

Effect of Economic Level on Students Goal Setting

¹Hasna Abu Khalid, ²Dr. Mary Ann Hollingsworth

¹Doctoral Candidate Education Leadership, and Policy, Seattle University

²Asst. Professor, Instructional Leadership & Support Department, University of West Alabama,
United States

Laura Holley

School counselor, Demopolis Middle School, Demopolis, AL, United States

ABSTRACT : *Poverty is a considerable and growing problem that leaves poor families and persons with a significantly decreased chance of achieving optimal quality of life. Children raised in poverty today will grow up in situations that will give them a small--if not negligible—opportunity of following a path capable of leading them to a distinctly better place than where they started. Research indicates that children from low socioeconomic families as well as society develop academic skills more slowly than children from high socioeconomic groups. Socioeconomic disadvantage and other risk factors linked to poverty have a negative effect on cognitive development, academic success, as well as smaller impacts on behavior. This research contributed to discover of various challenges that low socioeconomic students face. This knowledge will help personalize and improve and increase the interventions the stakeholders use in their practice. A semi-structured survey was administered online to students (6th to 12th grades) across Marengo and Sumter counties, Alabama for a period of six weeks. Analysis of data employed Likert analysis, Descriptive Statistics, and Inferential Statistics to generate, recommendations for relevant stakeholders.*

KEYWORDS – *Poverty, Goal-setting, Quality of Life, Socioeconomics, Academic success*

I. Introduction

Goal setting is a broadly observed occurrence. Many times, people set goals. An example is that dieters set a target weight. A second example is that runners aim for a particular time. Latham and Locke (1979) made a series of experiments about goal setting. From these experiments, the two researchers concluded that different goals, including those set by an outsider (for example, a peer) and self-set goals are capable of contributing to a better performance than not setting goals (Asikhia). The International Council of Nurses (ICN) (2004) defines poverty as a human condition. For ICN, poverty is a way of life that impacts every relationship an individual has with the world. A family is the most significant component of a child's social organization. The family is responsible for the growth of not only the child's physical and mental dispositions, but also moral dispositions. Asikhia (2010) claims there are three variables that play a significant role in a child's learning process/educational performance and social integration: The first variable is the type and size of the family the child comes from. The second variable is educational background of the child's parents or other family members. The third variable is socio-economic status (Asikhia).

Lower socioeconomic status tends to negatively impact academic success. The achievement gap in the educational setting among students who come from households whose socioeconomic status (SES) is high as well as children who come from low SES households is well documented (Barton, 2003; Leach & Williams, 2007; Ross, Smith, Madden & Slavin, 1997). Not only is the gap hefty—it is also unrelenting. This fact is identified as well as broadly accepted (Barton; Leach & Williams; Ross *et al.*). For decades, policymakers, educators, and other stakeholders in the education sector have partnered to tackle the complex and pervasive poverty problem in schools. The problem appears to be the elephant in the room (Leach & Williams).

The achievement gap issue was highly publicized in the 2000 United States' presidential campaign. Candidates from both parties (George Walker Bush, Republican; and Albert Arnold Gore, Democratic) vowed that in the event that they were elected, they would take necessary actions to close the achievement gap (Barton). Three days following President George Walker Bush's inauguration--on January 20th, 2001, he took action. In this context, he enacted No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The NCLB law grew out of concern that the United States' education system was no longer competitive throughout the world. Considerably, the law increased the federal obligation in holding schools countrywide responsible for the academic progress of every students. The bipartisan supported Act's 1,100 pages described requirements designed to ensure that states in addition to schools improve the performance of all subgroups of students. That includes students identified as coming from a low socioeconomic background, students in special education, and poor and minority children--these children's achievement, on average, trails their peers (Klein, 2015; Pettigrew, 2009).

According to the Act, every student has to be performing at a skilled performance level in three key subjects by 2014. One of the subjects is mathematics. The rest of the subjects are language arts and science. In the event that any subgroup does not progress at the projected rate, the school all together is regarded as failing. There could be an educational setting that is strongly concentrated on standards-based accountability for students in every subgroup. In this case, key stakeholders in the education sector should be conscious of the problems present when students grow up in poverty. Moreover, the key stakeholders should be conscious of and ready to execute programs and initiatives aimed at combating and narrowing the achievement gap to ensure success in all students (Archibald, 2006).

Drummond & Stipek (2004) established that some low-income parents' responsibilities were restricted to catering for children's basic in addition to social emotional needs. These needs include clothing, food, emotional support, and socializing manners. The low-income parents stated that scarcity of financial resources made it hard for them to ensure that their children realize their educational and other life goals (Drummond & Stipek, 2004). Dillon (2012) writes that 42% of children in the United States live at 200% of the Federal Poverty Line or below—they live in low-income households. Given this startling statistic, for many years, the impact poverty has on a child's academic, psychological, in addition to social functioning has been a topic of research. In general, it is believed that children who come from high and middle socio-economic status parents are exposed to a favorable learning environment at home. That is because the children have access to extra learning facilities (Ahmar & Anwar, 2013). By contrast, children who come from low SES parents lack access to extra learning facilities--as a result, the chance to reach the top of the educational ladder might not be simple (Becker & Tomes, 1979). Mukherjee (1995) and Williams, Penelope & White (1991) identifies that children from low SES families are more likely than children from high SES families to develop several patterns with regard to education, including low levels of literacy, numeracy, as well as comprehension; and low higher education participation rates. Further patterns include that the students are more likely to leave school early and demonstrate high levels of problematic school behavior (for example, absenteeism) (Mukherjee; Williams *et al.*).

Hart and Risley (1995) carried out a landmark longitudinal study. The study revealed differences in language development from a very young age between economically disadvantaged students and non-economically disadvantaged students. By the age of three (3), already, children in poverty were on a lower developmental path as compared with their peers who come from a high SES. It is without a doubt that there are educational developmental disparities between children from low SES and those children living in high SES. In addition to these disparities, the National Center for Children in Poverty (2006) carried out a study. The study revealed that 50 percent of children who take part in the welfare system have some type of mental health concern. When these children from low SES join school with mental health as well as academic concerns, school social workers play a pivotal role of working with and improving the welfare of these impoverished children. School social workers strive to effectively empower students living in poverty to higher levels of individual as well as professional functioning. To achieve these, school social workers must know the numerous social parameters that influence the mental health as well as academic success of a student living in poverty. When examining these parameters, additionally, it is crucial to bear in mind the greater community environment of the child's school. Also, Fram and colleagues (2007) established that schools in impoverished neighborhoods had lower test scores in addition to a greater proportion of below-grade-level readers than schools in affluent areas.

According to Condrón (2013), both affluence and equality impact on academic achievement through support in school resources for educational achievement. Condrón's study examined these across multiple countries and found that high levels of social and economic inequality undermined academic achievement. Factors that contributed outside the school were "income, wealth, child poverty, and residential segregation." (p. 93).

Purpose of the Study

The proposed study aimed at investigating some variables that impact student's goal setting. Principal among these variables were:

- • Socio-economic status of students,
- • Educational aspirations,
- • School setup and its organization,
- • Well adjusted behaviors,
- • Personal characters,
- • Creativity intelligence,
- • Values, and
- • Attitudes.

Nevertheless, the proposed research study significantly focused on socio-economic status. The division of society into various classes as well as association of parents with a particular class can impact children's goal setting, especially academic goal setting. The study was designed to evaluate the effect of socioeconomic status on student performance and find out if motivating low SES students by increasing their socioeconomic status can result to an increase in their academic performance. In order to attain the democratic ideal regarding equalizing educational opportunity, it was important to approximate the degree to which progress in academic achievement is being influenced by the socioeconomic variable. When students establish their own goals, they take responsibility of their own learning goals. Such goal-oriented behavior that is the outcome of goal setting is not only empowering, but also proactive. Setting goals can be particularly significant for students having low achievement motivation.

Conceptual Framework

In this study, the authors embraced the school readiness framework. The framework was adapted from (Ramey and Ramey 1992). The framework helped to assess the factors that contribute to academic success of elementary school students from low SES. The framework captures seven key aspects:

Survival Needs: It means if or if not a person's basic human needs are met. Such needs include such as food, clothing, as well as shelter. The needs can be measured or evaluated by various incidences, including hunger.

Health Condition: It means if a person is having good physical as well as psychological health. This can be reflected in various ways. Among them are through physical disabilities incidences and of illness. Others include intellectual disabilities and stress levels.

Sense of Security: It means if a person is feeling secure from three perspectives, one of which is physically. The rest of the perspectives are emotionally and financially.

Self-esteem: It means a person's self-perceptions in several areas. Among them are personal and cognitive. Another area is social competency.

Motivation: It means if a person has positive motivation to perform well in various backgrounds. Some of them are school, family, as well as in the community. Motivation can be measured through the person's attitudes in addition to goals with regard to these backgrounds.

Social Interactions: refers to whether an individual has sufficient interactions with others in their social lives.

Basic Skills: It means if or if not a personal has the primary skills to carry out basic tasks independently—to carry out the tasks independently both at home and outside home environments. An example is traveling from home to school. A second example is helping out in household chores (Long & Li, 2014; Ramey and Ramey 1992).

Procedure, Participants, and Location of Survey

The study consisted of administration of a semi-structured survey online to students (6th to 12th grades) across Marengo and Sumter counties, Alabama for a period of six weeks. The Primary Investigator (PI) sent letters to schools across the county to notify participants about the existence of the survey with a link provided on the letters. To study the nature of the obtained data, Likert analysis, descriptive statistics, as well as inferential statistics (that is, one-way ANOVA, t-test, and regression analysis) were fulfilled by the PI. Likert analysis was used to measure different variables, including perception, attitude, principles, as well as behavior. Ratings comprised numbers as well as descriptions. Regression analysis was employed with the key objective of setting up the link between these two variables: student socio-economic background as well as academic performance. Upon obtaining this information, recommendations could be availed to promote equal opportunity for students to learn and to be successful in spite of income status. Moreover, this information could support initiatives to achieve grant funding for setting up of a sustainable program to support the intervention programs.

II. Conclusion and suggestions

Survey Results Analysis - School

The results regarding the grades the participants indicated that the majority of them are in sixth grade (around 88% of the participants). Only a few participants are in the 10th (6%) and 11th grade (6%). Most of the participants in the study about the effect of economic level on students were females—approximately 64% of the participants were females, while around 36% were male students. From the findings above, it is apparent that around seven (7) percent of the participants indicated that they eat one meal per day. The percentage of those who eat three meals per day is approximately 57%, while that of the participants who eat more than three meals per day is about 36%. A considerable percentage (53%) of the participants indicated that they receive free lunch in their schools. Forty (40) percent of the participants indicated that they pay (their parents) for lunch, while only about 7% answered that their payment mode for lunch is reduced. When asked if they dress out for PE everyday, the majority of the participants (around 71%) indicated that they do so. The rest of the participants (around 29%) stated that they dress out for PE on a daily basis.

Survey Results Analysis – Family

The results of father's educational level reveal that 20% of the participants' fathers are high school drop-out, 27% have high school diploma, while 20% have 2-year degree. About 7% of the participants' fathers have masters' degree. There was no any participant who indicated that their father has a doctorate degree. The outcomes of mother's educational level reveal that around 7% of the participant's mothers are high school dropouts, around 27% have high school diploma, and about 13% of the participants' mothers have a 2-year degree. Around 13% of the participants' mothers have a 4-year degree, approximately 33% have a master's degree, and only around 7% have a doctorate degree. Most participants (around 71%) of the participants indicated that their parents are married, while no participant indicated they are widowed. About 7% of the participants stated that their parents are divorced; an equivalent percentage (about 7%) stated that they are separated, while around 14% stated that their parents never married. About 36% of participants stated that their financial situation today is excellent, while 43% stated that it is good. Around 14% of the participants stated that there financial situation today is average, while around 7% stated that it is poor. None of the participants stated that there financial situation today is terrible.

Survey Results Analysis – Environment

Forty (40) percent of the participants in the study about the effect of economic level on students' goal setting indicated that they live in a very safe neighborhood. An equivalent percentage (40) stated that they live in a quite safe neighborhood. Around 13% of the participants pointed out that they live in not quite safe neighborhoods, while 7% indicated they live in not safe at all neighborhoods. When asked why they might be stressed at home, roughly 13% of the participants stated poor relationships with parents/communication issues, while roughly 7% of the participants indicated domestic abuse. Eighty (80) percent of the participants stated they are not stressed at home.

Survey Results Analysis – Goal Setting

When asked if they have ever set a goal and accomplished it, roughly 93% of the participants stated yes, while 7% stated maybe. Around 32% of the participants indicated that their parents motivate them to set goals, while an equal percentage (32%) indicated their friend. The percentage of the participants who stated that they motivate themselves is 26%, while the percentage for the participants who stated teachers is around 10 percent. The survey requested the participants to state their plans after finishing their high school education. Around 33% of the participants indicated that they desire to earn a doctorate degree, while about 27% of the participants indicated that they desire to earn a masters degree. Twenty (20) percent stated that they desire to earn a 4-year college degree, while about 13% stated they would straight go to work after completing their high school education. Finally, around 7% of the participants stated that they desire to earn a 2-year college degree after completing their high school education.

The participants listed different current goals that they have established for themselves. First of all, the goals revolved around career/education. In this regard, some stated that they desired to be travelling nurses in order to help expectant mothers give birth. Other states they would like to be singers, gymnasts, teachers, and doctors. Other stated they would like to own small businesses and factories, play for a popular basketball team, play for a popular softball team, and score high grades (make straight As) in their exams/ Secondly, the goals revolved around health. Some participants stated that their current goals are to add weight, while others stated they would like to reduce weight. Finally, the goals revolved around entertainment, including attending sports events to cheer for their popular teams.

When asked what they will do to meet their goals, with regard to career goals, the participants stated that they will be studying hard and smart (including practicing a lot, paying attention, and embracing positive advice). As for the health goals, those who stated they would like to add weight stated they would eat more. For the participants who stated they would like to lose weight, they indicated they will meet this goal by engaging in workouts and selecting weight loss friendly foods.

Summary of Aspects from Conceptual Framework

Table 1 demonstrates, that on average, participants were performing fairly well in the majority of the aspects in the conceptual framework adapted from Ramey and Ramey (1992)--as reflected by the mean values. The aspects have been standardized—they have been standardized to a scale of 5. The aim of this standardization was to offer a significant comparison across the aspects. Unsurprisingly, three lowest average score are Security (financial security), Health (psychological, stress levels), and Needs (PE Clothing). These findings gives a clue to the fact that some of our participants come from poor background, which can impact their established goals. Needs (Food) aspect scored well due to the fact that a considerable number of participants are offered free food in their respective schools—and a small number are offered foods in schools at reduced rates. Three aspects have highest scores: Self-esteem (Goal Setting and Accomplishment) at 3.75, Security (Physical, Neighborhoods) at 3.75, and Motivation at 3.8. Self-esteem and Motivation scores indicate that most

participants are motivated to realize their life goals, including career and health. Parents and friends are key source of the participants' motivation to set and accomplish the participants' various goals. Security aspect high score is a clear demonstration that most of the participants' live in safe neighborhoods, with low or no incidences of crimes. Though, a few participants live in unsafe neighborhoods typified by several crime incidences.

Hypotheses Testing

H1a: There is a negative correlation between the meals eaten per day and current financial situation among the participants.

A very strong negative correlation was found between meals eaten per day and current financial situation ($r=-0.87$; $p=0.064$). In other words, when the participants' financial status increases, they tend to eat more meals per day. Moreover, most participants eat three meals or more per day than those who eat less than three meals per day, one reason being that most schools provide free meals to their students. The hypothesis was accepted.

H1b: There is a negative correlation between living in a safe neighborhood and stress levels among the participants.

A weak positive correlation was found between in a safe neighborhood and stress levels ($r=0.364$; $p=0.318$). Putting it differently, respondents who live in unsafe neighborhoods (they are fewer than those who live in safe neighborhoods) experience high levels of stress. The hypothesis was rejected.

H1c: There is a positive correlation between setting a goal and accomplishing it and the present financial situation among the participants.

A weak positive correlation was found between setting a goal and accomplishing it and the present financial situation ($r=0.480$; $p=0.260$). In other words, setting a goal and accomplishing it is dependent on the financial position of a participant. Only several participants who are in a good financial position are able to accomplish their goals. The hypothesis was accepted.

H1d: There is a negative correlation between motivation to set goals and plans after high school among the participants.

A strong negative correlation was found between motivation to set goals and plans after high school among the participants ($r=-0.648$; $p=0.118$). In other words, if there is low or no motivation to set goals, then a significant number of the participants are likely to progress with post-high school education—they will opt to be employed after high school. Though, all participants are motivated by different types of persons. The participants will, therefore, highly likely to set goals and have plans after high school—they will consequently progress with post-high school. The hypothesis was accepted.

H1e: There is a positive correlation between setting a goal and accomplishing it and plans for after high school among the participants.

A weak negative correlation was found between setting a goal and accomplishing it and plans for after high school ($r=-0.320$; $p=0.340$). In other words, the act most of the participants to set goals and fulfill them will have an impact on their plans for after high school—chances are high that their plans for after high school will succeed. If respondents do not set and fulfill the goals, then chances are low that their plans for after high school will succeed. The hypothesis was rejected.

A weak negative correlation was found between the mode of paying for lunch at school and the current financial situation ($r=-0.466$; $p=0.691$). Stated another way, a significant number of the respondents are offered free lunch and therefore, the current financial situation does not impact their capability to have lunch. Though, some participants should pay for the lunch or pay partial amounts and therefore, the current financial situation affects their capability to have lunch—in case the financial situation is poor, they are not likely to afford the lunch.

III. Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to find the impact of socioeconomic status on students' goal setting as well as academic achievement. The study revealed that low SES is demonstrated a few participant who take one meal per day and that some participants dress out for PE sometimes. Some participants indicated that their financial situation today is average, while others stated that it is poor. Similarly, according to Lacour & Tissington (2011), poverty is a type of specific culture as well as a lifestyle. Poverty is a growing issue across the United States. The number of people living in poverty in the country is increasingly rising. Poverty is an indication of the degree to which a person lacks important resources. Examples of the resources are financial, emotional, spiritual, support systems, and role models. More examples are mental, physical resources, relationships, in addition to knowledge of hidden rules. For Lacour & Tissington (2011), poverty directly impacts academic success. That is because of lack or inadequate resources to support student success. Low achievement is correlated closely with inadequate or no resources. The authors recommend programs that increase parental

employment as well as incomes. Such programs would serve to enhance school achievement of these parents' elementary school children (Lacour & Tissington, 2011).

According to Peters and Mullis (1997), when there are different reading materials at home, student scores rose. The scores rose by over four points and, at the same time, schooling rose by over four months of a year (Peters and Mullis). In addition, Drummond & Stipek (2004) established that some low-income parents' responsibilities were restricted to catering for children's basic in addition to social emotional needs. These needs include clothing, food, emotional support, and socializing manners. The low-income parents stated that scarcity of financial resources made it hard for them to ensure that their children realize their educational and other life goals.

The current study revealed that few participants' parents are either high school dropouts or only have only high school diploma. Parents' education level can have a significant impact on students' goal setting. For Peters and Mullis (1997), parental education has a considerable impact on academic achievement. The two researchers established that when compared to father's education level, mother's education level has a 20% greater impact with regard to the academic success of teens. Mother's education impacts children's specific ways of talking as well as playing. Also impacted are relationships and reading (Peters and Mullis, 1997).

The current study revealed that a considerable number of participants live in safe neighborhoods. Though, a few participants live in neighborhoods that are either not quite unsafe or not safe at all. Additionally, the study revealed that a few participants experience stress at home. Some of the causes of stress include poor relationships with parents/communication issues and domestic abuse. Deci and colleagues (1991) claim that students have four different psychological needs. Some of them are safety and autonomy. Other needs include belonging and competence. These needs must be fulfilled. That way, chances are high that students will become engaged in as well as dedicated to school. Students will, therefore, will aim to fulfill their expressed goals in addition to values (Watson 2003). According to Hawkins and colleagues (1992), this phenomenon is frequently referred to as *school/social bonding* (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller 1992).

Even more, when the four psychological needs are satisfied, students are more likely to become engaged in school—that is, school bonding occurs. Secondly, students are more likely to act based on school goals as well as values. Thirdly, students are more likely to develop social skills as well as understanding. Lastly, students are more likely to contribute to not only the school, but also the community as a whole. When the various psychological needs are not met, students are not only more likely to become inspired and more separated—they are also more likely to become poorer academic performers (Schaps, 2005).

The current study revealed that most participants' parents are married. The rest of the participants stated that either their parents are divorced, separated, or never married. According to literature, there are four pros that biological parents have over a single-parent family. Ordinarily, as compared to single-parent families, families with two parents have access to over one employment and savings. This type of families has, at the same time, more than one income and kin-associated economic resources (Princeton, n.d.). As compared to single-parent families, two parents have the capability to commit more time, love, in addition to monitoring of their children. Two parents may monitor each other's parenting. They can also relieve each other in case they find that parenting is becoming harder or tiresome. As a result, in general, the quality of parenting has a tendency of being higher in two-parent families than in single-parent families (Princeton, n.d.).

The current study revealed that almost all participants have ever set a goal and accomplished it. In addition, the study revealed that participants engage in different goals in order to meet their goals. With regard to career goals, the participants stated that they will be studying hard and smart (including practicing a lot, paying attention, and embracing positive advice). As for the health goals, those who stated they would like to add weight stated they would eat more. For the participants who stated they would like to lose weight, they indicated they will meet this goal by engaging in workouts and selecting weight loss friendly foods.

Based on goal setting and fulfilling, Dweck and colleagues (2014) claim that goal-setting exercises are valuable for low SES children. Such exercises can help the low SES children to develop higher academic tenacity as well as enthusiasm. The exercises must concentrate on setting learning-associated goals more—as compared to performance-related goals. The reason is that learning goals are positively associated a 'growth mindset'. As such, learning goals motivate children to seek out new challenges. The learning goals also motivate children to invest more effort on hard tasks (Dweck et al.). To illustrate this, a performance-related goal would be scoring 92 points in a science examination. Nevertheless, a learning-related goal would be the act of a student to understand seed germination in order that he-or she may explain it to his-her classmate.

Performance goals have a tendency to cultivate active failure avoidance. By contrast, learning goals assist students to see failures as constituting learning points. Students, therefore, will focus on continuously improve on themselves. Also, students have a tendency to be more inspired as well as successful when goals are cooperative instead of being competitive/individualistic (Dweck et al.). As we see it, it is especially important for low SES children to have suitable long-term goals. That way, the children would be in a better position to translate their academic drive into confidence—it is the confidence that they have control over their

circumstances. Simultaneously, the students should view education as a tool to use to empower themselves. A summary of factors from conceptual framework revealed that three lowest average score are Security (financial security), Health (psychological, stress levels), and Needs (PE Clothing). These findings gives a clue to the fact that some of our participants come from poor background, which can impact their established goals. Needs (Food) aspect scored well due to the fact that a considerable number of participants are offered free food in their respective schools—and a small number are offered foods in schools at reduced rates. Three aspects have highest scores: Self-esteem (Goal Setting and Accomplishment), Security (Physical, Neighborhoods), and Motivation. Self-esteem and Motivation scores indicate that most participants are motivated to realize their life goals, including career and health. Parents and friends are key source of the participants’ motivation to set and accomplish the participants’ various goals. Security aspect high score is a clear demonstration that most of the participants’ live in safe neighborhoods, with low or no incidences of crimes. Though, a few participants live in unsafe neighborhoods typified by several crime incidences.

Discussing hypotheses testing, a very strong negative correlation was found between meals eaten per day and current financial situation when the participants’ financial status increases, they tend to eat more meals per day. Second, a weak positive correlation was found between in a safe neighborhood and stress levels. It means that respondents who live in unsafe neighborhoods (they are fewer than those who live in safe neighborhoods) experience high levels of stress. Third, a weak positive correlation was found between setting a goal and accomplishing it and the present financial situation.). That means setting a goal and accomplishing it is dependent on the financial position of a participant. Fourth, a strong negative correlation was found between motivation to set goals and plans after high school among the participants. In other words, if there is low or no motivation to set goals, then a significant number of the participants are likely to progress with post-high school education—they will opt to be employed after high school. Though, all participants are motivated by different types of persons. As such, the participants will highly likely to set goals—as well as have plans after completing high school.

Fifth, a weak negative correlation was found between setting a goal and accomplishing it and plans for after high school. It means the act most of the participants to set goals and fulfill them will have an impact on their plans for after high school—chances are high that their plans for pursuing higher education will succeed. If respondents do not set and fulfill the goals, then chances are low that their plans for after high school will succeed.

Sixth, a weak negative correlation was found between the mode of paying for lunch at school and the current financial situation. In this context, a significant number of the respondents are offered free lunch and therefore, the current financial situation does not impact their capability to have lunch. Though, some participants must pay for the lunch or pay partial amounts and therefore, the current financial situation affects their capability to have lunch—in case the financial situation is poor, they are not likely to afford the lunch.

III. FIGURES AND TABLES

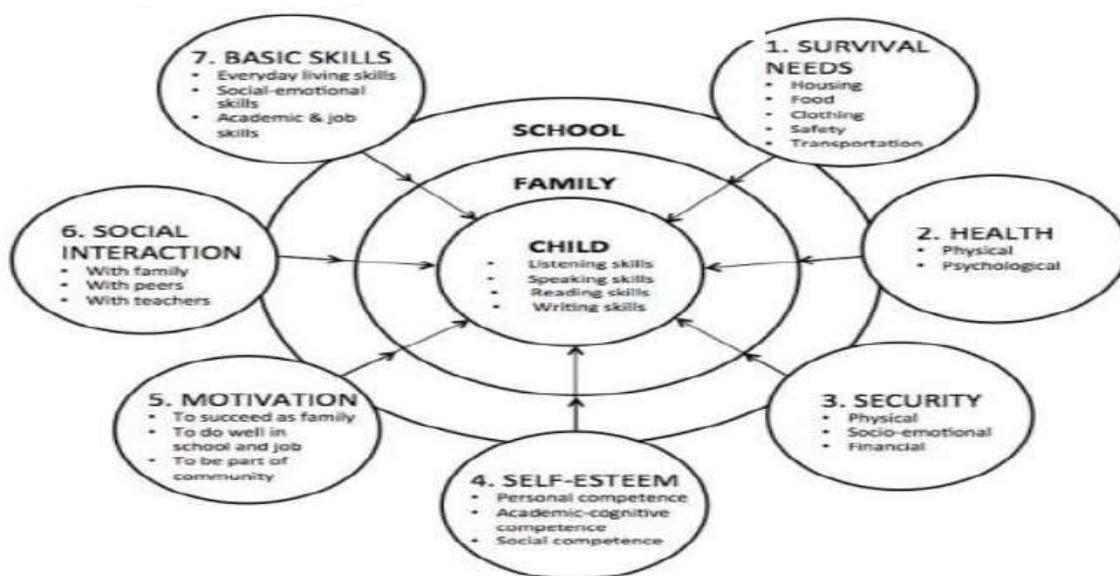


Figure I: Conceptual Framework Adapted from Ramey and Ramey 1992

Table 1: Summary of Factors from Conceptual Framework

	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
Needs (Food)	3.5	3	3.697
Needs (PE Clothing)	3.5	2	4.726
Health (Psychological, Stress Levels)	3	1	5.099
Security (Physical, Neighborhoods)	3.75	4	2.63
Security (Financial)	2.8	2	2.588
Self-esteem (Goal Setting and Accomplishment)	3.75	0.5	6.85
Motivation	3.8	5	2.683

IV. Conclusion

The current study has thrown sufficient light regarding the impact of SES on students’ goal setting and academic success. Poverty significantly affects the resources available to students. Because of poverty, several students struggle to have the same academic success levels of non-low SES students. We recommend that low SES students must be financially assisted, including providing them with adequate scholarship. There should be more emphasis on creating policies as well as and programs that help low-income parent(s) to provide suitable psychological in addition to educational support for their children. The health care services should equitably be provided to decrease health inequality gap. It is worthwhile to mention that successful education policies will assist in decreasing poverty in the long run. That is through making poor children more productive during adulthood.

In the United States, Title I ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) assigns funds using a special formula—in a way that benefits highest poverty district and state schools. In general, as compared to richer districts, high-poverty districts within a state get more Title I funds per poor student. In districts, ESSA high-poverty schools should be first in line for Title I dollars per poor student (Education Trust, 2016). We recommend some changes to ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act) and co-existing state/district accountability systems. In this context, common achievement standards should be adopted across states. More accountability should be concentrated on student growth instead of proficiency levels. States as well as districts should be provided with the flexibility to concentrate on limited resources on the neediest schools. Simultaneously, federal and state accountability systems should be reconciled.

We further recommend that educators should be provided with incentives to help them embrace practices having a convincing research base when expanding initiatives to create and recognize effective educational regimes. Accountability movement has established that highly disadvantaged schools (as well as districts) have one key weakness—they frequently do not have the capability to change themselves. State as well as district officials must make sure that disadvantaged schools adopt instructional practices in addition to associated policies having a strong research base. Simultaneously, the federal government should help in strengthening instructional practices and other initiatives aimed at ensuring the wellbeing of all students, irrespective of their SES. Even more, governments at every level should assist increase the supply of high-quality practices. That is through necessitating schools to use thoroughly assessed programs.

Low SES students must be encouraged to take part in various activities with the key objective of empowering them to compensate their feelings inferiority regarding education in addition to co-curricular achievement. Such activities should enable students of low SES to compete effectively with high SES students. The children of lowly educated parents should be offered facilities that will enable them to attend the summer coaching classes/sessions. The objective of these sessions will be to supplement regular programmes of the schools.

Teacher’s treatment among low and high SES students should be well thought-out towards. The aim of this is to ensure that low SES students do not realize that they are being prejudiced against based on socioeconomic status. Additionally, high-poverty schools do have the capacity to significantly improve student learning. The schools should, therefore, be helped to enhance their standard operating practices quality. One way to achieve this is through increasing the instructional capacity of teachers and other key school stakeholders in these schools—this can be done through professional development.

Limitation and Future Directions

The current study concentrated on the effect of economic level on students’ goal setting in two counties of Alabama, United States: across Marengo and Sumter. The study investigated various factors that influence students’ goal setting mainly from an economic perspective, including parents’ education level, financial situation of the participants, affordability of basic needs, marital status of parents, safety of neighborhoods, as well as psychological health. As a consequence, this study is limited to the two counties. The current study did not represent the entire United States. In light of this, the outcomes of the current study cannot be generalized, but they form a good basis for offering recommendations to help low SES students across the United States achieve their set goals, especially academic goals. The study can direct other United States’ academicians’

attention to examine effect of economic level on students' goal setting in other counties across the country. Secondly, the academicians should examine differences in SES for students in rural versus urban settings. The main objective of this is to gain a higher understanding regarding community effects that are play. Thirdly, academicians may want to concentrate on the various ways that poverty presents itself in both rural and urban settings and the impact of the poverty on low SES students. Fourthly, academicians in the United States may want to examine home-based factors that explain students' goal setting as well as academic performance. Last but not least, academicians in the United States may want to examine school-based factors at explain students' goal setting as well as academic performance. The here is to confirm the particular factors that have the most considerable effect on the goals and academic performance of lower SES students.

REFERENCES

- [1] Latham, G. P. & Locke, E. A. (1979). Goal setting--A motivational technique that works. *Organizational Dynamics*, 8(2), 68-80.
- [2] International Council of Nurses. (2004). *Working with the Poor against Poverty*. Retrieved from <http://www.icn.ch/publications/2004-working-with-the-poor-against-poverty/>.
- [3] Asikhia, O.A. (2010), "Students and teachers' perception of the causes of poor academic performance in Ogun State secondary schools, Nigeria : Implications for counseling for national development. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(2), 229-249.
- [4] Barton, P. E. (2003, October). *Parsing the achievement gap*. Princeton, NJ: Policy Information Center Educational Testing Service. Retrieved from <http://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/PICPARSING.pdf>.
- [5] Leach, M. T., & Williams, S. A. (2007). The impact of the academic achievement gap on the African American family: A social inequality perspective. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 15(2/3), 39-59.
- [6] Ross, S.M., Smith, L.J., Madden, N.A. & Slavin, R. E. (1997). Improving the academic success of disadvantaged children: An examination of success for all. *Psychology in the Schools*, 34(2), 171-80.
- [7] Klein, A. (2015, April 10). No Child Left Behind: An overview. *Education Week*. Retrieved from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/section/multimedia/no-child-left-behind-overview-definition-summary.html>.
- [8] Pettigrew, E.J. (2009). *A Study of the Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Student Achievement in a Rural East Tennessee School System*. Retrieved from <http://dc.etsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3196&context=etd>.
- [9] Archibald, S. (2006). Narrowing in on educational resources that do affect student achievement. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 81(4), 23-42.
- [10] Drummond & Stipek (2004). Low income parent's beliefs about their role in children's academic learning. *The Elementary School Journal*, 104 (3), 197-213.
- [11] Dillon, N. (2012). *The Effect of School Community Setting on Children Living in Poverty: A Survey of School Social Workers*. Retrieved from http://sophia.stkate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1020&context=msw_papers.
- [12] Ahmar, F. & Anwar, E. (2013). Socio economic status and its relation to academic achievement of higher secondary school students. *Journal of Humanities And Social Science*, 13 (6), pp.13-20. Retrieved from <http://www.iosrjournals.org/iosr-jhss/papers/Vol13-issue6/B01361320.pdf?id=3399>.
- [13] Becker and Tomes (1979). An equilibrium theory of the distribution of income and intergenerational mobility. *Journal of Political Economy*, 87, 1153-1189.
- [14] Mukherjee, D. (1995). The relationship between socio-economic background and participation in education. *ACEE Research Monograph, 1*.
- [15] Williams, N., Penelope, R.W. C. and White, V.M. (1991). Australian research on poverty and education, 1979-1987. In R.W. Connell, V.M. White and K.M. Johnston, eds, *Running Twice as Hard: The Disadvantaged Schools Program in Australia*. Geelong: Deakin University Press.
- [16] Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. (1995). *r Baltimore, Maryland: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.*
- [17] National Center for Children in Poverty. (2006). *Children's mental health: Facts for policy makers*. Retrieved from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_687.html.
- [18] Fram, M.S., Miller-Cribbs, J.E., & Lee, V.H. (2007). Poverty, Race, and the contexts of achievement: Examining educational experiences of children in the U.S. South. *Social Work*, 52(4), 309-319.
- [19] Condron, D.S. (2013). Affluence, inequality, and educational achievement: A structural analysis of 97 jurisdictions across the globe. *Sociological Spectrum*, 33, 73-97.
- [20] Ramey, S. L., & Ramey, C. T. (1992). Early educational intervention with disadvantaged children--To what effect? *Applied & Preventive Psychology*, 1, 131- 140.
- [21] Long, N.X. & Li, J. (2014). *Policy Analysis Exercise: Pathways to Academic Excellence for Students from Low Income Families*. Retrieved from <http://www.beyondresearch.sg/PAE%20Final%20Report%20For%20Beyond.pdf>.
- [22] Lacour, M. & Tissington, L.D. (2011). The effects of poverty on academic achievement. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6 (7), 522-527. Retrieved from http://www.academicjournals.org/article/article1379765941_Lacour%20and%20Tissington.pdf.
- [23] Peters, H.E., & Mullis, N.C. (1997). The role of family income and sources of income in adolescent achievement. In G. J. Duncan & J. Brooks-Gunn (Eds.), *Consequences of Growing Up Poor* (pp. 340-381). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- [24] Deci, E., Vallerand, R., Pelletier, L., & Ryan, R. (1991). Motivation and education: The self- determination perspective. *Educational Psychologist*, 26, 325-346.
- [25] Watson, M. (2003). *Learning to trust*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- [26] Hawkins, J. D., & Weis, J. G. (1985). The social development model: An integrated approach to delinquency prevention. *Journal of Primary Prevention*, 6, 73-79.
- [27] Schaps, E. (2005). *The Role of Supportive School Environments in Promoting Academic Success*. Retrieved from <https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/research-articles-and-papers-the-role-of-supportive-school-environments-in-promoting-academic-success>.
- [28] Princeton (n.d.). *Parental Marital Status and Children's Education in Developing Countries*. Retrieved from <http://paa2012.princeton.edu/papers/122606>.
- [29] Dweck, C. S., Walton, G. M., & Cohen, G. L. (2014). *Academic Tenacity: Mindsets and Skills that Promote Long-term Learning*. Seattle: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- [30] Education Trust. (2016). *What's in the Every Student Succeeds Act? - Funding*. Retrieved from [HTTPS://EDTRUST.ORG/RESOURCE/WHATS-IN-THE-EVERY-STUDENT-SUCCEEDS-ACT-FUNDING/](https://edtrust.org/resource/whats-in-the-every-student-succeeds-act-funding/).