



Honours Project
Department of Curriculum and Instruction

A Project entitled

“Effect of student’s SES (socio-economic status) backgrounds on ethnic minority secondary school students’ academic achievement ”

Submitted by

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Declaration

I, Attiyyah-Zaineab , declare that this research report represents my own work under the supervision of Dr. LEE, Hui Lin Daphnee , and that it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

Signed: _____

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1. Abstract

This study investigates the patterns between ethnic minority secondary school students SES (socio-economic status) backgrounds and their academic achievement. A main education policy conducted a research and discovered the achievement gap was ample among the students that were classified as minority and low-socioeconomic status students. (Crane, 1996; Desimone & Long, 2010; Delen & Bellibas, 2015; Flores, 2007; Haycock, 2001; Kober, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lubienski, 2002). This study utilized the mixed method research design to obtain results for the following two research questions from 56 ethnic minority secondary school students.: 1) What factors of socio-economic status are most significant to ethnic minority secondary school student academic achievement? 2) How do these factors impact the academic achievement of ethnic minority secondary school students?

The results obtained indicate secondary school ethnic minority students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds generally faced challenges in their academic achievement due to their family income and family education. These factors were significant and has negatively impact their academic achievement. It is anticipated that the results of this study will instigate more research to meet the needs of these students.

2. Introduction

This research aims to investigate and study the pattern between ethnic minority secondary school students' socio-economic backgrounds and their academic performances. As most of ethnic minority students encounter difficulties with Chinese language skills due to not being the native speakers of the language and may also require support for other subjects. They might not be able to afford private tutorial sessions due to financial constraints, the low educational background of parents, and the home environment may also influence ethnic minorities' academic success in various ways. For instance, some of the ethnic minority students' parents are not well educated which may also cause difficulty in terms of learning support as their parents are also not able to teach them. This study wants to compare and address the effects of secondary school ethnic minority students of different social-economic backgrounds on their academic performances. This study is significant to study the patterns between ethnic minority secondary school students' SES and their academic performance. If the pattern determines students' success with their socio-economic status background, research will be needed to meet the needs of these students.

The objectives of this study are to find out the most significant factor(s) of socio-economic status affecting ethnic minority secondary school students and their impacts. Since socio-economic factors comprise various measures. This study will mainly focus on students' family income, education, and occupation as stable measures of SES.

3. Literature review

3.1 SES effect on academic achievement

Education has been recognized to be an essential approach to decreasing poverty and improving an individual's living conditions (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Fullan, 2006). To evaluate the achievement inequality among diverse groups of students, education has become obligatory. The student achievement gap among diverse groups of learners has been increasingly a vital topic of consideration in contemporary educational literature (Bellibas, 2016). Even though, there has been a predominant relationship concerning socioeconomic status (SES) and student achievement (Bellibas, 2016). Yet, there is limited research focusing on the association between factors and achievement of students of distinct groups of SES. This research may devote to concentrating on the interconnection among academic achievement and socioeconomic status of ethnic minority secondary school students in Hong Kong.

3.2 Academic Achievement

Academic achievement refers to the performance outcome of an individual's accomplishment of specific goals during school, college, and university (Steinmayr, Meibner, Weidinger & Wirthwein, 2014). Academic achievement can comprise various domains of learning. For instance, cognitive goals are to apply critical thinking to various subjects or to the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in particular intellectual domains (Steinmayr, Meibner, Weidinger & Wirthwein, 2014). All students' academic achievements are recorded term by term to track their academic progress through school, college, and university years. Moreover, students are

also at times labeled to different classes according to their academic ability which is portrayed by their academic achievement every year.

A main education policy conducted a research and discovered the achievement gap was ample among the students that were classified as minority and low-socioeconomic status students. (Crane, 1996; Desimone & Long, 2010; Delen & Bellibas, 2015; Flores, 2007; Haycock, 2001; Kober, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lubienski, 2002). It has been discovered that students from low socioeconomic backgrounds are unlikely to succeed in Primary, Secondary schools and to enter university dissimilar to the students belonging to higher socioeconomic status backgrounds (Daniel, 2009; Gelbal, 2008; Perry & McConney, 2010; Undheim & Nordvik, 1992). This demonstrates there might be an association between low-socioeconomic status and minority students that affects their academic achievement directly and they are unlikely to pursue higher education. There could be different SES measures behind this discovery. Hence, family economic status, education, and occupation could be significant measures directly related to this discovery. However, more research is needed to imply these measures as significant associating with students' academic achievement. Therefore, this study would focus on these three measures to discover the pattern among socioeconomic status and academic achievement.

3.3 The connection of race/ethnicity and SES

In Hong Kong, the official mentioning of ethnic minorities as a subcategory of Hong Kong's population was declared in 2001 (Census and Statistics Department, 2002). Nonetheless, the existence of ethnic minorities groups were evident since the beginning of British colonial period (Plüss, 2000, 2005; Vaid, 1972). To provide judicial protection to ethnic minorities, public's

attention was brought to a publication of a consultation document for legislating against racial discrimination in 2004 (Home Affairs Bureau [HAB], 2004). Ethnic minority totals about 5% (342,198) of Hong Kong's population mostly fitting to ethnic groups of Filipinos, Indonesians, Whites, Japanese, Thai, Koreans, Nepalese, Indians, and Pakistanis (Census and Statistics Department, 2007, p.15). The ethnic minority children below 15 years and in the 15-24 age group totals 32,289 and 41,936 respectively in Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department, 2007, p.36). There has been a rise in the ethnic minority population accounting for 6.4% (451,183) of the total Hong Kong population in 2012 (Census and Statistics Department, 2012, p. 37).

3.4 Family Income and Occupation

Academic achievement is directly affected by poverty due to the lack of resources available for students. According to Lacour and Tissington (2011), low academic achievement is closely correlated with lack of resources and various studies have also documented the relationship between low socioeconomic status and low academic achievement.

It has been reported that South Asians consisting of Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalese, etc. among other ethnic groups tend to have median incomes and are the lowest excluding foreign domestic helpers (Census and Statistic Department). This might foreshadow children of South Asians belonging to low-income families could be affected and also their academic achievement due to financial constraints. Ethnic minority children requiring additional academic support and their parents not being able to meet their needs and their academic needs could affect their academics negatively. However, it is not essential ethnic minority students' academic achievement is

directly related to their family's low income. Yet, this study can further investigate and assist to ask the students for in-depth information if the students' academic success correlates with their socioeconomic status. Furthermore, 1 in every 5 ethnic minority families are living under the poverty level in 2016 and a massive number of South Asians worked in low-paid basic positions as reported by the Government's Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities 2016. This foreshadows, there could be multiple reasons for such conditions such as not being educated enough to work and secure good occupations that directly affect the family income. The ethnic minority students can only access the resources their parents could afford with the income and education they have to make their academic and general life convenient.

Furthermore, there have debates regarding the relationship relating educational accomplishment and socioeconomic status of students among educational professionals. There is a predominant disagreement that socioeconomic status does majorly affect students' academic performance (Blevins, 2009). Employment is one of the socioeconomic factors that provide income for individuals. Since 1 in every 5 households of ethnic minorities are living in poverty and mostly South Asians work in low-paid jobs which could possibly affect those ethnic minority children's academic achievement. As they might not be able to provide additional tutorial classes or arrangements required for their child's educational support. However, some educational professionals show disagreement with this philosophy and state that other factors external to the socioeconomic status of the students are the influential variables in academic achievement (Marzano, 2003). Yet, most educators believe low socioeconomic status negatively affects students' academic performance (Blevins, 2009).

3.5 Family education

Level of education of student's parents is another socioeconomic factor that plays a vital part in the academic success of the students. As studies show, the education level of successful students' parents is higher than that of unsuccessful students' parents. According to De Broucker and Underwood (1998), parents with a high level of educational background provide children with the most propitious environment to study, hence providing essential motivation for their children to proceed to higher education levels. A study conducted by The Program for International Student Assessment discovered students with high school graduate mothers tend to achieve more success as compared to the others. Moreover, some scholars state family education is considered the most important factor compared to family income factor being closely related to student academic achievement (Chevalier & Lanot, 2002).

Furthermore, the education institutes with secure economic resources may also positively affect students' academic performance. As monetary levelling is one of the essential factors in the quality of education and general academic achievement amongst students (Burtless, 1996). The vital factors comprising of income, employment and education tends to play a role in students' academic achievement. This may foreshadow if any of the factors of socioeconomic status mentioned impact ethnic minority students' academic achievement negatively. Then their academic success could be affected in multiple ways. For instance, not being able to avail private tutorial chances to support studies due to income and employment factors and also not being to able to seek support from parents in studies due to their insufficient understanding and educational background. This study may support to discover which factor(s) of socioeconomic status are most significant to ethnic minority students' academic achievement in Hong Kong or which socioeconomic status does not directly correlate with students' academic success.

3.6 The Hong Kong Context (Ethnic minorities' education level, income, and employment)

In Hong Kong, there has always been a prevailing inequality in educational success and socioeconomic status between the mainstream society and the ethnic minorities. For instance, the low levels of educational accomplishment attained by the South Asian minorities in Hong Kong associated with their local Chinese equivalents (Commission on Poverty, 2014). At the same time, South Asian minorities also tend to possess a median monthly income that is less as compared to the entire population of Hong Kong (Commission on Poverty, 2014). The revenue factor of socio-economic status further shows that most South Asian minorities in Hong Kong do not tend to do well financially. However, there is little evidence of whether the income factor has affected ethnic minority secondary school students' academic success. This research may contribute to this topic and analyze whether ethnic minority students are having difficulties obtaining good academic achievements due to their financial conditions and parental occupation or these factors do not affect their academic success.

In terms of occupation and school, ethnic minorities tend to find themselves in deprived positions due to cultural differences and language barriers (Cheung, 2015). Poverty has an penetrating harmful impact influence on students growth and educational achievement as demonstrated by the past researchers (Glick and White 2003; Lichter 1997). Moreover, children that are raised in deprived families tend to have a deserted financial prospect during their adulthood. They also have a higher tendency of passing economic deficiency to the next generation (Lichter 1997; McLanahan and Sandefur 1994; Stier and Tienda 2001). The existing studies regarding Hong Kong ethnic minority children have probed into serious issues like language (Lai et al. 2015) and cultural barriers in schools (Hue and Kennedy 2014; Hue et al.

2015), underachievement in the education system of Hong Kong (Tsung and Gao 2012; Loper 2004), discrimination faced in society (Crabtree and Wong 2013; Lee and Li 2011) and their psychological well-being (Yuen and Lee 2013; Yuen 2013). As reported by a government survey, there is a degree of educational inequality among ethnic minorities and the local Chinese in Hong Kong. The survey also reports that ethnic minority students have the lowest attendance ratio compared to the entire population of Hong Kong (Census and Statistics Department 2012).

Pakistani parents have the lowest human capital in terms of education as reported by a study conducted in Hong Kong (Cheung & Chou, 2018). About 80% of Pakistani parents received secondary or a lower level of education and only 15% of them were university graduates. The jobs had an effect by the division of human capital level among the Pakistani, Nepalese, Mixed (Asian and Chinese), and Chinese parents (Cheung & Chou, 2018). The Chinese parents were associated with professional jobs compared to Pakistani and Nepalese parents. Since the family education is also one of the factors of socioeconomic status, these findings may be accommodating to inquire about secondary school ethnic minority students regarding the effects of their parent's educational background correlating with their academic achievement. The study can further investigate how family education, parents' occupation, and family income factors affect ethnic minority students' academic accomplishment in various ways. The findings of this research can help disadvantaged ethnic minority students by raising awareness in their schools.

Research Questions

By the end of this research, I will be able to address the following two research questions:

Q1: What factors of socio-economic status are most significant to ethnic minority secondary school student academic achievement.

Q2: How do these factors impact the academic achievement of ethnic minority secondary school students?

4. Research Design & Methodology

4.1 Participants

The target participants of this research were ethnic minority secondary school students who are currently studying in Hong Kong secondary schools. For quantitative data collection, a total of 56 participants of different ethnicities studying from S1-S6 were invited to participate in the online questionnaire. There were 43 Pakistani, 6 Indian, 3 Nepalese, 2 Bangladeshi, 1 Indonesian, and 1 Kenyan secondary school students who participated in the study. There were 37 female and 19 male participants. For qualitative data collection, a total of 2 participants from the 56 participants, 1 Pakistani female, and 1 Indian female student were invited to participate in semi-structured interviews.

The online questionnaire surveys and interviews were mainly conducted with ethnic minority students studying in different secondary schools in Hong Kong. Students from different secondary schools with populations of ethnic minority students were approached to fit the research design. Since I am an ethnic minority, I had contacts in the community and friends of different ethnicities studying in secondary schools and working in NGOs as well. Hence,

snowball sampling was adopted as most of the participants were referred by other contacts and it made it easier for me to approach the participants for data collection.

4.2 Design of the research

I adopted a mixed research design for this research as both qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied to obtain objective and reliable results to produce data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). An online questionnaire of a 5-point scale was designed to elicit students' responses on the effects of their socioeconomic status backgrounds on their academic achievement. After collecting the responses, semi-structured interviews were conducted to ask follow-up questions.

4.3 Data collection and analysis

The study's data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires are the primary instrument used to collect data. The questionnaire was sent via Google forms to participants. The questionnaire inquired participants about their personal information, some basic information regarding their parents, and factor(s) of respondents' socioeconomic status affecting their academic achievements the most and the least. The students were only able to choose and write one factor that affects their academic achievement the most and the least. The data obtained by the questionnaire helped the researcher to gain insights and understanding of respondents' socioeconomic status factors affecting their academic achievement. The questionnaire data was processed with excel to calculate the descriptive statistics namely the percentage and frequency of each response followed by analyzing students' explanations of their SES factors affecting their academic achievement.

Upon analyzing the respondent's questionnaire responses, two potential interviewees were contacted to schedule a semi-structured interview. The interviewees were selected based on their responses that required more follow up questions to be asked regarding how their SES factors affect their academic achievement and they agreed by leaving their contact information in the questionnaire. The interviews were conducted at a Zoom video meeting. At the beginning of the interview, follow-up questions were asked to the respondents for clarification of their responses prior to the questionnaire. Then it was followed up by a few follow-up questions to obtain more information. Each interview lasted for 20-25 minutes which was a reasonable time for obtaining further information from the respondents without overwhelming them. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed for analysis where phrases and sentences were extracted and categorized as "reasons for not opting for private tutorial classes" and "SES factors affecting the academic achievement the most and the least".

5. Findings

This section will present data collected from 56 respondents through qualitative and quantitative approaches. It is found that most ethnic minorities' secondary school student's academic achievement is affected by the economic factor of their socioeconomic status. The data collected is analyzed and has been characterized in four sections that present the effects of ethnic minority students' SES on their academic achievement. The first section includes students' rating of their academic performance and the reasons for not opting for private tutorial classes. The second and third section includes students' socioeconomic status affecting their academic

achievement the most and the least. The final section will include other SES factors affecting students' academic achievement as reported by respondents.

5.1 Student's rating of their academic performance

Based on student's responses, 25 students self-rated their academic achievement as “mostly C's”, 19 students self-rated themselves as “mostly B's” and 6 students self-rated themselves as “mostly A's”. 5 students self-rated themselves as “mostly D's” and 1 student also rated “mostly E's or below”. The data indicates most of the students' academic performance falls under Grade C or below. This shows most of the respondents were average or below students and might require additional academic support if they have trouble focusing on studies.

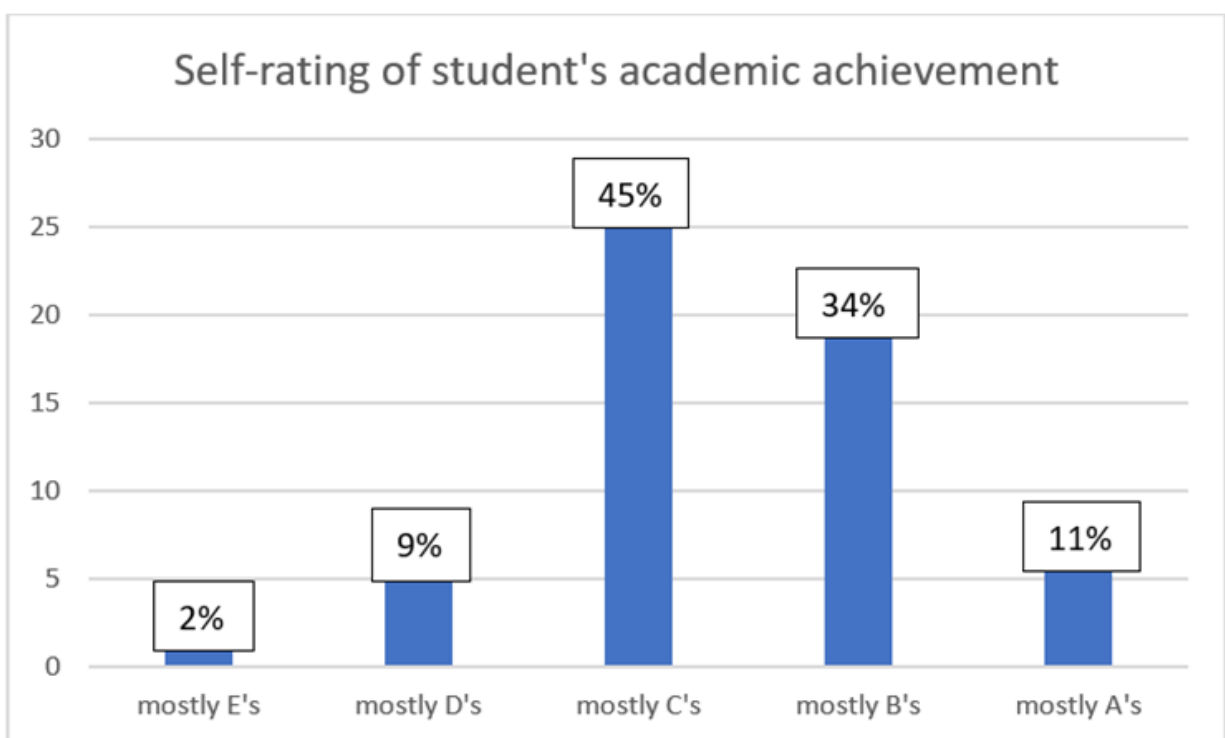


Figure 1: Q11. What number from 1-5 would you rate yourself in terms of academic achievement? (1-mostly E's, 2-mostly D's, 3-mostly C's, 4-mostly B's and 5-mostly A's)

5.2 Reasons for not opting for private tutorial classes

Respondents were also asked if they took private tutorial classes and out of 56 respondents, 48 (86%) of them responded “No” while the rest of the 8 (14%) respondents responded “Yes”. Since most of the students' academic performance fell under Grade C or below, they did not opt for private tutorial classes. There could be multiple reasons for not opting for private tutorial classes and the respondents were asked the reasons. The respondents' reasons are explained below.

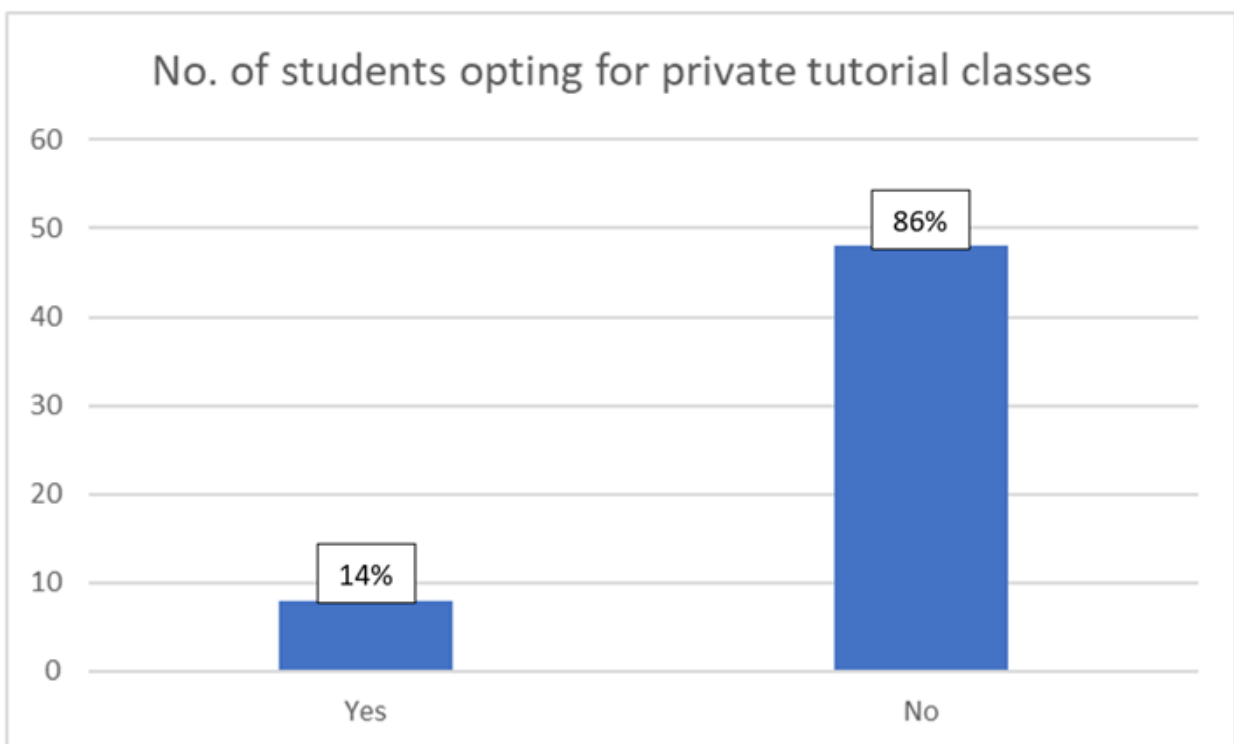


Figure 2: Q12. Do you take private tutorial classes?

Respondents were asked to share the reason for not opting for private tutorial classes and, 45% responded “time constraint” and 21% responded they did not opt for private tutorial classes due to “financial constraints”. The rest of the participants responded that “parents are unsupportive of private tutorials”, “not needed” and “sister teaches me”. The graph (figure 4) below indicates

most of the students are unable to join tutorial classes due to time and financial constraints.

When asked the same question from both interviewees, one replied:

“The timing of Hong Kong schools are very long, when we come back home from school we are already so exhausted. If we go for tutorial classes outside or hire a private tutor at home, it will feel like we are back to school at home. We also have to finish our homework that also takes up a lot of time already and attending private tutorial classes require a lot of money which we can’t afford.”

Figure 3: Student 1 (S1) response for the reason of not opting private tutorial classes.

The other interviewee responded:

“I have to go to work after school. I mostly dismiss around 11 or 12 at night. Therefore, I don’t have time to even attend the school tutorial classes and I can’t afford private ones. This is why I am earning to support my and family needs as we are a family of six members. My dad is the only one to earn and that’s not enough for a big family. Me and my sister have to work to meet our needs and also sometimes help out at home. I face both time and money problems to support my studies so private tutorial classes are not an option for me.”

Figure 4: Student 2 (S2) response for the reason of not opting private tutorial classes.

Overall, the respondents' replies indicate that the majority of them did not opt for private tutorial classes due to financial and time constraints despite some requiring additional academic support to improve their grades.

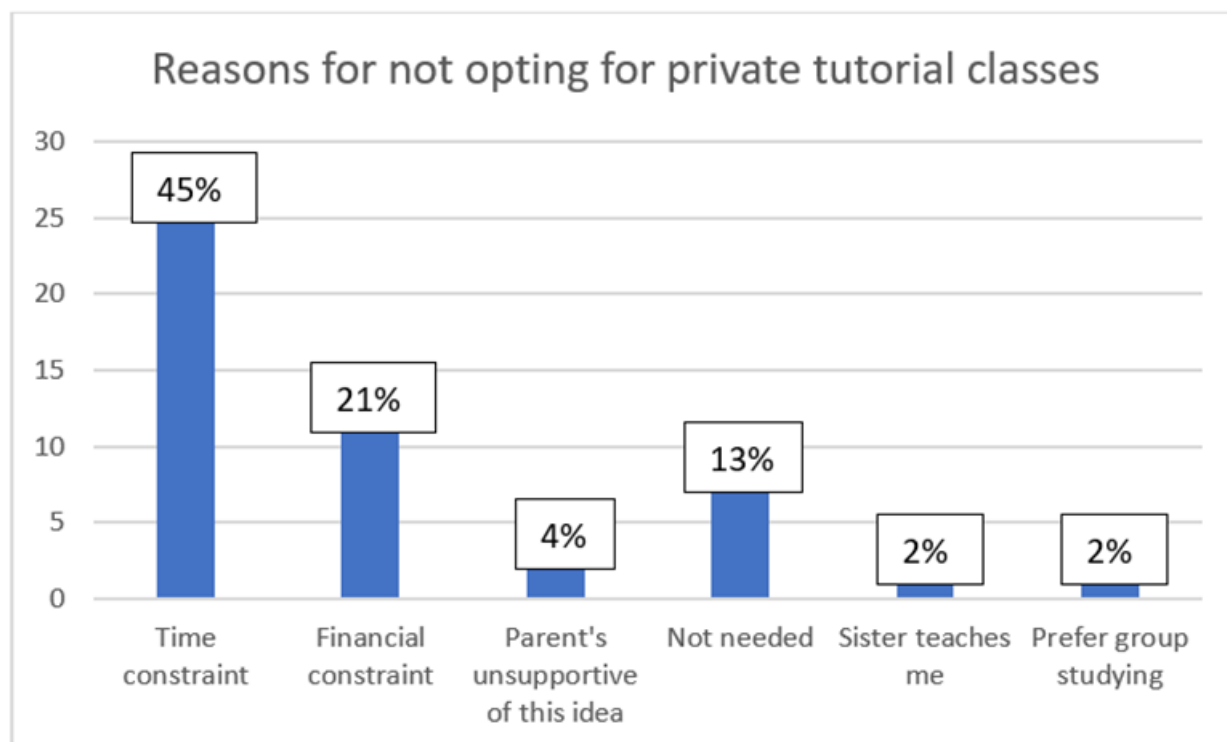


Figure 5: Q13. Why didn't you opt for private tutorial classes?

5.3 Socioeconomic status factors affecting students' academic achievement the most

Respondents were asked about their socioeconomic status affected their academic achievement the most by only allowing them to choose one option from the questionnaire. The top three responses recorded are economic, parents' education, and parents' occupation factors alongside some other factors such as “not enough resources”, “not spacious flat”, “school environment” and “no interest”. The economic factor recorded 38% (21) votes, parent’s education recorded 16% (9) votes and parent’s occupation recorded 13% (7) votes. The data foreshadows most of the student’s academic achievement is affected by economic factors followed by their parent’s education and occupation. Respondents also explained how these factors affected them and those explanations will be mentioned below.

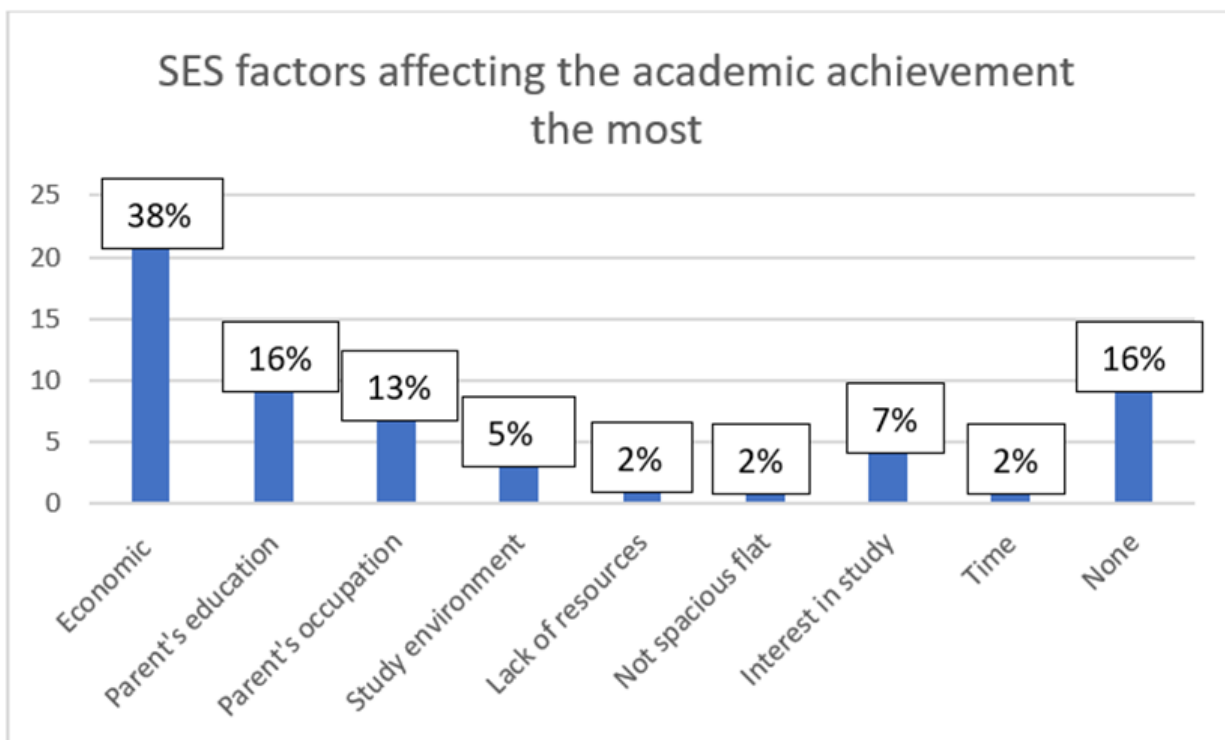


Figure 6: Q15. Which SES factor affects your academic achievement the most?

Economic

Before asking students about the factors of socio-economic status affecting their academic achievement the most, an additional question was asked regarding students facing problems in their education due to financial problems. Most of the students responded “yes” making it 39 (70%) votes, 13 (23%) students responded “no” and 4 (7%) students did not answer. Some of the students also explained the problems and the responses included “unable to pay fees”, “unable to afford private tuitions” and “it's hard to balance work and studies”. It is observed that most of the students generally faced problems in their education due to the economic factor. Since every student is different and so are their needs. The respondents in this survey felt the need for private

tuitions to support their studies. However, most of them were unable to avail the privilege due to the economic factor of their socioeconomic background.

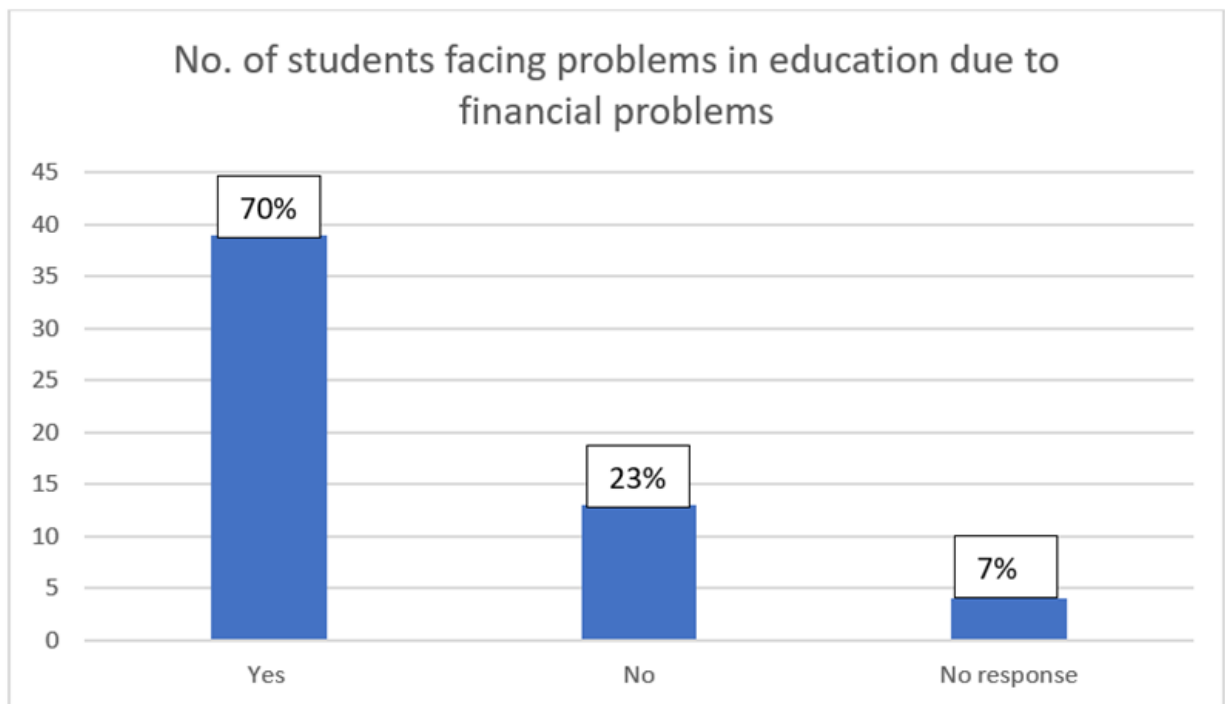


Figure 7- Q14: Do you face any problems in your education due to financial problems?

Moving to Q15 (figure6), 38% of students voted for the “economic” factor affecting their academic achievement the most. The common response was as above regarding not being able to afford private tuition and one respondent also said it has caused her foundation to be weak due to it. Some respondents also stated “expensive academic-related things”, “lack of resources demotivate me” and “father being jobless worries me about how things will be back on track”. One of the respondents also mentioned that being the older sibling, she needs support for her education because she cannot ask anyone in the house indicating her parents are not being able to

help her as well due to not being well educated. The responses indicate that belonging to low-income families does not only affect their education but also stresses them about their financial situation at home which may cause distraction from focusing on studies. There are 48 respondents with 5-11 family members with a total family income ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000. The family income stated by the respondents reflects their situation of facing difficulties in their academic achievement due to the economic factor of their socioeconomic status.

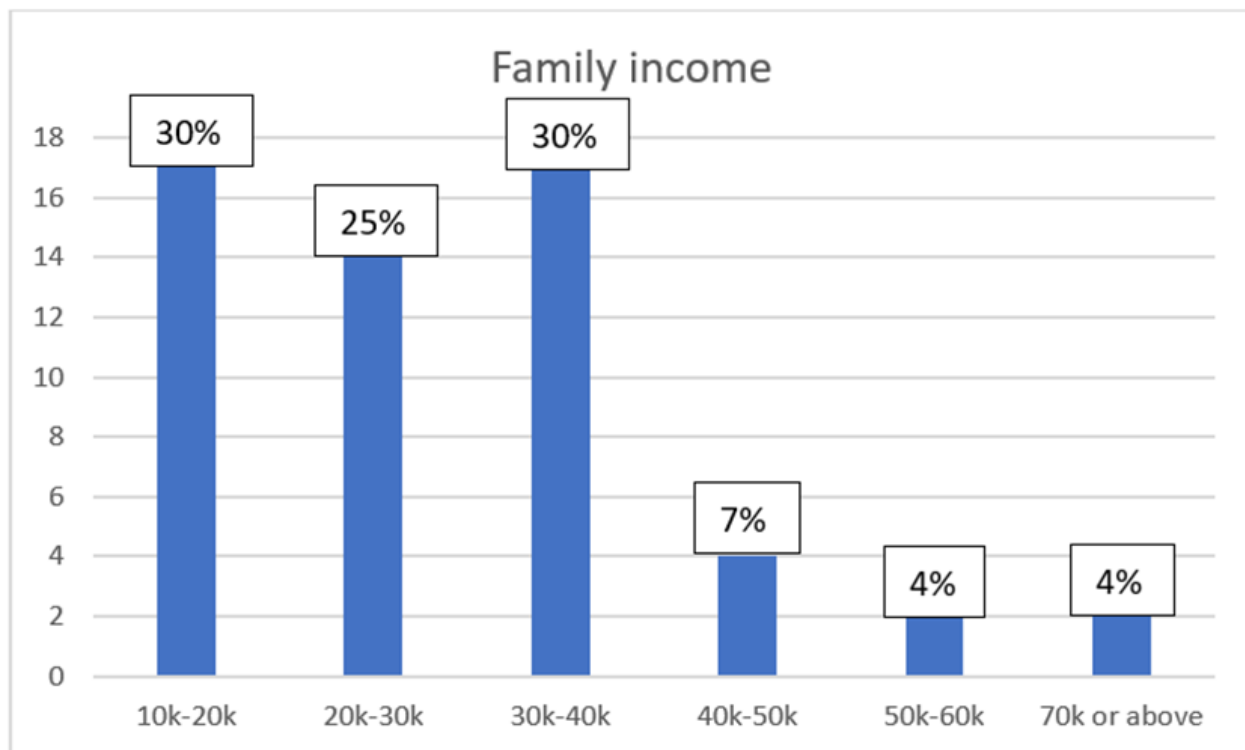


Figure 8: Family income

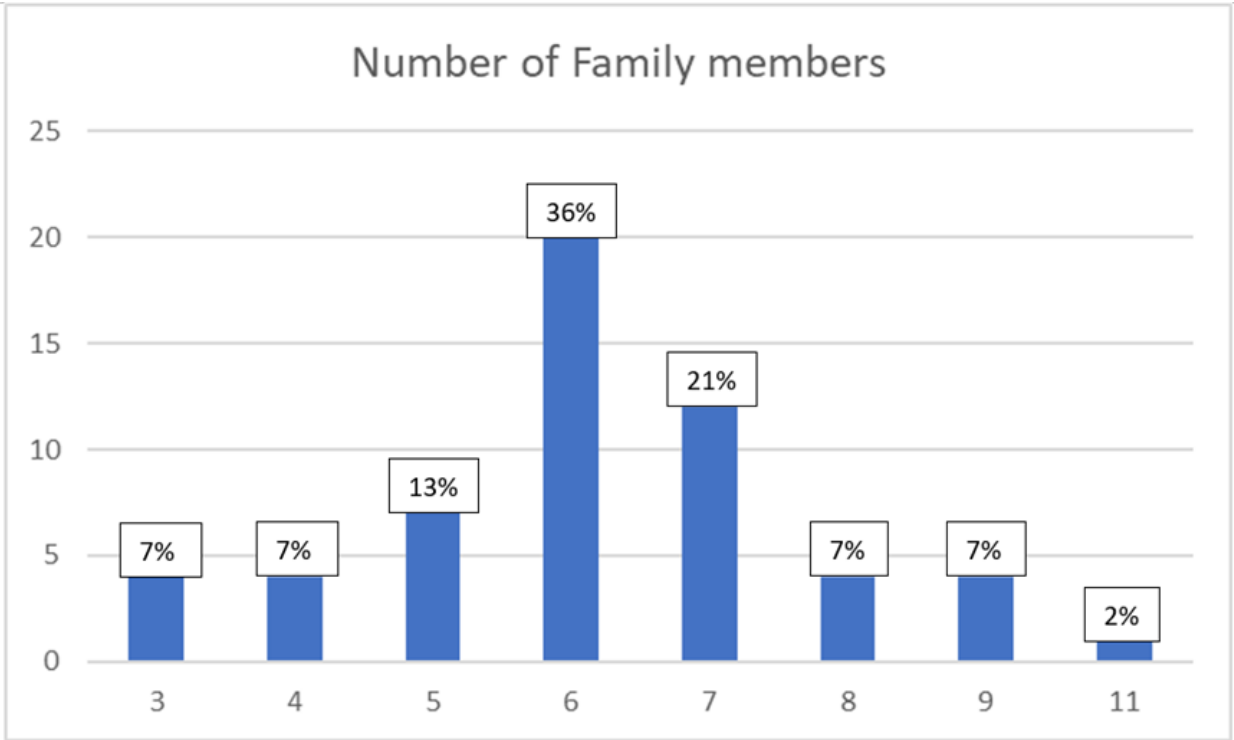


Figure 9: Number of family members

Parent’s education and Parents’ occupation

Parent’s education level was the second-highest factor affecting their academic achievement the most followed by parent’s occupation. Respondents were asked about their parent’s education level and occupations to better understand their situation and the challenges they face.

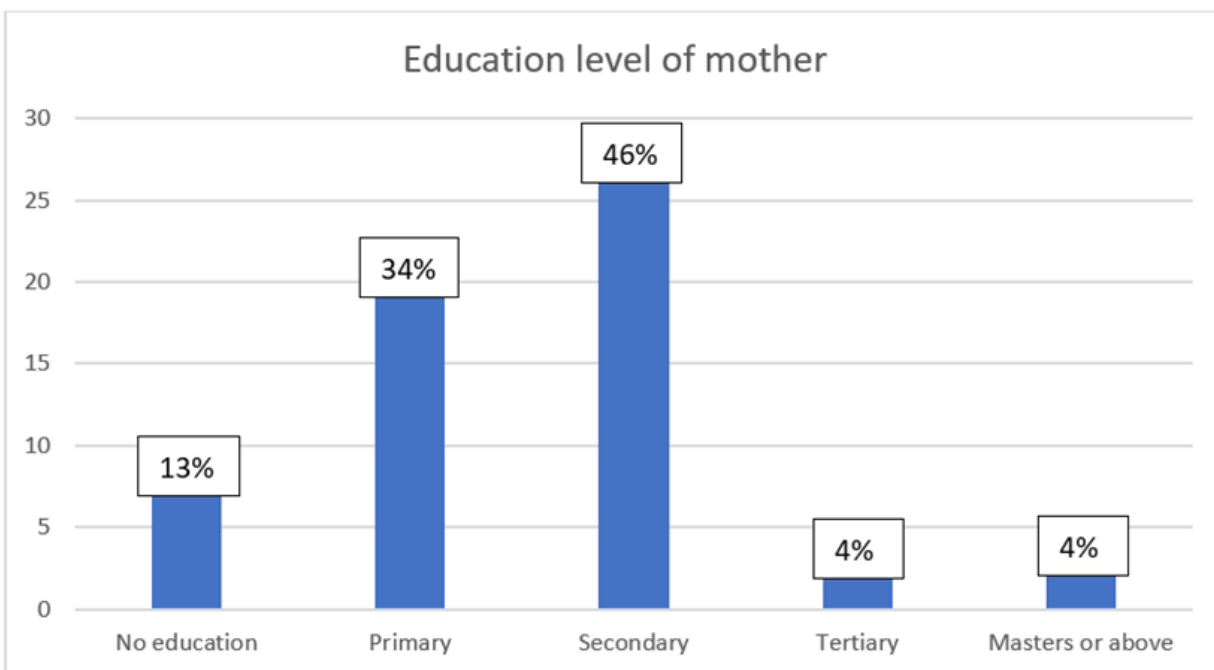


Figure 10: mother's education level

The bar chart above shows the education level of respondents' mothers. 13% (7) respondents mothers received no education, 34% (19) studied till Primary, 46% (26) studied till Secondary, 2 of them received education till Tertiary and 2 of them received till Masters or above.

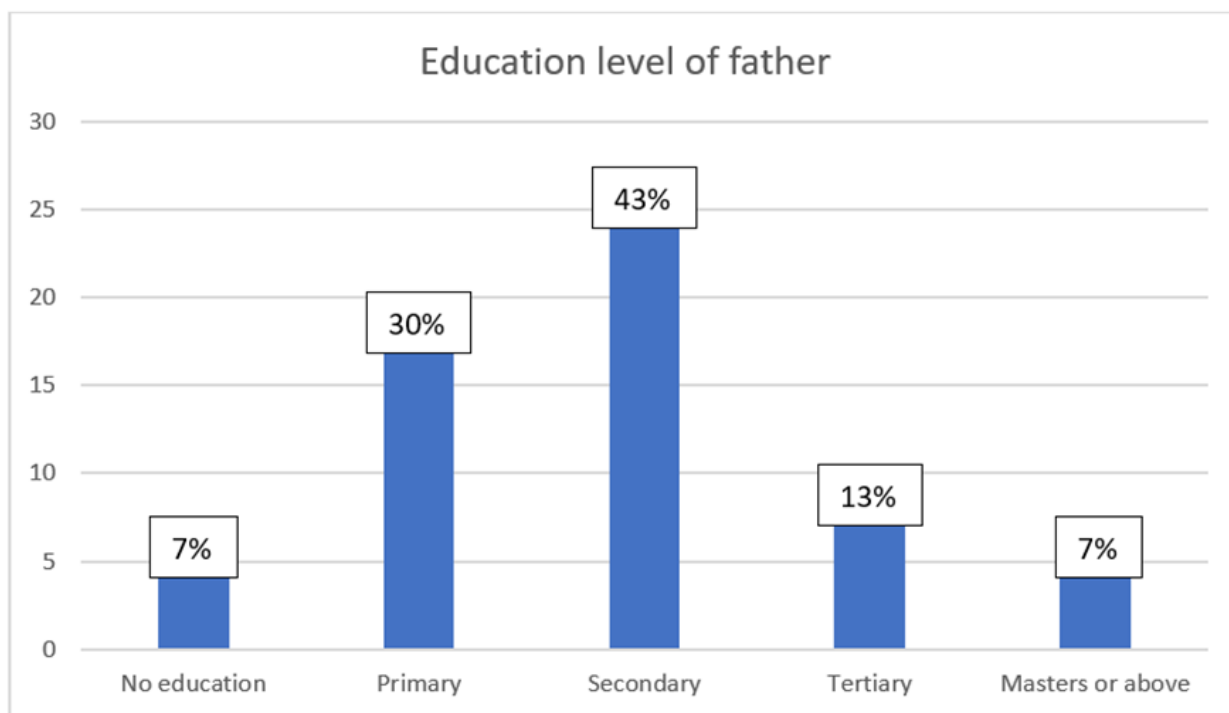


Figure 11: father's education level

The bar chart above indicates respondents' father's level of education. 7% (4) respondents fathers did not receive any education, 30% (17) studied till Primary, 43% (24) studied till Secondary, 13% studied till Tertiary level and 7% (4) studied till Masters or above.

Overall, the bar chart of parents' education level indicates the education level of respondents' parents is nearly the same except that there are more fathers who received education till tertiary and Masters or above compared to the mothers.

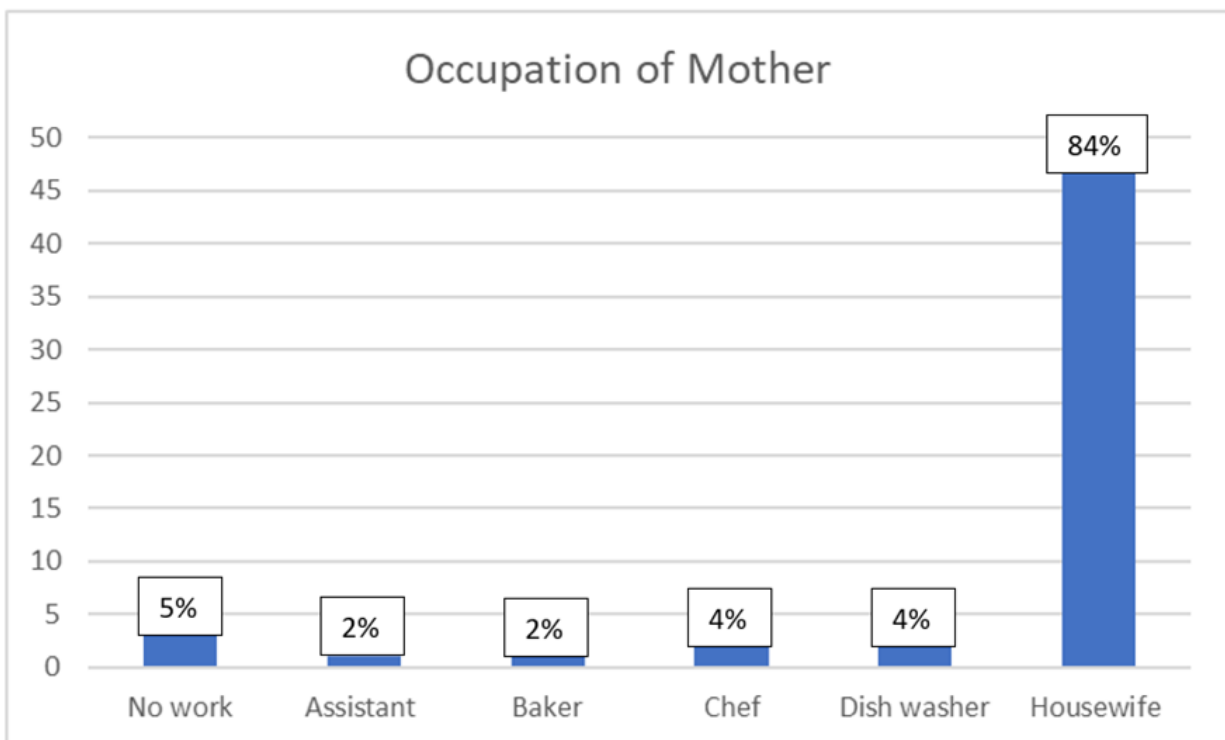


Figure 12: the occupation of mother

The bar chart above shows the occupation of respondents' mothers. 3 of the respondents responded as “no work”, 1 works as an assistant, 1 works as a baker, 2 of them are chefs, 2 of them are dishwashers and 47 (84%) mothers are housewives.

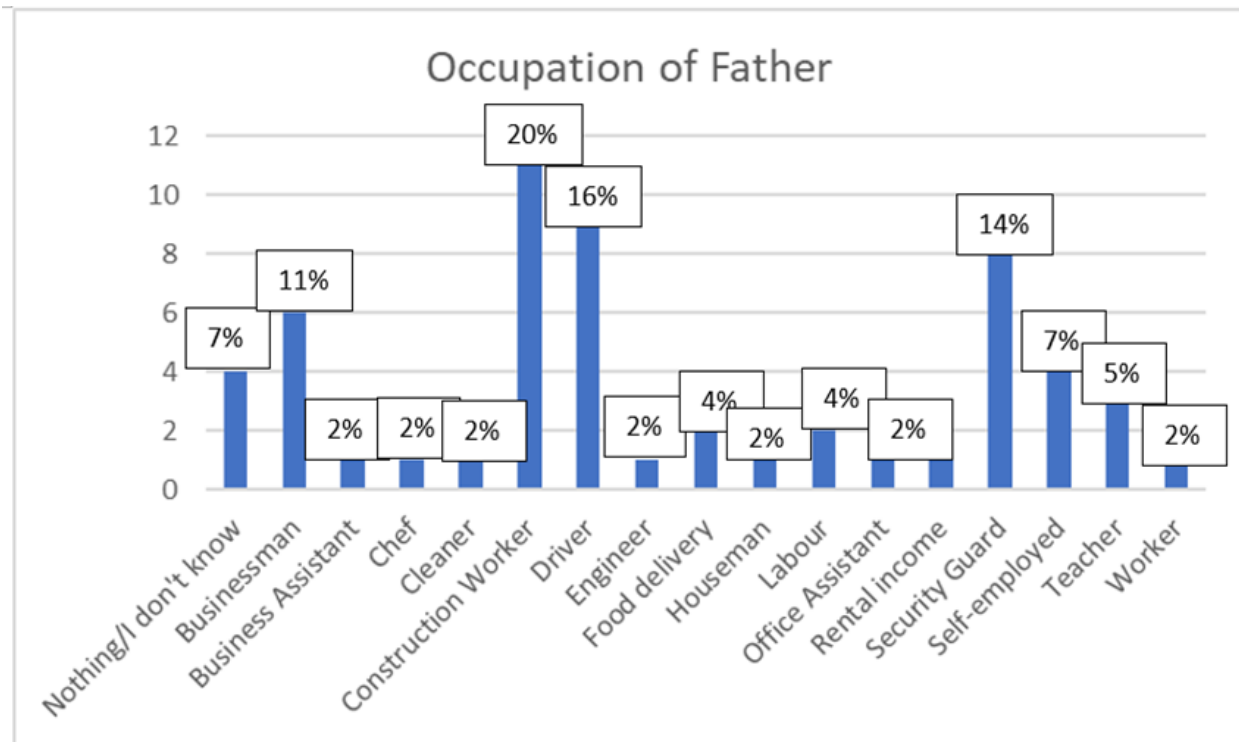


Figure 13: the occupation of father

The bar chart above shows respondents' fathers' occupations. 4 of the respondents were unaware of their father's jobs or their fathers did not work. The rest of the fathers were employed and some even worked two jobs. 6 of them are Businessman, 1 is Business Assistant, 1 is Chef, 1 is Cleaner, 11 of them are Construction workers, 9 of them are drivers, 1 one of them is an Engineer, 2 of them are food delivery guys, 1 of them is a houseman, 2 are labors, 1 is an office assistant, 1 of father's income comes from rental, 8 of them are security guards, 4 of them are self-employed, 3 are teachers and 1 is a worker.

The occupation bar charts indicate most of the mothers are housewives and some of them work. Almost all fathers are employed in different occupations.

Since parents' education level was the second-highest factor affecting their academic achievement the most followed by parents' occupation. Most of the respondents explained the same reason "parents cannot help with schoolwork", "if parents were more educated then they would put more effort and have a much better understanding of education", "parents can't provide much help in terms of syllabus and education system e.g. Jupas, S1 application". One of the respondents also mentioned that their parents' education and their family income affected his academic achievement the most because his mother is not highly educated to help with his education and his parents cannot afford a tutor for him. It's observed that students not only face challenges due to the economic factor but parents' education matters significantly as well. As most parents are unable to help their children with homework and other school-related matters such as applications for schools and Jupas. The graph above-showing respondents' parents' education level and their occupations indicate that most mothers are at home with the children and the fathers are working. The education received by the respondent's parents was also mostly from their native countries. Hence, it is understandable that most parents are unfamiliar with the Hong Kong education system.

A question was asked from the interviewee-student 1(S1) during the interview regarding her statement stating her "mother is not highly educated and she did not understand the education system in Hong Kong so my foundation was not the best". The question and the response is stated below.

Q: As you mentioned your mother was not highly educated and she did not understand the education system in Hong Kong so your foundation was not the best. I would like to ask if your father contributed to help you with your studies.

Response (S1): My father did not have time to help me or my siblings with studies as he does 2 jobs. One in the morning and one at night. He barely spends time with us and even if he was able to help me or my siblings with studies, he would not be able to offer much help as has studied till secondary 4 in Pakistan.

Figure 14: Interaction between Interviewer and S1

The response above emphasizes that one member of the family being the breadwinner cannot contribute much to help the children with their education and even if they manage to do so, they are unable to help a lot due to not being educated enough.

5.4 Socioeconomic status factors affecting students' academic achievement the least

Respondents were also asked regarding the factors of their socioeconomic status affecting their academic achievement the least. The top three factors recorded were economic, parent's education, and parent's occupation. 29% voted for economic (family income), 34% voted for parents' education and 16% voted for parent's occupation.

Students that chose the "economic" factor explained that their family income is stable enough, some said they do not require extra tutorial classes so no extra fees have to be paid and they

study in government schools so the fees are not an issue. Hence, 29% of the respondent's academic achievement is not affected by their family income due to the explanations above.

Students that chose "parents' education" explained that their parents do not help with their studies as they ask for help from their siblings and teachers, some said parents' education level is good and parents did not study in Hong Kong so it does not really matter. These are the reasons why 34% of students' academics are not affected by their parent's education level. Students that chose "parents' occupation" explained that they work hard for their academics thus their parent's occupation is not related to it and it does not affect their academic performance.

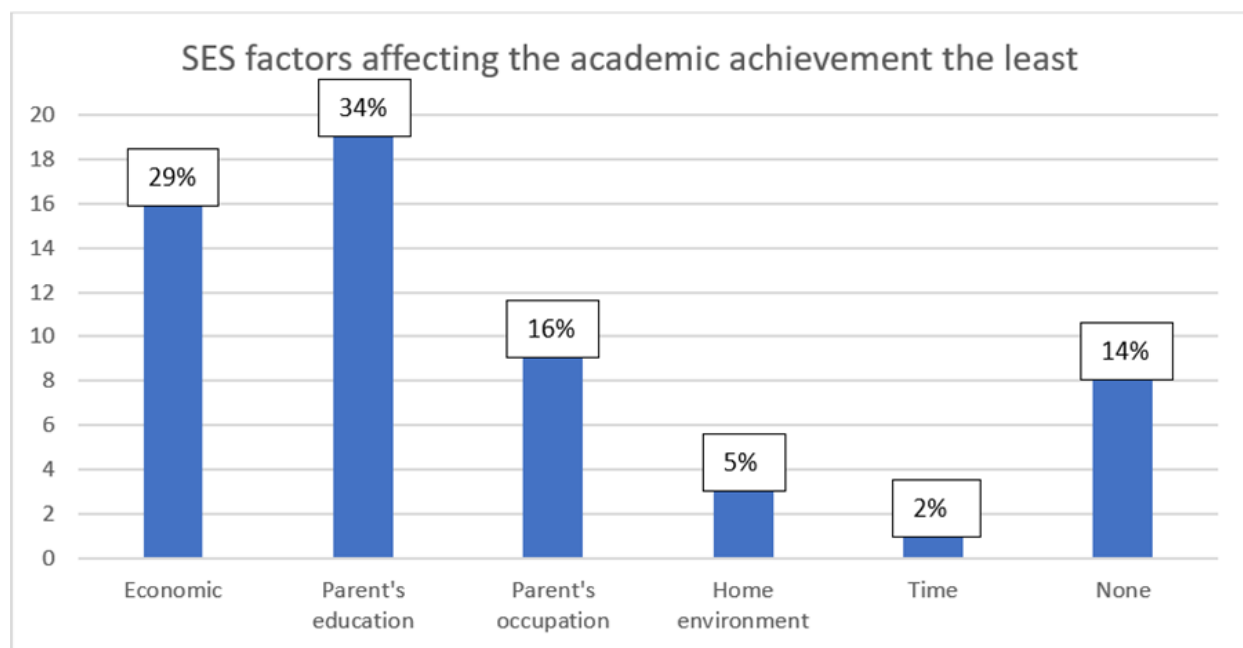


Figure 15: Q17. Which SES factor affects your academic achievement the least?

5.5 Other socioeconomic factors affecting students' academic achievement

Respondents were also asked to mention any other factors affecting their academic achievement besides the mentioned ones. Many of the students responded with “home environment” and “parental interaction” affecting their academic achievements. For the home environment, many respondents mentioned the noisy environment in their house with family members makes it hard for them to focus on their studies especially when everything is switched to online classes. Students that chose parental interaction did not explain how it affects their academic achievement. However, one of the respondents did mention both factors with a bit of explanation that is shown below.

“ Home environment definitely affects my studies. Having four siblings together under a cramped house can be fun but with a-lot of disadvantages. For example, it is hard to focus when you are studying. Now that everything has turned online, it is hard to find a quiet spot in the house. Secondly, lack of parents understanding about the educational system in Hk, they tend to not really focus on my education. Example, my father doesn't understand why having a tutor is important nor did he ever asked me about my studies.”

This further explains students' academic achievement is not only affected by their family income, parents' education, and their occupation but their home environment and parental interaction also somewhat influence their academic achievement. The findings in this study portray a pattern between students' socioeconomic status background and their academic achievement. The factors affecting their academic achievement the most are the economic and education level of their parents.

6. Discussion

This section answers the two research questions stated below with reference to the research findings and literature review.

1. What factors of socio-economic status are most significant to ethnic minority secondary school student academic achievement.
2. How do these factors impact the academic achievement of ethnic minority secondary school students?

6.1 Economic factor affecting students' academic achievement

Upon analyzing respondents' responses, we found that ethnic minority students generally face challenges in terms of their academic achievement due to their socioeconomic background. Most of the respondents' economic factors contributed to their challenges followed by their parents' education that impacts their academics as some of their parents do not understand Hong Kong's education system and cannot help the students with their academics. This makes these two factors the most significant factors of socioeconomic status affecting respondents' academic achievement.

During reviewing questionnaire responses, many respondents explained they were not able to afford private tutorial classes and the findings also showed 31 students' received grade C or below for their academics. This foreshadows that these students may require additional tutorial classes to perform well academically. Some students also explained that lack of resources demotivates them and if their fathers are unemployed, it also stresses them about their financial condition. According to Lacour and Tissington (2011), low academic performance is closely

correlated with lack of resources and various studies have shown a correlation between low socioeconomic status and low academic achievement. However, some students claimed that their economic status does not affect their academic performance because their family income is stable and sufficient for the resources they require. They generally tend to worry less about their academics as their study environments were suitable for them as well.

During the interviews with two of the interviewees, one of the students emphasized requiring a private tutor to better understand her subjects, especially during Form six. However, they are unable to afford one and she opts for the free tutorial classes that are provided by NGOs and the school once or twice a week. Another interviewee also shared her concern about time and financial constraints that affect her academic performance negatively. As the student has to work after school to meet her and her family's needs. The findings confirm the claim of Lacour and Tissington that low socioeconomic status is closely correlated with low academic performance. One of the factors contributing to the student's academic success in this study is their family income. Our findings may partially confirm the claim that students who belong to low socioeconomic status's standard of life are less expected to triumph in schools and enter university as compared to those with higher socioeconomic status background (Daniel, 2009; Gelbal, 2008; Perry & McConney, 2010; Undheim & Nordvik, 1992). As we can observe 21 students voted for the "economic" factor affecting their academic achievement the most and 16 students voted it affects their academic achievement the least. Students may triumph less in school due to these reasons yet they have chances to enter university in Hong Kong. As the government in Hong Kong supports students from low-income families with education grants

that can cover their university fees and expenses. Hence, students with low grades can also enter university even if they pass their subjects with level 2 and receive help from the government.

6.2 Family education affecting students' academic achievement

According to Chevalier and Lanot (2002), family education is considered the most important factor compared to family income being closely related to a student's academic achievement. We have observed the students in our study also faced challenges in their academic success paths to their parents' education. Most of the parents were unable to help their children with homework and applications related to JUPAS or Secondary school due to not being well educated. Some students also explained that if their parents were more educated, they would have put more effort into their academics. Those efforts could be providing a better environment for the students to study by setting some rules at home or emphasizing the importance of education for their children. As one of the respondents mentioned, her father never asked about her studies. In this study, students' parents' involvement in their education was relatively less than it should be. Therefore, family education is also equally important alongside family income for students' academic success in this study.

7. Conclusion & Limitations

To conclude, the most significant SES factors for ethnic minority secondary school students are the family income and education for their academic achievement. These significant SES factors have negative impact on ethnic minority students' academic achievement. Students were unable to afford private tuitions for additional academic support and lack of resources also demotivated

them. Furthermore, the understanding of Hong Kong education system for their parents is not evident and some parents also displayed lack of interest in their children's academic.

Nevertheless, the limitation of this study was the narrow sample size. Thus, the results obtained cannot be generalized to all ethnic minority secondary school students in Hong Kong. The research could be more holistic if it was conducted on a large sample size to acquire information regarding their socioeconomic status background affecting their academic achievement.

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9. Appendices

Appendix 1-screenshot of the online questionnaire

Effect of student's SES (socio-economic status) backgrounds on ethnic minority secondary school students' academic achievement

The aim of the study is to compare and address the effects of secondary school ethnic minority students of different social-economic backgrounds on their academic performances. The objectives of this study are to find out the most significant factor(s) of socio-economic status affecting ethnic minority secondary school students and their impacts.
All the data collected will remain confidential and shall be destroyed immediately after the study is completed.
Please refer to the information sheet for more information:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ebtpPEWnVafqOodDzXJT1YDYqPHo4WV1_SdAnAuMFmo/edit?usp=sharing

Name *

Short answer text

Date *

Month, day, year

Consent *

☐ I am over 16 and I hereby consent to participate in the captioned research

☐ My child is under 16 and I hereby consent my child to participate in the captioned research

Q1. Age *

☐ 11-16

☐ 17-20

Q2. Gender *

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Prefer not to say

Q3. Ethnicity *

☐ Pakistani

☐ Indian

☐ Filipino

☐ Nepalese

☐ Bangladeshi

☐ Indonesian

☐ Japanese

☐ Korean

☐ Thai

☐ White

☐ Other Asian

☐ Other...

Q4. Class *

☐ S1-S3

☐ S4-S6

Q5. Number of family members (including yourself) *

Short answer text

Q6. Family income *

☐ 10,000-20,000

☐ 20,000-30,000

☐ 30,000-40,000

☐ 40,000-50,000

☐ 50,000-60,000

☐ 60,000 or 70,000

☐ 70,000 or above

Q7. Education level of mother *

- ☐ No education
- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Tertiary
- ☐ Masters or above

Q8. Education level of father *

- ☐ No education
- ☐ Primary
- ☐ Secondary
- ☐ Tertiary
- ☐ Masters or above

Q9. Occupation of mother *

Short answer text

Q10. Occupation of father *

Short answer text

Q11. What number from 1-5 would you rate yourself in terms of academic achievement? (1-
Mostly E's or below, 2-Mostly D's, 3-Mostly C's, 4- Mostly B's and 5- Mostly A's *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Mostly E's or below	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Mostly A's

Q12. Do you take private tutorial classes? (If answered yes, skip the next question) *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q13. Why you didn't opt for private tutorial classes?

☐ Financial constraint

☐ Time constraint

☐ Parents unsupportive of private tutorial classes

☐ Other...

Q14. Do you face any problems in your education due to financial problems? (e.g. unable to afford fees of extra classes, lacking resources like technological devices at home?) If you do, please explain below. *

Long answer text

Q15. Which SES factor affects your academic achievement the most? (Please state any other SES factors if the given options do not apply) *

- ☐ Economic (family income)
- ☐ Parent's education (level of parent's education)
- ☐ Parent's occupation (Parent's jobs)
- ☐ Other...

Q16. Please explain how your chosen factor affects your academic achievement the most? *

Long answer text

Q17. Which SES factor affects your academic achievement the least? (Please state any other SES factors if the given options do not apply) *

- ☐ Economic (family income)
- ☐ Parent's education (level of parent's education)
- ☐ Parent's occupation (Parent's jobs)
- ☐ Other...

Q18. Please explain how your chosen factor affects your academic achievement the least? *

Long answer text

Q19. Any other factors that affect your academic achievement? (e.g. Home environment, environmental deficiencies, parental interaction, health etc.) *

Long answer text

Please leave your contact information if you agree to follow up (e.g. email or phone number) *

Short answer text

Transcript 1

Student 1-S1

Interviewer: Do you take private tutorial classes?

S1: No, I don't

Interviewer: Why?

S1: The timing of Hong Kong schools are very long, when we come back home from school, we are already so exhausted. If we go for tutorial classes outside or hire a private tutor at home, it will feel like we are back to school at home. We also have to finish our homework that also takes up a lot of time already and attending private tutorial classes require a lot of money which we can't afford.

Interviewer: As you mentioned in your questionnaire response that having a tutor will help you understand your subjects better for good DSE results. Why do you think like that?

S1: : I think I need extra help in academics and if I have a tutor then it will be a great help for different subjects. I can ask any questions I have and the tutor will just focus on one student that helps to learn better.

Interviewer: You also mentioned, it is more normal for local Chinese students to hire a private tutor whereas very unlikely for Ems. Can you explain why you think it is unlikely for EMS to afford?

S1: This is what I have seen while growing up. People from my community find it difficult to afford private tuitions for their children. Our EMs fathers mostly are the breadwinners of the family. It becomes difficult to afford private tutors. For our EMs living in Hong Kong, most of the people are either construction workers or security guards as they are not well educated to do better jobs like the local Chinese people here. If we are lucky enough, we enroll into free tuition classes provided by some NGOs in Hong Kong or attend free after school tutorials provided by school to receive some help for homework once or twice a week.

Interviewer: As you mentioned in the survey your mother was not highly educated and she did not understand the education system in Hong Kong so your foundation was not the best. I would like to ask if your father contributed to help you with your studies.

S1: My father did not have time to help me or my siblings with studies as he does 2 jobs. One in the morning and one at night. He barely spends time with us and even if he was

able to help me or my siblings with studies, he would not be able to offer much help as has studied till secondary 4 in Pakistan.



Transcript 2

Student 2-S2

Interviewer: Do you take private tutorial classes?

S2: No

Interviewer: Why?

S2: I have to go to work after school. I mostly dismiss around 11 or 12 at night. Therefore, I don't have time to even attend the school tutorial classes and I can't afford private ones. This is why I am earning to support my and family needs as we are a family of six members. My dad is the only one to earn and that's not enough for a big family. Me and my sister have to work to meet our needs and also sometimes help out at home. I face both time and money problems to support my studies so private tutorial classes are not an option for me.

Interviewer: Why did you opt for work being a S.6 student?

S2: We have a family of six people. The financial situation is not well of our household. Hence, me and my younger sister work after school. Before pandemic, me and my sister would directly go to our workplaces from school and dismiss by 12 midnight. We barely get enough sleep. We have to either sacrifice our sleep or the peace of our house because there are many problems due to financial condition of our house.

Interviewer: How does it affect your studies?

S2: It affects my studies badly. Most of the times I am clueless of what's going in the class or on Zoom. My classmates know that I work so they are always willing to help me. But still I can't catch up much or take out time for homework because I also have to work and when I come back from work it's already very late and I sleep for 4-5 hours and then wake up for school.

Interviewer: Do you expect yourself to study ahead?

S2: I want to study ahead because that's how I can secure a good job in HK. I know the government also helps with grants for university fees. I hope to enter university and manage work at side.