



The Influence Socio-Economics Backgrounds To Students' Academic Performance

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Abstract. Indonesian students studying at Curtin University come from different socio-economic backgrounds. Their present socio-economic status was measured by income which is for the survey purposes identified with their scholarships. The aim of the research was to examine and compare the manner in which income as a socio-economic variable had effects on their academic performance. A questionnaire was used as a method for research and students were treated individually. Findings indicated that although not significantly, performance was influenced by income. Background factors, size of family, parents' occupation and education, area of origin were found to influence the performance in a positive way, also. Survey have found a problem with language which was opposite to previous research. The future investigation on a larger sample may be useful.

Keywords: Academic Performance, Socio Economics, Students.

Abstrak. Mahasiswa Indonesia yang belajar di Curtin University berasal dari latar belakang sosial ekonomi yang berbeda. Status sosial ekonomi mereka saat ini diukur dengan pendapatan yang untuk tujuan survei diidentifikasi dengan beasiswa mereka. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menguji dan membandingkan bagaimana pendapatan sebagai variabel sosio-ekonomi berpengaruh terhadap prestasi akademik mereka. Kuesioner digunakan sebagai metode untuk penelitian dan siswa diperlakukan secara individual. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun tidak signifikan, kinerja dipengaruhi oleh pendapatan. Faktor latar belakang, ukuran keluarga, pekerjaan dan pendidikan orang tua, daerah asal ditemukan mempengaruhi kinerja dengan cara yang positif juga.

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Survei telah menemukan masalah dengan bahasa yang berlawanan dengan penelitian sebelumnya. Investigasi masa depan pada sampel yang lebih besar mungkin berguna.

Kata Kunci : Prestasi Akademik, Sosial Ekonomi, Mahasiswa

LATAR BELAKANG

There is probably no country in the world where researchers do not deal with socio-economic status and its role in the process of educational performance of students. The reason is that education is one of the most important issues in every society, and socio-economic status is very significant category that can be investigated inside the education system, especially when it concerns students' achievement. Besides, very often the research results influence policy makers decisions in schools in order to achieve their goals and gain benefits from the education for the society.

KAJIAN TEORITIS

A number of researchers have examined the relationship between socio-economic status and educational performance (Ewijk & Slegers, 2020; Bond, 1981; Baht et al, 2016; Gobena, 2018). Most of them seem to agree that relationship is positive in many countries. That means "students from higher socio-economic status's have higher performance scores than students from lower socio-economic status's" (Clifton, 1978: 5; Xuan et al, 2019). However, comparative analyses of students carried out by the same author in England and New Zealand shows substantial differences between them. For example comparing performance in chemistry and physics the effects of socio-economic status variables are more powerful in England than in New Zealand. It means that these things should not be generalised. Most of the surveys are examining the effects of a number of socio-economic status variables, such as the occupation of a student's parents, educational levels of parents, size of his family, economic status of family, religion, upon his educational performance.

Mangindaan, et al (1978) analyses achievement factors at secondary level of Indonesian education. There is also evidence that size of family has an effect on performance. Children from small families tend to do better at school. They have the advantage that their parents can provide them with more material goods and devote more time to them, so they have a better home environment. Economic status in terms of affluence in the home has more effects on achievement in urban areas. The differences in performance between urban and rural students are more obvious at higher economic status level. It is likely the urban well-off families use their material advantages for providing better schooling for their children than some rural families. The authors take parent's occupation as one of the most important index of socio-economic advantages, which correlates with student achievement. They point out that "the higher the educational level of the parents is the higher are the achievement scores of the children" (Mangindaan, 1978).

A curious finding is that parents with no more than two years of primary education have children who perform better than those whose parents have left primary school at a higher level. It could be explained in terms of economic reasons. Poorly educated parents are forced to leave school to earn a living despite their ability to learn. Findings show also bigger differences in achievement level between various groups in urban than in rural areas. Fathers are better educated than mothers, which result partly from the culture that he as "a head of family" needs better education in order to support family are. Abbot-Chapman, et al (1992) monitor student performance on both, secondary and tertiary level in Australia. In general, they consider that a student's family background factors do not influence significantly their performance at higher educational level. They have developed an index of disadvantage, as the measure of socio-economic status based on family background simply does not exist. Such information you can not find recorded at enrolment or anywhere. The Mentioned index "is constructed so that higher values represent higher levels of disadvantage and lower values mean more advantage" (Abbot-Chapman, et al, 1992:70). Disadvantage is related to student success, failure and attrition. In general, the mean honours score increases with the year. Those who left in first year (in 1989) of

their study have much higher disadvantage index scores than have those who left mid year in second year 1990.

The authors emphasise this finding for attrition because it shows how disadvantaged students are at greater risk of early drop out. According to the authors more important factor for student performance at university is the prior performance. They believe that is true even for highly disadvantaged students. That means “for high academic achievers disadvantage carries less weight than for those of lower achievement” (Abbot-Chapman:79). Those students who come adequately prepared from high schools are likely to perform better than those inadequately prepared whatever their background. When you add motivation and course commitment to that factor even disadvantaged students are likely to complete course successful and to graduate.

Most of the researchers point out that the student performance and achievement never depends on one of these background factors, only. It is always a combination of two or more. Apart from these factors its worth mentioning, natural ability intellectual stimulation, influences in the classroom, etc. which work together and affect the student’s performance. We are aware how relative the impact of background factors is for academic performance of Indonesian student at Curtin University. We are of the view that their income is most important variable that needs to be examined, which influence their study and determine their socio-economic status at University. Our intention is not therefore to isolate that variable but put it into correlation with others to get a better picture of our problem.

Need for more investigation

The increase in numbers of Indonesian students participating in university education in Australia was an attractive point for starting our research project. Mentioned research did not cover investigation on income as socio-economic variable, and its influence on students’ achievement. As mentioned in The Proposal this project is going to be an attempt to identify and define socio-economic status of the group of students at Curtin University. Furthermore, we are going to

examine its influence on their performance at University. In doing so, we have chosen their income as the most important variable of socio-economic status to put into correlation with their academic performance. In this case we have identified income with scholarship as the majority of Indonesian students live on this. Our investigation will cover all other sources of financing the students in order to compare the results and get proper picture of their socio-economic status.

The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out if the material situation affects their study in a positive way, i.e. if they do better with more money. We believe in causality of these two factors, income and performance, and want to investigate the following hypothesis: "Students with higher incomes have better academic performance."

METODE PENELITIAN

A questionnaire was sent to group of Indonesian students studying at Curtin University. Forty persons were selected according to their country of origin, all were overseas students and all have studying at the same university. These students have not yet graduated and studied different streams.

We compared their socio-economics status at university with their academic performance at university in terms the income they received and group of background factors such as size of family, parents' education and occupation, areas they come from either town or village. We also compared it in terms the students' previous achievement as well as the type of university attended before coming to Curtin University.

The research instrument was a questionnaire. It contained forty questions and was divided into three sections. The first section, from question one to ten, were focused on some general questions. Those questions should have ensured some overall information of the sample. We have found out the structure of the sample according to the gender, type of stream studying, the length of their stay in Australia and some problems which occurred while staying and studying in

Australia. The purpose of second group of questions, from 11-21, was to investigate the influence of the background factors on the students' performance at the university. Included were questions about the size of their family, parents' occupation and level of education, and their personal achievement at schools finished in Indonesia. Two questions from this section related to their achievement at Curtin University. Finally, the last and the biggest questions section concerned their income. The focus of this question group was to find out the source and the amount of income they are received. By several open questions students were asked to respond to sponsors' requirements (those with scholarship) and the problems followed by their requirements.

Each respondent got a questionnaire and was asked to respond in a written form. They were treated individually. Every respondent got an envelope as well putting in a completed questionnaire. Students had four days at their disposal for completing the questionnaire, after which they left the completed questionnaire in the "Education Library" at agreed place.

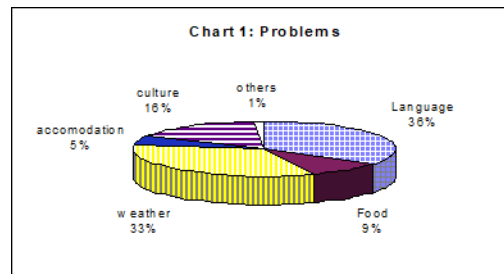
Bar graphs and pie charts were used for presenting our results. We used bar charts for comparing students' achievement with their income, social factor (town-village), economic-status at home (size of family, parents' education and occupation) and their previous performance at the university. Pie chart was used for presenting main problems they have found while studying at Curtin University.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

A. The sample of students by sex, age, period of stay and streams

Forty individuals responded to our questionnaire. This represented 70% were males included 30% females. Most of them, 57% were in the 31-40 years age, 38% of all students were in the 21-30 years age, and only 5% in the age over 40. Among the respondents 57% stated that they have been in Australia from 7 to 12 months, 25% live here more than one year, and 18% of them live less than 6 months. Students who have been here less than 6 months have not yet finished any semester. Thirty-one persons have been studying to get Master degree, eight persons are doing

English Language Course, and only one person is doing Bachelor degree. Regarding the problems they have been faced with their study at Curtin University the majority of respondents indicated two problems as the biggest: language and weather. The least problem they had was with accommodation. Thirty-two persons live in flats. Most of them responded are being satisfied with their present accommodation in relation to their study (35 persons).



B. Comparison of Achievement Based on Background Factors

The second group of questions provided us very interesting results. It concerned background factors and the respondents were asked to reply the questions about their origin, size of family, parent's occupation and education, type of school finished in Indonesia. These replies should have shown a relationship with their performance at Curtin University. Before coming to Australia 31 persons (77%) lived in towns and 9 persons (23%) lived in rural areas.

1. Origin Variable

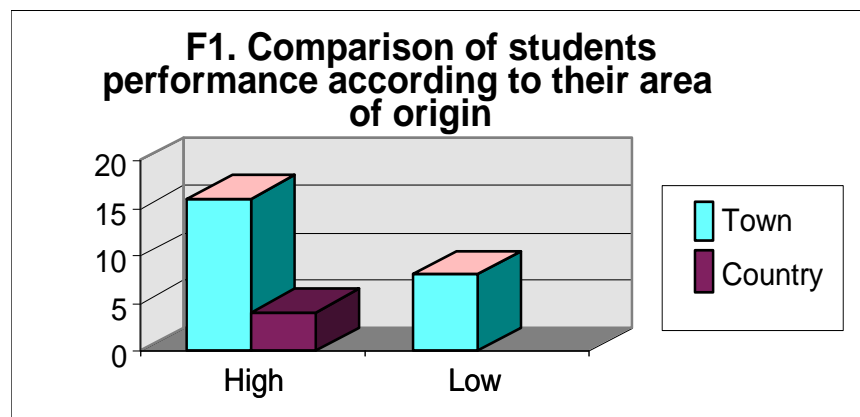
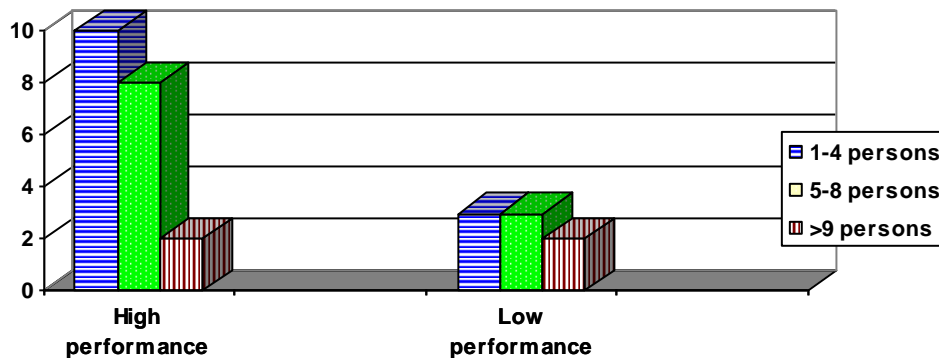


Figure 1 shows comparison of the students' performance according to their area of origin (town or country). Findings indicate that area of origin has a positive effect on students' performance. Thus, students from towns tend to do better than those from the country. An interesting situation is that there were no persons coming from country who performed badly. Four students coming from villages tend to have high performance. In other words, although in minority, country students tend to have high academic performance.

2. Size of Family

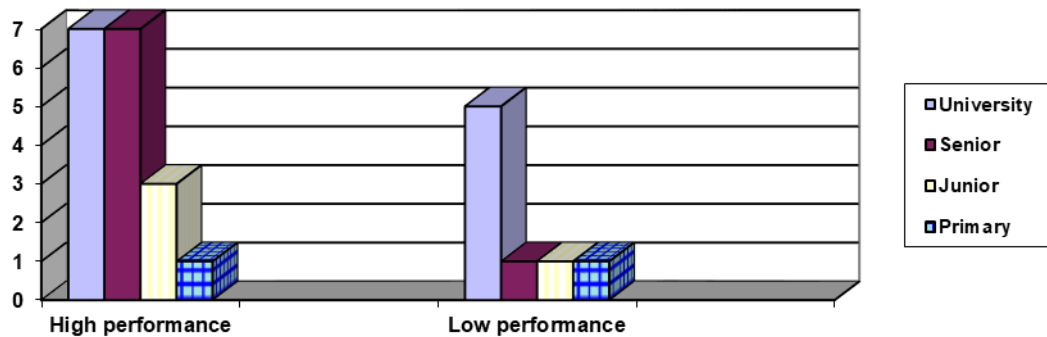
F 2: Correlation between size of family and students' achievement



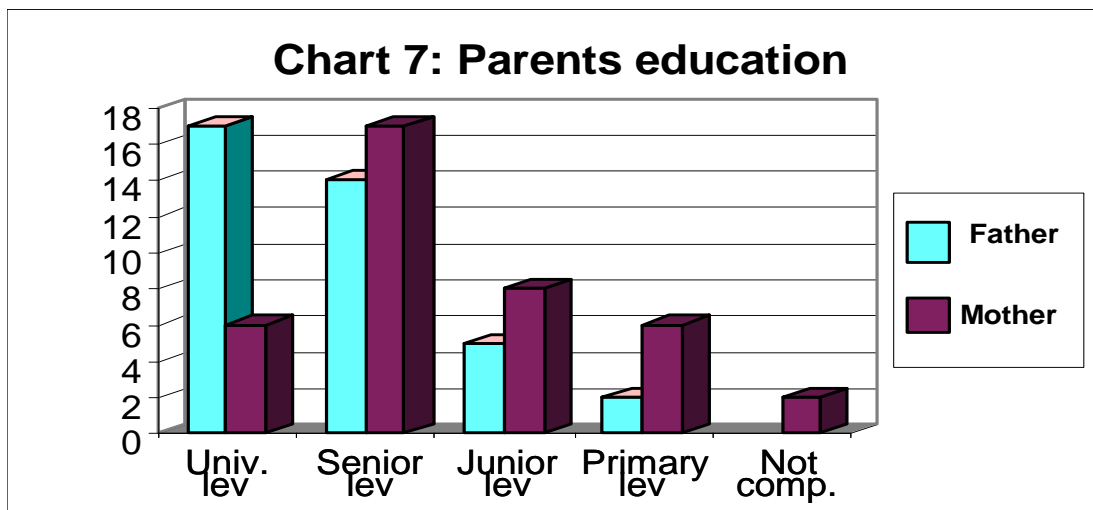
Size of family seems to influence the academic performance of the Indonesian students. Figure 2 shows correlation between the number of persons in the student family and their achievement. Students coming from small families (1-4 persons) tend to have better academic performance than those who come from medium size families (5-8 persons). But, there is no big difference in academic achievement between mentioned two groups of students, both tend to have high achievement. However, students from large families (with more than 9 persons) tend to have same level of performance. In general, there is a decrease in academic performance with the bigger size of family.

3. Parents' education

F 3: Students' achievement by level of parents' education

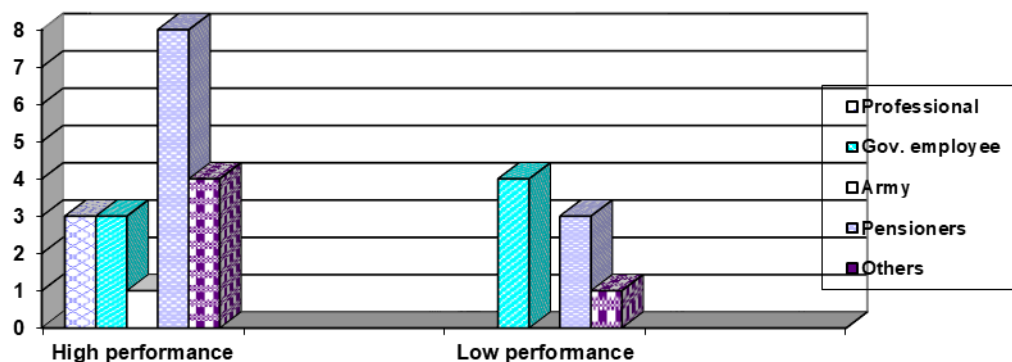


Another factor which correlates with academic performance is the educational attainment of parents. Figure 3 represents achievement for students by level of father's education. Speaking generally, father have higher level of education than mothers (chart 7). Figure 3 also shows that the higher the educational level of the father the more likely is the students will perform better.



4. Parents' occupation

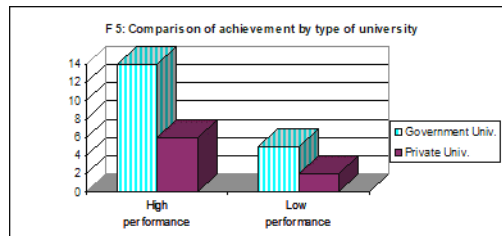
F 4: Students' achievement by parents' occupation



The results obtained compared parents occupation with students achievements too. Figure 4 shows that parents of students who have low achievement are employed either in government offices or are pensioners. On the other hand, the parents of those students who tend to perform better have professional occupation, but most of them are also pensioners. Although, both group of students (with high or low achievement) are supported by retired parents, it can be seen from the graph that professional occupied parents have a bigger influence on students academic performance than other parents occupations.

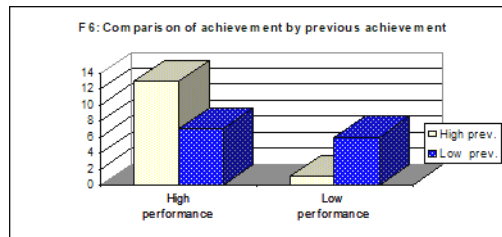
5. Type of University

Figure 5 shows the correlation between type of university finished in Indonesia and students' achievement. Twenty-three students have attended government-funded university in their country, and sixteen of them have finished private ones, one person has finished secondary school and is now taking undergraduate studies. Students who have finished government type of university tend to have better performance than those who come out from private university. Most of the students coming from government university are receiving scholarship from government, so, part of the explanation why they are performing better seems to lie in this fac



6. Previous Achievement

Interpreting previous student achievements with the present ones at Curtin University (figure 6) we have found out that students with previous high achievement tend to do better than students who got bad university results at previous university. So, there is clear indication that performance was influenced by previous results.



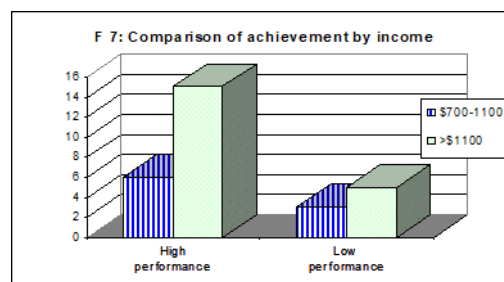
C. Comparison of Achievement Based on Income

To determine whether their income positively affect their performance in this survey, the students were separated into the following two groups; 1) those received scholarship and 2) those funded by other sources such as: parents funds, company's sources or individually funded ones. The data revealed differences based on income. Thirty-five persons got scholarships, eight of them received income from other sources and three persons had double founded incomes (from two different sources).

An amount of \$1,100 was established as a measure for testing our hypothesis: "students with higher incomes have better academic performance". Students who had income less than that amounts were classified as the low-income students. All others with income over that amount were in the group of high-income students. The data revealed that 62,5% of the respondents had

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income from \$1,101 to \$1,300 and the rest of respondent had income between \$700 to \$1,100. Three students (with double income) had income over \$1,300. Low-income group of students is more likely to perform worse than the high-income group of students. Figure 7 illustrates that there is increase of academic performance with increase of income. So, there is a clear indication that income amounts had a positive effect on students' performance. In other words, income levels resulted in differences in performances.



The responses about possible other sources of incomes provided upon our two questions “Do you have any extra money?” and “Do you have a part time job?” showed no significant correlation with their performances. A few of the students (17,5%) answered they had extra money and the majority 82,5% replied they did not have it. It appears that the present level of incomes were quite sufficient that students did not require additional source of income (for example part time job) to improve their performance.

All scholarship students replied that they had an obligation to report to their sponsors the result of their study. **Lianah The**

DISCUSSION

In order to begin our survey we have assumed that higher income of Indonesian students studying at Curtin University is, the better their academic performance will be. We have believed also in a positive relationship between background factors (area of origin, family size, parents' education and occupation) and students' achievement.

The results of our questionnaire were expected. The findings illustrate that although not significantly, there is a clear indication that performance was influenced by income. Background factors were found to influence in general the performance in a positive way, too. Is income, as a main socio-economic variable we have chosen, the most powerful determinant of their achievements, it is hard to say. Which one of chosen variables is the most powerful is also hard to say without additional examinations. A part from these there is many other socio-economic variables, which probably affect students' performance. Income, represented through scholarships, did not show significant economic inequalities among students. From the perspective of this survey, the relationship between socio-economic status and performance is evident and important. Findings support previous research (Mangindaan, et al, 1978; Clifton, 1978). However, the interesting results were noticed analysing the influence of area of origin factor to the achievement. Even though in minority, students with rural backgrounds tended to have high academic performance. The question is: Would the examination on a large sample show same results? The survey found that language is a big problem for Indonesian students. This is worth mentioning being students' performance might be affected by their non-fluently speaking or not understanding the lecturers. This finding is not in accordance with previous research (Chigarasa, 1982). Findings of students' obligations towards sponsors (through supplying reports) imply a problem of pressure with this overseas group of students. Consequently, their performance outcomes might be affected, as well.

This research suggests that future researchers may choose larger sample of respondents with the same causal assumption, which we have made. They may choose also either the same or different group students, studying at other universities

KESIMPULAN DAN SARAN

This survey was conducted to provide a comparison, which has not been evident from previous research. In addition, it was conducted to examine the influence of socio-economic status variables; income and background factors, on academic achievement of a group of Indonesian students at Curtin University.

In conclusion, the above research gave support to our hypothesis “Students with higher income have better academic performance”, fully. Moreover, some findings are quite new comparing to the previous ones. For instance, results showed, even though in minority students with rural backgrounds tended to have high academic performance. The study revealed also that Indonesian students had problems with language, what might affect their performance. Additional research on a larger sample could be useful to ascertain whether the influence of these socio-economic variables is significant and to explore whether the new findings have affects to the performance of Indonesian students at Curtin University.

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