

Case study on research methods in education: literature review

[Sociology](#), [Poverty](#)



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Introduction

Research is important in the development of the best pedagogical approaches aimed at improving students' learning outcomes. To this end, this paper explores the extant research literature with a view to answering the question: “ what is the disparity in performance by the children from poor social economic settings when compared to children from well-off social economic settings?” Besides an answer to the aforesaid question, the literature review identifies informational gaps within the study topic.

Literature Review

There is extensive literature on the disparity in performance by children from poor backgrounds compared to those coming from financially stable families. However, while most of the researchers address the impacts of a learner's economic background on their academic performance and general behavior

in school, majority of them fail to elaborate the specific disparities. A study by Osman and Rajah (2011, pp. 61-65) revealed that in Malaysia, students from poor backgrounds performed far below their counterparts whose economic settings were favorable. Hernandez (2011, pp. 4-12) established that children living in poverty were three times more likely to drop from high school than those who came from well-off families. Another research by the National Center for Educational Statistics found that in 2008, 91 per cent of 12th-graders from financially stable families graduated with a diploma, compared to 68 per cent of 12-graders who lived in poor families (NCES, 2011, para. 1). According to Reardon (2011, pp. 5-12), the parental socio-economic status greatly affects a student's academic performance. The author established that students learning in high-poverty schools performed poorer than their well-off counterparts. In their analysis, Hemphill and Vanneman (2011, pp. 4-30) found that although the academic performance gap between learners from poor and well-off socioeconomic settings has been reducing, it is far from being closed.

Educational Theories Supporting the Research Question

The research question in this write-up is supported by two educational theories, namely the cultural-compatibility and cultural-incompatibility theories. The two educational theories are founded on the premise that whether or not a certain population has been fully acculturated affects the academic performance of learners from that culture. As such, the academic performance for minorities such as Black Americans and Mexicans is generally lower than Whites' (Arthur and Tonya, 2012, p. 25). This situation

is also related to the fact that the culture and history of minority populations have directly or indirectly led to their low socioeconomic status, which has in turn led to lower performance by students from the minority population segments.

Research Methodology

In conducting the research, a suitable random sample of students from well-off and poor families will be identified in several schools. The performance of each group in all subjects will be monitored over time. Their social behavior within the school will also be observed and recorded. The data gathered will be analyzed and interpreted to answer the research question.

Contribution to the Field of Education

Answering the research question will augment the existing research literature on and enhance the understanding of academic performance disparities between poor and well-off learners. The study will provide information on the specific inequalities existing between the two types of students, thereby giving a clearer picture of the actual problem. More importantly, it will be useful to educational stakeholders in devising programs and policies which seek to minimize the aforesaid performance gap.

Conclusion

There exist disparities in academic performances between students from well-off and poor families. Answering the research question in this paper will

fill the informational gap on the specific disparities and augment the existing literature on the topic.

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