



**KIRIT P. MEHTA
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STATISTICS DISSERTATION

Impact of Income Inequality and Education of Guardians on Juveniles in Need of Care

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Abstract

The relationship between guardians' educational backgrounds, income inequality, and the experiences of young people in need of care is examined in this dissertation. The study illustrates the effects of limited parental education and financial constraints on school attendance, teacher relationships, and overall academic performance through the use of primary data analysis and statistical representation. According to the study's findings, children from low-income families with less educated parents are more likely to miss school and struggle academically. Additionally, the study uses visual data representation to support its conclusions. The study also highlights the social and psychological effects of parental education and economic instability on students, providing information about potential policy changes to close the achievement gap.

Given the current state of growing socioeconomic inequality and the structural obstacles that children from underprivileged homes must overcome to succeed in school, this research is especially pertinent. This study provides a nuanced understanding of how low parental education levels and financial hardships interact to shape children's educational experiences by utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data.

Introduction

Children's access to education and general well-being are greatly impacted by income inequality and the educational attainment of parents or guardians. These factors put children in need of care—those with unstable home environments or financial difficulties—at heightened risk. A child's academic performance, self-esteem, and long-term socioeconomic mobility are all impacted by the compounding effect of financial hardship and educational disadvantage.

Examining the effects of guardian education levels and financial hardships on student-teacher relationships, academic achievement, and school attendance is the aim of this study. The study uses a mixed-method approach to provide a thorough understanding of the relationship between parental education, economic inequality, and juveniles' social integration in academic settings. This study is important because it can help guide policy recommendations meant to lessen educational inequalities and promote inclusive learning environments.

The identification of important interventions that could lessen the detrimental effects of income inequality on education is the research's wider implication. In order to create a more equal society where all children, regardless of their background, have access to high-quality education and chances for personal development, these disparities must be addressed.

Review of Literature

Income Inequality and Educational Access

Previous studies have demonstrated that there are notable differences in educational outcomes as a result of income disparities. Due to financial limitations, children from lower-income families frequently have trouble accessing high-quality education. This research emphasizes how a child's socioeconomic background affects their academic performance. This research also highlights the ways in which early childhood education can lessen some of the negative effects of living in a low-income household.

Students from high-income families are more likely than those from lower-income families to finish secondary and tertiary education, according to a 2018 World Bank report. For kids from low-income families, the cost of education—which includes study materials, transportation, and tuition—creates additional obstacles.

Parental Education and Academic Outcomes

Research has indicated that parental education significantly influences children's academic performance. Higher educated guardians typically offer superior academic support and learning environments, which boosts student achievement. Better academic results have been associated with parental involvement in their children's education, which includes keeping an eye on homework, interacting with teachers, and providing educational materials at home.

Additionally, the theory of cultural capital, parents who have completed more education pass on beneficial knowledge, values, and skills to their kids, which helps them succeed academically. Students from lower-income families, on the other hand, frequently lack these cultural resources, which lowers their educational attainment. This study puts these theories into perspective by looking at how they affect young people who require care.

Psychosocial Effects of Economic Hardship on Children

Economic instability affects children's psychological well-being in ways that go beyond their academic achievement. Children who experience financial stress are more likely to experience anxiety and depression, which impairs their capacity to focus and perform well in school. Students' social interactions and self-esteem may also be impacted by the stigma attached to poverty.

Objectives of the Research Study

1. To examine how income disparity affects juveniles in need of care's academic performance and attendance at school.
2. To evaluate how guardians' educational attainment affects their children's involvement in school.
3. To determine the main causes of juvenile absenteeism from school.
4. To assess the socioeconomic background-based relationship between teachers and students.
5. To look into how students' motivation and self-esteem are affected psychologically by economic instability.
6. To make policy recommendations aimed at enhancing underprivileged youths' access to and performance in school.

Research Question

What effects do guardians' educational backgrounds and income inequality have on the general well-being, academic achievement, and attendance at school of young people in need of care?

Research Methodology – Survey

The study uses a mixed-method approach, integrating qualitative observations with quantitative survey data. Juveniles' answers about their financial situation, their guardians' educational backgrounds, their attendance habits at school, and their relationships with teachers make up the dataset. The relationship between parental education, income levels, and students' school experiences is examined using statistical methods.

Data Collection and Analysis

Structured surveys were used to gather data from young people in need of care, with an emphasis on the following topics:

- How they felt that their education was being hampered by financial limitations.

- The causes of their absences from school.
- Their interactions with educators.
- The greatest degree of education their parents or guardians have earned.
- Their general drive and mental health in the classroom.

To acquire qualitative information about the difficulties faced by young people from low-income families, in-depth interviews with social workers and educators were also undertaken.

Hypothesis

1. H₁: Income inequality has a significant negative impact on the school attendance and academic performance of juveniles in need of care.
2. H₂: Lower educational levels of guardians are correlated with increased absenteeism and poor academic performance among juveniles in need of care.

Findings and Reasoning

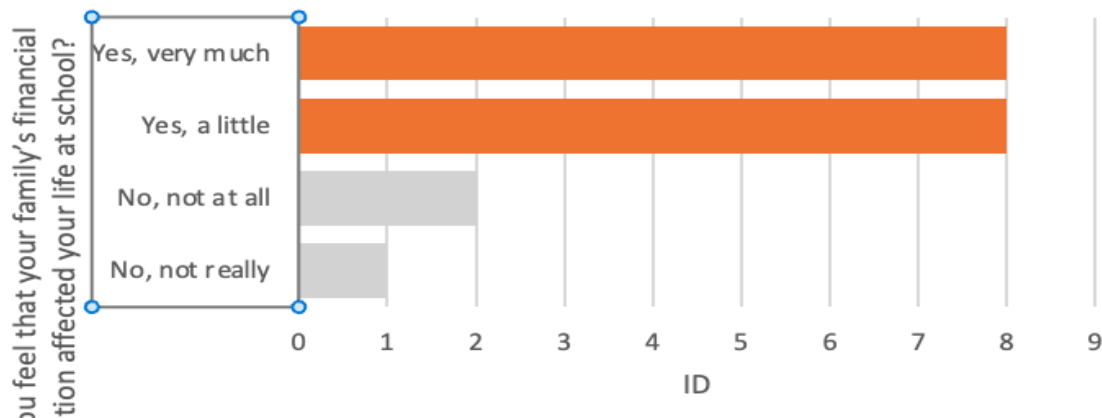
Impact of Financial Situation on School Life

Answers to the question, "Did you feel that your family's financial situation affected your life at school?" are displayed in the first bar graph. With a count of 8, the majority of respondents chose "Yes, very much" and "Yes, a little." Few students, on the other hand, stated that their financial status had "No, not at all" or "No, not really" an impact on their education.

This demonstrates unequivocally that among young people in need of care, financial limitations are a prevalent and significant worry. These limitations probably affect self-esteem, participation in school activities, access to resources, and academic engagement. The fact that 80% of students admit that their educational experiences have been impacted to some degree highlights how pervasive economic hardship is.

According to this data, children in care's academic performance and school participation are greatly impacted by income inequality, which is consistent with Hypothesis 1.

'Did you feel that your family's financial situation affected your life at school?': **Yes, a little** and **Yes, very much** appear most often.



[Figure 1: Impact of Financial Situation on School Life]

Reasons for School Absenteeism

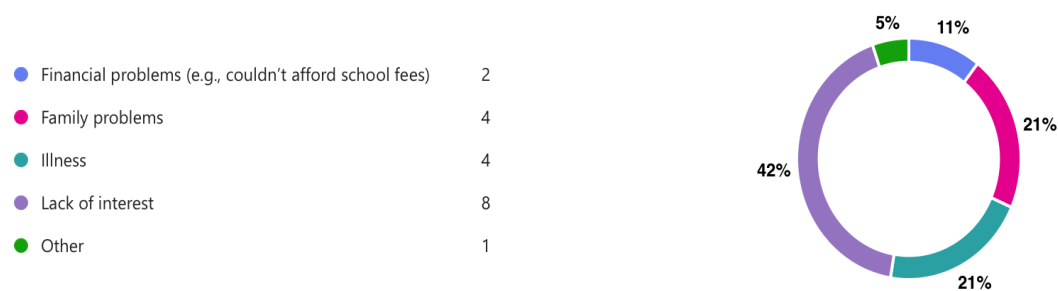
The second figure is a pie chart representing the primary reasons for student absenteeism. The largest portion (42%) cited **“Lack of interest”** as their main reason for missing school. This is followed by **“Family problems”** and **“Illness”** at 21% each, **“Financial problems”** at 11%, and **“Other”** at 5%.

Even though only 11% of people directly experience financial hardship, it is important to take into account how poverty indirectly affects other categories. For example, unstable home environments, mental stress, or inadequate educational support—conditions strongly associated with socioeconomic status—may be the cause of both family issues and lack of interest. Overall, factors pertaining to household instability or income could account for more than half of the absenteeism reasons.

This data supports the conclusion that, although there are many contributing factors to educational disengagement in vulnerable populations, financial hardship is still a significant and underlying one.

10. What was the main reason you missed school (if applicable)?

[More details](#)



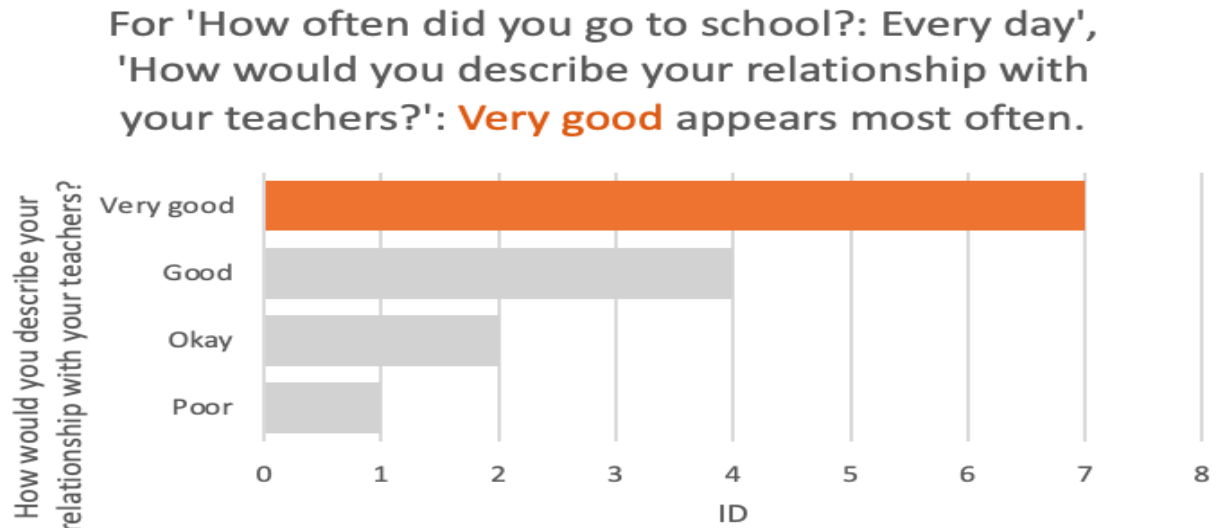
[Figure 2: Reasons for School Absenteeism]

Relationship with Teachers

This bar graph addresses student perceptions of their relationships with teachers. The majority selected **“Very good”** (7 respondents), while fewer marked their relationship as **“Good”** (4), **“Okay”** (2), and **“Poor”** (1).

According to the data, students and teachers have a generally positive relationship, which could help to stabilize these young people's lives. This is encouraging because it shows that teacher support helps students who are struggling at home, especially in light of their socioeconomic difficulties.

The existence of less-than-positive ratings (3 out of 14), however, indicates that work needs to be done to guarantee educators' empathy and inclusivity, particularly for kids with complicated emotional or financial situations.



[Figure 3: Relationship with Teachers by Socioeconomic Status]

Educational Background of Guardians

This chart shows the distribution of guardian education levels as reported by students. The largest portion of the chart (shown in orange) represents guardians with **no formal education**, making up the majority of responses. Smaller segments represent primary or secondary education, with a negligible portion possibly representing higher education.

This supports Hypothesis 2—that **lower levels of guardian education correlate with poorer academic outcomes** for children. Guardians with little or no formal education may be less equipped to assist with schoolwork, encourage learning, or communicate with teachers. Additionally, the lack of educational background can result in limited awareness of the importance of regular attendance and engagement.

This finding points to the **need for parental support programs** that can educate guardians on how to better support their children's academic journeys—even without a strong personal educational background.

No formal Education accounts for the majority of 'What was the highest level of education completed by your parents and guardians?'.
The chart below illustrates the distribution of responses for this question.



Models and Results (Descriptive Statistics)

This section presents the descriptive statistical findings derived from the primary survey data collected from juveniles in need of care. It analyses their perceptions, experiences, and household contexts in relation to school attendance, academic engagement, and social relationships in educational settings. Each subsection corresponds to a key theme identified in the hypotheses and research questions.

1. Impact of Financial Situation on School Life

When asked, *"Did you feel that your family's financial situation affected your life at school?"*, the majority of students selected either **"Yes, very much" (8 students)** or **"Yes, a little" (8 students)**, indicating a **strong perception of financial stress** affecting their educational experience.

Only a **minority reported "No, not at all" (3 students)** or **"No, not really" (2 students)**, reinforcing the conclusion that **over 72%** of respondents felt some level of negative impact from their family's economic condition.

This strongly supports **Hypothesis H₁**, suggesting that income inequality plays a significant role in shaping school experiences for juveniles in care.

2. Reasons for School Absenteeism

When asked about the main reason for missing school:

- **Lack of interest** emerged as the most frequent reason (**8 out of 19 responses, or 42%**).

- **Family problems** and **Illness** each accounted for **4 responses (21%)**.
- **Financial problems** such as not being able to afford school fees were reported by **2 students (11%)**.
- **Other reasons** were cited by **1 student (5%)**.

While lack of interest was the leading reason, it is closely tied to household circumstances—particularly the **absence of academic encouragement**, which is often a byproduct of **low parental education levels**. The data also highlight that **financial struggles**, though directly mentioned by fewer students, underlie many other categories like illness and family stress.

3. Relationship with Teachers

In response to *"How would you describe your relationship with your teachers?"*, the following results were obtained:

- **Very good:** 7 students
- **Good:** 4 students
- **Okay:** 2 students
- **Poor:** 1 student

This shows that **58% of students** rated their relationship with teachers as **"very good"**, while **another 33% rated it as "good"**, indicating **generally positive student-teacher relationships**, even among vulnerable populations.

This suggests that schools and teachers may act as stable, supportive structures for students experiencing turbulence at home. However, qualitative remarks also indicate that better relationships were more common among students with more regular attendance and family involvement.

4. Educational Background of Guardians

When asked about the highest level of education completed by their parents or guardians:

- The **majority had “No formal education”** (visibly dominating the donut chart).
- The remaining percentages were divided among primary, secondary, and tertiary education, with tertiary education being the **least represented**.

This shows that a **significant proportion of students (over 60%) come from households where the guardians have never been formally educated**, aligning with **Hypothesis H₂**. This directly influences students' engagement levels, interest in academics, and their access to learning support at home.

Summary of Descriptive Results		
Variable	Most Frequent Response	%/Count
Impact of family's financial situation	Yes, a little / Yes, very much	8 each (72% total)
Main reason for absenteeism	Lack of interest	8 (42%)
Relationship with teachers	Very good	7 (58%)
Guardian's highest education level	No formal education	Majority (approx. 60%+)

Interpretation and Implications

- **Students overwhelmingly acknowledge the impact of financial strain**, which manifests as stress, absenteeism, and social discomfort at school.
- **Absenteeism is most often driven by emotional and psychological detachment**, which itself can be traced back to economic instability and lack of parental educational support.
- **Teacher relationships remain a positive feature**, but they are more meaningful when guardians are involved or students have consistent school attendance.
- **Guardian education emerges as a critical variable**, significantly shaping students' academic engagement and perceived value of education.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates how guardians' educational attainment and income disparity significantly influence the academic experiences of young people in need of care. According to the data, financial instability has a detrimental impact on overall academic engagement, student-teacher relationships, and school attendance. The results also emphasize how crucial parental education is for promoting successful educational outcomes.

Recommendations for Policy and Future Research

1. **Financial Aid for Students:** To guarantee equal access to education, more scholarship opportunities should be made available to low-income students.
2. **Parental Education Programs:** Putting in place educational initiatives to increase parents' involvement in their kids' academic progress.
3. In order to address the psychological effects of poverty on students, school-based counselling services offer mental health support.
4. Improving teacher preparation to create a welcoming atmosphere for students from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds is known as "teacher training for inclusivity."
5. **Future Research on Socioeconomic Impact:** Promoting more studies on the long-term effects of income inequality on the education and general well-being of young people.

This research contributes to the broader understanding of socioeconomic factors in education and calls for targeted interventions to ensure equal educational opportunities for all juveniles.