshops, laboratories, teachers' quality, school administration, teaching approaches and methodologies, colleagues, etc. are the factors that influence students' academic achievement (Ajayi, 2001; Oluchukwu, 2000). That's why, the school environment remains an important area that needs to be considered and well-managed to stimulate and improve students' academic performance.

A number of research studies have been conducted to identify the factors contributing to students' unsatisfactory academic performance. In these research studies, various factors have been investigated. Raychaudhuri et. al. (2010) concluded that students' academic performance depends on various socio-economic factors like students' attendance, family income, parental educational level, teacher-student ratio, professionally trained teaching staff, sex of the student, and distance of schools. Tahir & Naqvi (2006) found a negative correlation between the family income and students' performance. Amua-Sekyi & Nti (2015) found that students' feeble foundation in English, unqualified teaching staff, lack of logistical support and professional development training affected negatively instructional process, causing students' poor performance in the English examination. It was revealed that children whose guardians facilitate them in getting education have a tendency to exhibit better performance in school. Students exhibit higher scholarly and behavioural levels, have higher goals and desires, and show other positive educational practices when parents are well-educated, inspiring, and involved. Parental involvement can forcefully influence students' achievement in urban schools. Findings show that two vital factors influencing parental involvement are; the time school events or interactions are planned, and coordinate correspondence with the school i.e., personal invitations to be present in events. Lamb et al. (2006) classified factors that affect students' performance as outside school factors and inside school factors. Outside scholars include poverty, family, and English language proficiency while inside the school factors comprise student records, credit accrual, and school curriculum.

Purpose of the Study

The expanding nature of unsatisfactory and disappointing academic performance of public secondary school students particularly in external examinations, tend to shift the liability on the curriculum, teaching methodologies and insufficient funding from government to ensure a vibrant and conducive environment for instructional process. Notwithstanding, these might not be the principal reasons why students exhibit unsatisfactory and disappointing performance in examinations. That's why the study under investigation was aimed to investigate the factors contributing to students' unsatisfactory academic achievement in English at secondary level in Kohat Division, Pakistan.

Method and Procedure

Population and Sampling

All the Secondary School Teacher (General) (formerly known as Senior English Teachers) working in public secondary school in Kohat Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province constituted the population of the study. According to Annual Statistical Report of Government Schools (2014-15) published by Elementary & Secondary Education Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, there were total 191 secondary schools in Kohat Division in which 129 were boys and 62 were girls (EMIS, 2014). The sample used in this study was comprised of 180 male secondary school teachers selected from 60 secondary schools through simple random sampling technique from Karak, Kohat and Hangu Districts located in Kohat Division.

Delimitation of the Study

The researchers deemed to select only male secondary school teachers due to culture barriers in the population area. Furthermore, the study was delimited to only 60 male secondary schools due to lack of resources with researchers. There are numerous factors that are responsible for the unsatisfactory academic achievement in English but the current study was restricted to only five factors i.e., student-related factors, classroom-related factors, school-related factors, teacher-related factors and family-related factors.

Research Design and Instrumentation

The study was quantitative and descriptive in nature and survey design was used for the study to seek the responses of the respondents regarding factors contributing to students' unsatisfactory academic achievement in

the subject of English at secondary level. In the light of research objectives and relevant literature, a self-developed structured questionnaire was prepared by the researchers to ascertain the views of the secondary school teachers regarding factors contributing to students' unsatisfactory academic performance in English. The questionnaire was designed on five point likert's scale i.e., SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), UN (Undecided), DA (Disagree) and SDA (Strongly Disagree) and comprised of five possible dimensions responsible for students' unsatisfactory academic achievement in English. These dimensions were: student-related factors; classroom-related factors; school-related factors; teacher-related factors; family-related factors.

Pilot Testing

In research, pilot testing plays a vital role in the purifying research instrument for achieving authentic and reliable results. So, pilot study was conducted in 12 public secondary schools selected from Karak, Kohat and Hangu Districts. Questionnaires were distributed among the participants and were told to respond without any hesitation and free of biasness. Responses were collected and analyzed. Some items were found weak and deleted. Some items were revised and some were replaced with their synonyms. Then final version was prepared in the light of suggestions given by the experts in the field of educational research.

Validity and Reliability

Without ensuring validity and reliability of research instruments, no authentic, accurate and reliable results are possible. That's why it was very imperative to confirm validity and reliability of research instrument. Based on this reality, validity of the questionnaire was confirmed by the five specialists in the field of educational research having extraordinary knowledge and experience. Furthermore, reliability was checked through Cronbach's Alpha and internal consistency reliability analysis was calculated separately for each factor through SPSS. The overall average reliability coefficient of questionnaire was found to be 0.804.

Table 01:

Average Internal Consistency Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) of Each Dimension of the Questionnaire

Items	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Student-Related Factors	06	0.832
Classroom-Related Factors	05	0.768
Teacher-Related Factors	08	0.781
School-Related Factors	07	0.843
Family-Related Factors	07	0.798
Average	6.6	0.804

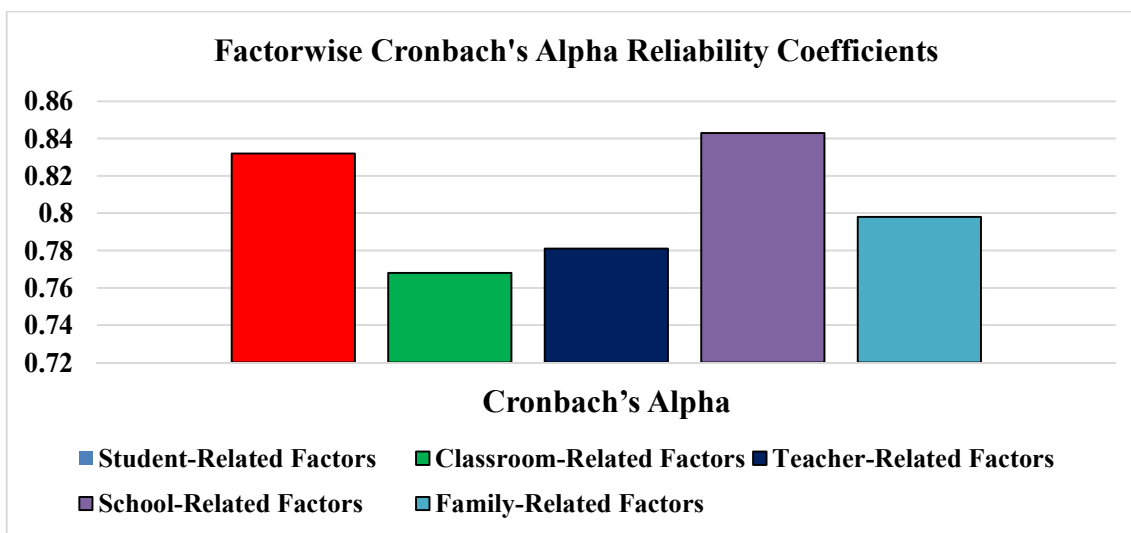


Fig. 01: Dimension wise Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection process was commenced on 9th April 2016 and completed on 25th May 2016 as the researchers personally visited the respective sample schools to seek the responses from the respondents. Before the distribution of questionnaires among the participants, purpose of the study was expounded to them and were asked that their response will be kept confidential and will be used only for the research purpose. Furthermore, they were assured that their responses will be destroyed after data analysis. Then they were requested to respond freely without any hesitation and free of biasness. In this way data was collected with 100% response rate. After gathering information from the respondents, raw data was organized, classified, tabulated, analyzed and

interpreted. Descriptive statistics i.e., mean and standard deviation were employed for data analysis through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

Results and Data Interpretation

The purpose of the study was to explore the factors that contribute to students' unsatisfactory academic performance in English at Secondary Level. The study was quantitative and descriptive in nature and survey design was used for gathering information. A self-developed structured questionnaire based on five point likert's scale was used to seek the responses of the respondents regarding factors contributing to students' unsatisfactory academic performance in English. Statistical analysis was done based on descriptive statistics i.e., mean and standard deviation as under:

Table 02: Student-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
Students' cheating addiction in examination	3.97	0.81	Agreed
Negative attitude towards English	3.89	0.83	Agreed
Extraordinary involvement in co-curricular activities	3.83	0.79	Agreed
Students' truancy	3.56	0.93	Agreed
Child labour	3.34	0.96	Agreed
Students' disruptive behaviour	3.26	0.89	Agreed

Table 1 indicates student-related factors contributing to unsatisfactory academic achievement in English at secondary level. Descriptive analysis revealed that students' cheating addiction in examination (mean=3.97, SD=0.81), negative attitude towards English (mean=3.89, SD=0.83), extraordinary involvement in co-curricular activities (Mean=3.83, SD=0.79), students' truancy (Mean=3.56, SD=0.93), child labour (Mean=3.34, SD=0.96) and students' disruptive behaviour (Mean=3.26, SD=0.98) are the student-related factors contributing to unsatisfactory students' academic achievement in English at secondary level.

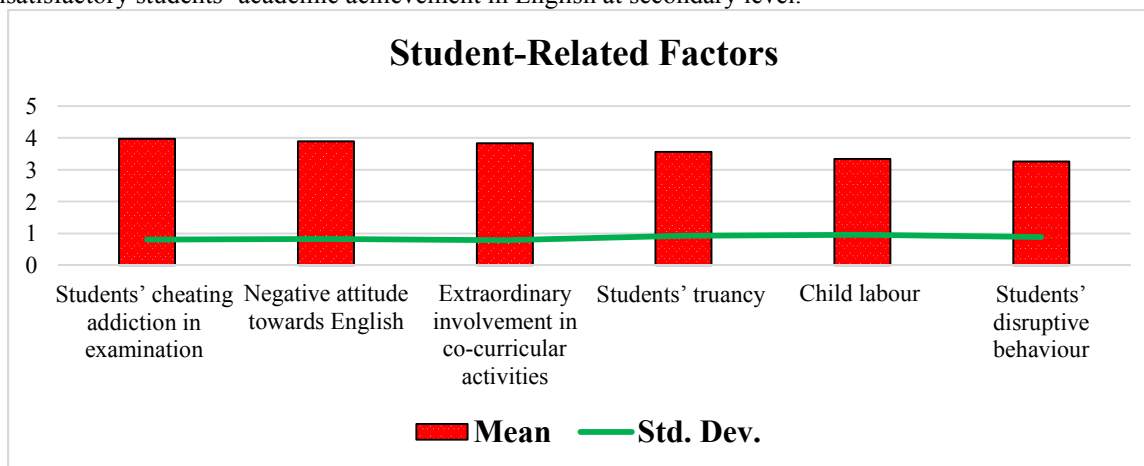


Fig. 02: Student-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Table 03: Classroom-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
Unfavorable classroom temperature	3.92	0.83	Agreed
Overcrowded Classroom	3.85	0.89	Agreed
Inadequate teaching learning materials	3.66	0.87	Agreed
Improper lighting	3.59	0.91	Agreed
Lack of classroom facilities	3.52	0.92	Agreed

Table 3 reflects classroom-related factors contributing to unsatisfactory academic achievement in English at secondary level. Descriptive statistics indicates that unfavorable classroom temperature (Mean=3.92, SD=0.83), overcrowded classroom (Mean=3.85, SD=0.89), inadequate teaching learning materials (Mean=3.66, SD=0.87), improper lighting (Mean=3.59, SD=0.91) and lack of classroom facilities (Mean=3.52, SD=0.92) are the classroom-related factors contributing to unsatisfactory academic performance of students in English at secondary level.

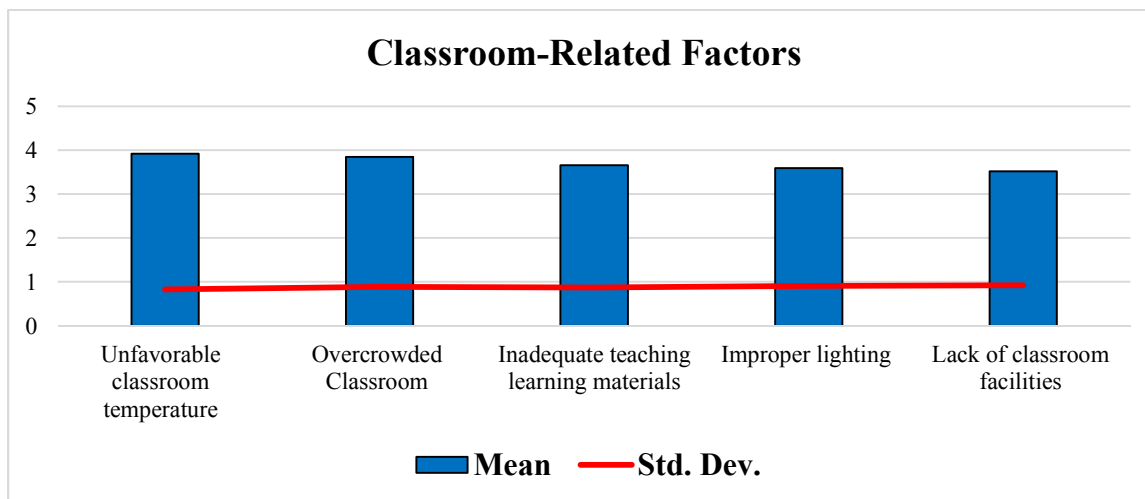


Fig. 03: Classroom-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Table 04: Teacher-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
Unawareness of modern teaching methods	3.68	0.86	Agreed
Incompetency of teachers	3.57	0.89	Agreed
Lack of professional training	3.39	0.94	Agreed
Poor classroom management ability	3.36	0.91	Agreed
Autocratic attitude of teachers	3.29	0.98	Agreed
English teachers' workload	3.26	0.96	Agreed
Teachers' Poor financial status	3.12	0.93	Agreed
Unpunctuality of teachers	2.49	1.02	Disagreed

Table 4 depicts teacher-related factors that contributes to unsatisfactory academic achievement of students in English at secondary level. Descriptive statistics shows that unawareness of modern teaching methods (Mean=3.68, SD=0.86), incompetency of teachers (Mean=3.57, SD=0.89), lack of professional training (Mean=3.39, SD=0.94), poor classroom management ability (Mean=3.36, SD=0.91), autocratic attitude of teachers (Mean=3.29, SD=0.98), English teachers' workload (Mean=3.26, SD=0.96) and teachers' poor financial status (Mean=3.12, SD=0.93) are the teacher-related factors that contributes to unsatisfactory academic performance of students in English at secondary level.

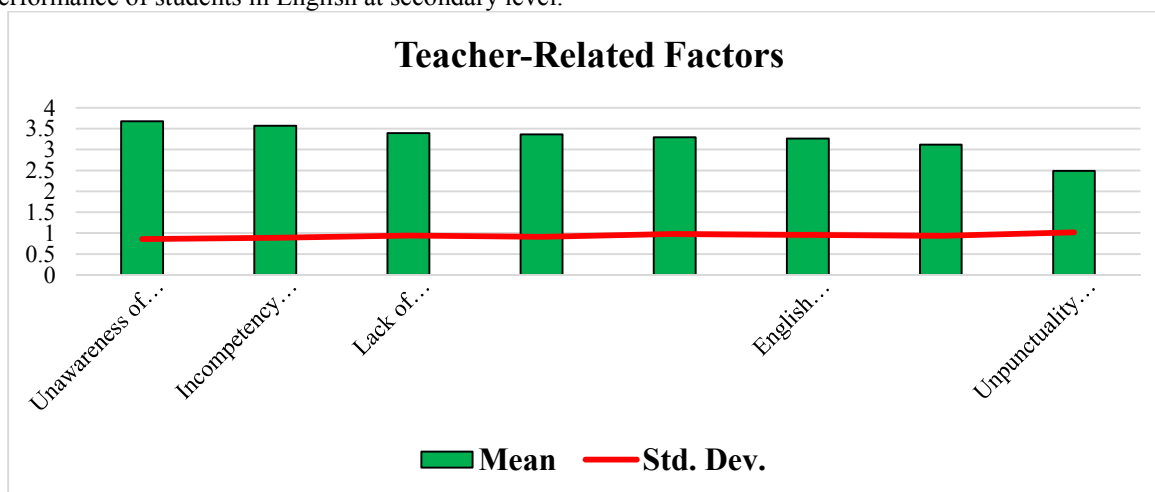


Fig. 04: Teacher-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Table 05: School-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
Ineffective curriculum	4.21	0.76	Agreed
Poor examination system	4.16	0.79	Agreed
Lack of facilities	3.98	0.77	Agreed
Under-staffing	3.95	0.82	Agreed
Unfavorable school environment	3.69	0.89	Agreed
Political involvement in school affairs	3.29	0.98	Agreed
Poor administration	3.20	0.96	Agreed

Table 5 depicts school-related factors that contributes to unsatisfactory academic achievement of students in English at secondary level. Descriptive statistics shows that ineffective curriculum (mean=4.21, SD=0.76), poor examination system (Mean= 4.16, SD= 0.79), lack of facilities (Mean=3.98, SD=0.77), under-staffing (Mean=3.95, SD=0.82), unfavorable school environment (Mean=3.69, SD=0.89), political involvement in school affairs (mean=3.29, SD=0.98) and poor administration (Mean=3.20, SD=0.96) are the school-related factors that causes students' unsatisfactory academic achievement in English at secondary level.

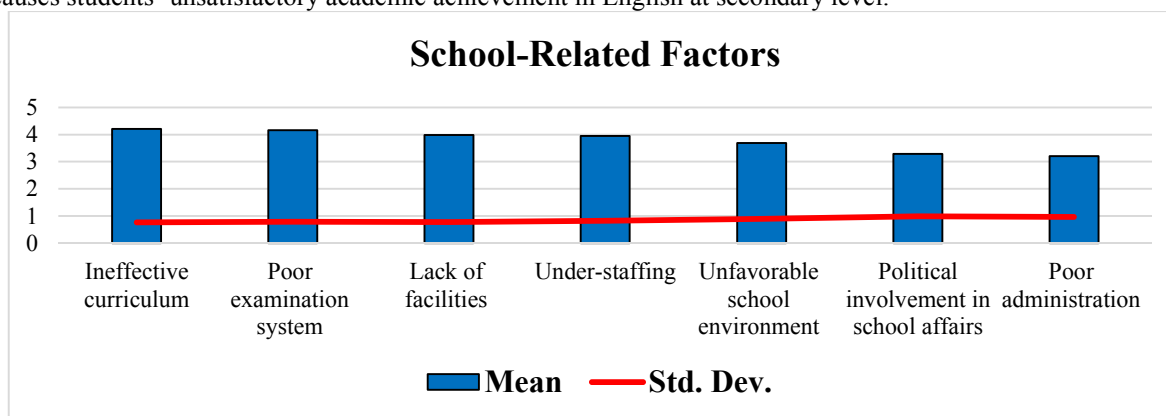


Fig. 05: School-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Table 06: Family-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Factors	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remarks
Joint family system	3.92	0.78	Agreed
Lack of parental attention on children	3.75	0.92	Agreed
Father or mother death	3.72	0.82	Agreed
Tension between father and mother	3.64	0.86	Agreed
Parental illiteracy	3.62	0.82	Agreed
Parental divorce	3.57	0.81	Agreed
Parental poverty	3.26	0.96	Agreed

Table 6 portrays family-related factors that contributes to unsatisfactory academic achievement of students in English at secondary level. Descriptive statistics depicts that Joint family system (Mean=3.92, SD=0.78), lack of parental attention on children (Mean=3.75, SD=0.92), father or mother death (Mean=3.72, SD=0.82), tension between father and mother (Mean=3.64, SD=0.86), parental illiteracy (Mean=3.62, SD=0.82), parental divorce (Mean=3.57, SD=0.81) and parental poverty (Mean=3.26, SD=0.96) are the family-related factors that causes students' unsatisfactory academic performance in English at secondary level.

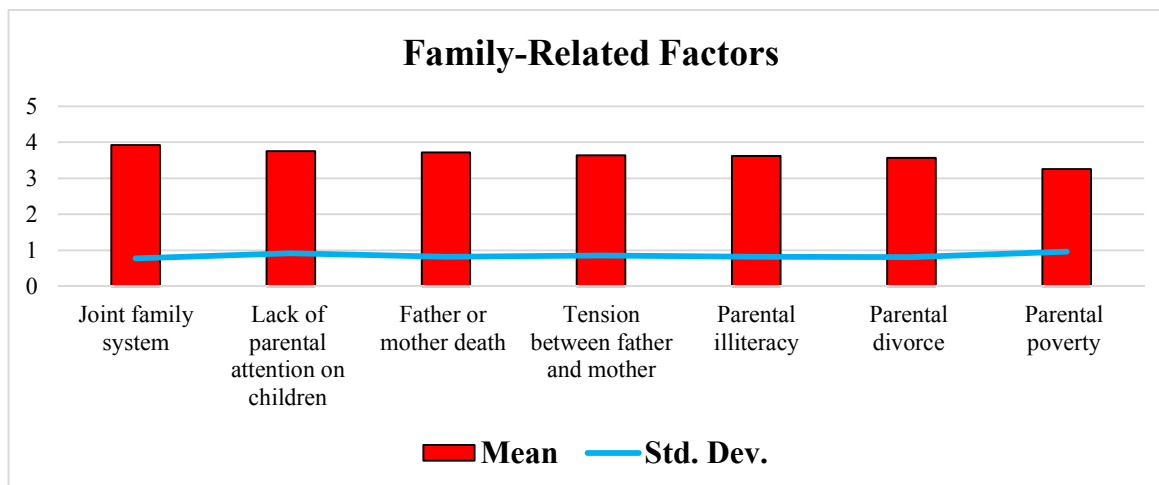


Fig. 06: Family-Related Factors Contributing to Unsatisfactory Academic Achievement in English

Discussion

The purpose of the study was to explore the factors that contribute to students' unsatisfactory academic achievement in English at secondary level. The study was quantitative and descriptive in nature and survey design was used for the study to seek the responses of the respondents through self-designed structured questionnaire regarding factors contributing to students' unsatisfactory academic achievement in the subject of English at secondary level. Data was collected through personal appointments and analyzed through proper descriptive statistics. The results revealed that students' unsatisfactory academic achievement in English is caused by a number of factors i.e., students-related factors; classroom-related factors; teacher-related factors; and family-related factors.

Student-related factors can play an important role in students' academic performance. Students' cheating addiction is commonly observed which has declined their academic performance badly. This culture of cheating has been so developed that now it has been considered students' right. Students' negative attitude towards English also affect their performance negatively. Extraordinary involvement in co-curricular activities is the most serious upsetting factors that is responsible for the poor students' performance. Students' truancy and disruption is another distressing factor that contributes students' unsatisfactory performance in English. In addition, child labour also affects students' performance as they are unable to study at home

Students' unsatisfactory academic performance is caused by classroom-related factors. Unfavorable classroom temperature was rated the most influential factor that affect students' performance in English. In abnormal classroom temperature, students feel themselves boring and disturbing which in turn affect their performance. Likewise, in overcrowded classroom, it is difficult for teacher to pay attention individually to each student and that's why students' performance is badly affected negatively. Adequate instructional materials and classroom facilities can boost students' performance positively but unfortunately, our classrooms lack of these instructional materials and facilities which affect students' performance negatively. Improper lighting in classroom can also affect students' performance adversely.

Teacher plays a pivotal role in socializing and educating the society through cultivating learners with social, moral and economic values. Successful learners depend upon competent, committed and successful teachers. According to Barnett (2009), Teaching and learning involves two active participants in the classroom - the teacher and the learner. It is the pedagogical relationship between teachers and students that actively works (or fails) to enable the student to appropriate the curriculum in ways meaningful to him/her. Although students must assume responsibility for their learning, research demonstrates clearly that among the factors that lead to students' performance are qualities of teachers (Vuzo, 2010). But unfortunately, the findings of the current study revealed that there are some teacher-related factors that affect students' performance negatively. Unawareness of modern teaching methods; incompetency of teachers; lack of professional training; poor classroom management ability; autocratic attitude of teachers; workload; and teachers' poor financial status are responsible for students' unsatisfactory academic performance in English.

No doubt, school environment plays a remarkable role in students' academic performance. Research revealed that students' performance is badly affected by unfavorable schools' environment (Amua-Sekyi & Nti, 2015). The findings of the current study indicated that a number of school-related factors contribute to students' unsatisfactory academic performance in English. Curriculum was ineffective and not according to the emerging needs of students; administration and examination system was poor and unsatisfactory; basic facilities were not available; there was insufficient teaching staff; school environment was not conducive; and political involvement

was observed in school affairs.

Family-related factors can play a critical role in a student's academic performance. Small (2010) expressed that youngsters whose parents pay attention on their education have a tendency to perform successfully in school. Students show higher scholastic and behavioural levels, have higher aspirations, and exhibit other positive school practices when parents are educated, stimulating, and involved. The findings of the current study revealed that a number of family related factors affect students' academic performance negatively. These factors are; Joint family system; lack of parental attention on children; father or mother death; tension between father and mother; parental illiteracy; parental divorce; and parental poverty. These factors can easily consume a student's attention and cause his or her academic performance to decline dramatically.

Conclusions

Based on discussion, it was found that students' unsatisfactory academic achievement in English is caused by a number of factors i.e., students-related factors; classroom-related factors; teacher-related factors; and family-related factors. These factors cause their academic performance to decline dramatically in English. The sub factors of these factors are:

1. *Student-Related Factors*: Students' cheating addiction in examination; negative attitude towards English; extraordinary involvement in co-curricular activities; students' truancy; child labour; and students' disruptive behaviour.
2. *Classroom-Related Factors*: Unfavorable classroom temperature; overcrowded classroom; inadequate teaching learning materials; improper lighting; and lack of classroom facilities.
3. *Teacher-Related Factors*: Unawareness of modern teaching methods; incompetency of teachers; lack of professional training; poor classroom management ability; autocratic attitude of teachers; English teachers' workload; and teachers' poor financial status.
4. *School-Related Factors*: Ineffective curriculum; poor examination system; lack of facilities; under-staffing; unfavorable school environment; political involvement in school affairs; and poor administration.
5. *Family-Related Factors*: Joint family system; lack of parental attention on children; father or mother death; tension between father and mother; parental illiteracy; parental divorce; and parental poverty.

Recommendations

Based on findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. Curriculum should be reviewed and designed according to the emerging needs of the students.
2. Examination laws should be implemented effectively by all BISE to strengthen the examination system. Students found guilty should be punished in the light of examination laws.
3. Government should take necessary actions to ensure the provision of basic educational facilities for students and teachers. In this manner, students and teachers will feel comfort and they will show excellent results.
4. Favourable and conducive environment should be ensured for teaching learning process. Classrooms should be equipped with all basic educational facilities and technologies so that effective teaching learning process may take place.
5. Poor students should be provided financial assistance so that they may continue their education. For this purpose, a special budget should be provided by the government to facilitate poor students financially.
6. Competent and qualified teachers should be appointed through transparent competitive examination purely on merit basis. Sufficient teaching staff should be appointed in each school to reduce workloads on teachers.
7. English teachers should be trained professionally in modern teaching methodologies at least once in a year.

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