

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE FAMILY ON THE LEVEL OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Social changes at the global level, changes in the economic system, the changed structure of the need for professional staff, as well as the process of forming the European educational space, inevitably bring with them changes in the structure of the educational system of our country. Since the demands in the field of educational qualifications are increasing almost every day in modern society, there is pressure on the individual to achieve the highest possible level of education in order to acquire a certain (more favorable) social position. However, the condition for that must be equal educational opportunities, which in no case must be only formal, but it is necessary to create a positive climate in which socio-economic factors that can lead to unequal educational outcomes are identified and removed. The aim of this paper was to determine whether the socio-economic status of a student's family has an impact on the quality of their studies and the level of achievement, and if so, to what extent it is represented. On that occasion, the obtained results showed that the socio-economic status of the student's family has a relevant impact on the level of their academic achievements, to a large extent.

Keywords: level of achievement; socio-economic status; the family; the students; higher education.

INTRODUCTION

The socio-economic status of the family is reflected in the economic position of family members in the social system. Authors of professional literature in the field of education use the term "socioeconomic status" in order to denote an individual or family position in a hierarchical continuum defined by the following variables: social class, household type, level of education, occupation, family income and place of residence (Simić-Vukomanović & et al., 2012). These parameters are indirectly related to the socialization process and the characteristics of a person or family, such as: behavioral models, value systems, educational and professional aspirations. Furthermore, many studies prove a confirmatory link between the socioeconomic status of the family and academic achievement. The results of the research provide insight into the fact that children from families whose socioeconomic status has a higher degree have better school results than the first days of schooling and reach a higher level of education than those from families with lower socioeconomic status. Indicators of socio-economic status, such as the occupation of parents, education and the amount of family monthly income, have the highest degree of reliability and validity (Milošević, 2002, p. 144).

As the most important factors of socio-economic status that affect the success of children from that family, Malinić (2009) states: the educational level of the parents, the occupation they are engaged in, employment and the amount of family income. The results of many empirical studies indicate that low socioeconomic status is directly related to narrow school choices, more precisely to educational inequalities, school failure, and especially to poor academic performance in science (physics, chemistry, mathematics), high risk of early school leaving, schooling, lower self-confidence and higher levels of school anxiety, which inevitably lead to lower academic

achievement and lower intellectual abilities, less developed academic and social skills (Baucal & Pavlović-Babić, 2009; Baucal, 2012).

Precisely when it comes to higher education, all social and economic inequalities are largely manifested in this system. Some of these inequalities are manifested in the domain of unequal start and in strict exams for enrollment in studies, others in terms of unequal existential conditions, the third through different opportunities to obtain the necessary funds for learning, the fourth through various (im) possibilities to further develop their aptitudes and abilities. through incomparably large differences in conditions for cultural life, etc (Kompilović & sar., 2018). Observed at the level of academic achievements, the development of social competencies of a young person is relevant for everyday social interaction and is directly related to the positive outcomes of accepting students as a group member, building relationships within that group and relations with lecturers, and thus with the level of academic achievement (Lane et al., 2001).

The changes at the level of a society are reflected in the appearance of changes in the educational system, as well as in the re-formation of factors that have an impact on the level of student achievement, model and assessment process (Andjelković & Stanisavljević Petrović, 2011).

Numerous studies have also shown that socioeconomic status, family structure, parenting style, their involvement in children's education, expectations and emotional support, are factors of family environment that contribute to the level of student achievement (Gutvajn & Ševkušić, 2013; Malinić, 2009; Rečić, 2003; Stanojlović, 2016).

Bolčić emphasizes the influence of social factors not only on the possibility of acquiring education, but also on social progress and the acquisition of material goods. In his opinion, the acquisition of material goods in different countries is determined by the acquired education, as well as work, social origin and connections in society (social network) (Bolčić, 2002, p. 43).

In modern times where there is a stratification of society, the conditions in which a person grows up, the structure of his family, as well as factors such as parental education, their (unemployment) that has a direct role, have a significant, if not key role for the causes of a person's low level of academic achievement. influence on the financial situation, quality or indifferent relations between family members, the opportunity and stimulation for learning that the student received from his family (Stojanović, 2015). Thus, the time in which a young person is being educated, living and working today has a strong influence of social factors, on the behavior of both students and professors, and thus on student summarized academic results (Krneta, 2000).

Table 1. Basic socio-economic characteristics of students in Serbia (in %) (according to: Savić et al., 2016)

Question	Result for RS (%)		
Students whose fathers have no tertiary education	69,9		
Students whose mothers have no tertiary education	69,1		
Students whose fathers perform manual occupations	30,2		
Students whose mothers perform manual occupations	11,6		
Students who assess that their parents belong to the lower half of the scale according to social status (grade 5 and lower on a scale from 1 to 10)	Students whose parents have a low social status (1-5, on a scale of 1 to 10) and do not have tertiary education compared to other students	32,3	22,1
Undergraduate students with lower social status	31,8		
Master's students with lower social status	31,5		

The basic socio-economic characteristics of students in the Republic of Serbia (hereinafter: RS) are presented in the following table (Table 1) based on descriptive indicators such as parental

education, type of occupation performed by the student's parent, family status of the student, etc. The data presented in this way give an insight into the general picture of the student population in RS, so if we look at the presented data, it is noticed that in RS there is a large percentage of students whose mothers or fathers do not have tertiary education, the percentage of students whose parents are workers without tertiary education. to the total number of manual workers and the percentage of students who estimate that their parents belong to the lower half of the ladder according to social status.

When it comes to financial difficulties, based on the data from the following table, it can be concluded that a large percentage of students (71.8%) in RS have financial problems.

Table 2. Assessment of financial difficulties (in %) (according to: Savić et al., 2016)

Level of financial difficulties	%
I have very serious financial difficulties	9,5
I have serious financial difficulties	20,9
I have moderate financial difficulties	41,4
I have no financial difficulties	19,1
I have no financial difficulties at all	9,2
In total	100

WORK METHODOLOGY

The research involves examining the impact of students' social and financial opportunities on the quality of their studies. On that occasion, the attitude of the students towards the quality of studying stood out as a dependent variable. Taking into account the parameter of personal competencies of the respondents as an independent variable in the research, but also the year of study, we constructed the following tasks:

- Examine the extent to which the socio-economic status of the student's family affects their obligations at the faculty.
- Determine whether budget students meet their obligations more efficiently than self-funded students.
- Examine whether employed students are able to effectively and regularly follow the study plan and program.

Based on the set goal and tasks of the research, a general hypothesis was set:

X0: Socio-economic status of students has a relevant impact on the level of student achievement.

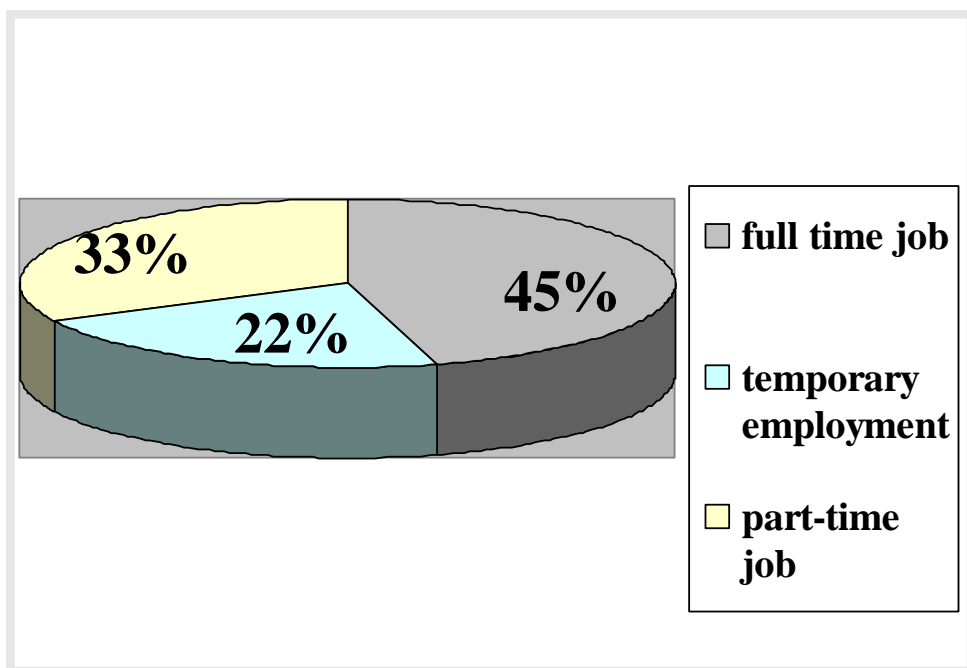
The technique in collecting data for research is surveying. The research instrument is a multidimensional survey questionnaire that includes several different groups of questions. The most common questions are related to the assessment scales to which the students answered the numbers from 1 to 4, where the numbers have the following meaning: 1- I strongly disagree, 2 - I partially disagree, 3 - I mostly agree, 4 - I completely agree with stated assertion, and other issues are issues of election and amendment. The sample consists of 170 students from Educons, Faculty of Project and Innovation Management, PMC in Belgrade.

Scientific research methods used for research purposes are methods of analysis and synthesis, inductive and deductive methods, as well as the method of description. The chosen research method of description is in accordance with the specifically defined nature of the problem, the goal and tasks of the research, as well as the set hypothesis. Statistical data processing refers to the determination of results on the total sample of respondents. The collected survey facts will be processed as a percentage and presented in tables and graphs for easier determination, analysis and interpretation of results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the obtained research results on the total sample of respondents will be interpreted and discussed.

The research was conducted at the Faculty of Educons, Faculty of Project and Innovation Management PMC in Belgrade. A total of 170 respondents participated in the research - 155 students who are self-funded and 15 students who are funded through scholarships received by the faculty due to exceptional success in high school and results achieved in state competitions, gender structure: 111 girls and 59 boys. When it comes to gender structure, we conclude that in the selected sample, there is a significantly higher percentage of girls than men. Most of the respondents are from the final years of study - 91 of them are in the fourth year, 15 are in the third year and 64 students are from the second year of basic academic studies. Of the total sample, 46% of students were employed - of which 21% were full-time, 10% said they were temporarily employed, and 15% stated that they were engaged in part-time work. Thus, the percentage of unemployed respondents is higher (54%).



Graph 1. Percentage of student employment type

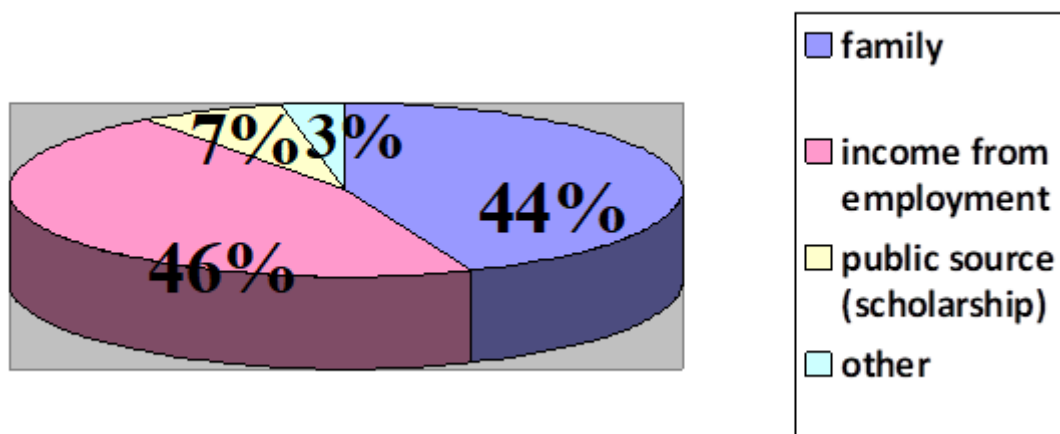
When it comes to the level of education of the respondents' parents, the obtained data are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Level of education of the respondents' parents

Parent	Level of education					
	Primary education	Secondary education	College	Basic academic studies	Master	PhD
Mother	9	85	30	36	8	2
Father	4	119	25	20	1	1

From the attached data, we can conclude that the mothers of the respondents have a higher level of education, ie. some kind of university degree (24 more than fathers). In the professional literature, we can find opinions that children whose mothers have a higher level of education are more likely to reach a high level of education themselves (Kalajdžić et al., 2015).

When it comes to the dominant source of income for students during their studies, the largest percentage of them is supported by the family of 44%, while 46% of them are supported by their own employment. A smaller percentage of those are on a budget or receiving scholarships, while only 2% of respondents cited another source of income. Thus, a large percentage of the sample depends on the financial situation of their family and this may affect the quality of their studies and the level of academic.



Graph 2. Dominant source of income of respondents

The next question from the questionnaire referred to the fact that students give an assessment of their own financial situation in relation to the average income in RS. The figure of 45,000 dinars was taken as an average. The obtained data will be shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Financial situation of the respondents

Offered answers	Respondents' answers (%)
Well above average	2
Above average	26
Average	51
Below average	14
Well below average	7

From the above, it can be concluded that the largest percentage of respondents answered that his family has an average income, which is not at all encouraging given the high tuition fees, housing and overhead costs for students who came from other cities, as well as general living expenses. a family that supports the student. Also, the overall percentage of respondents whose economic status is below the national average (21%) is not negligible.

The eighth question from the questionnaire reads: Do you think that the socio-economic status of your family affects the quality of studies?

Table 5. The influence of the socio-economic status of the student's family on the quality of their studies

Offered answers	Respondents' answers (%)
Strongly disagree	5
Partially disagree	21
Mostly agree	57
Totally agree	17

From the attached, we can see that the worryingly large percentage of students who feel the consequences of their socio-economic status of their family in terms of the quality of their own studies. A student who feels the consequences of the socio-economic status of his family may have problems with his own self-confidence and not realize his maximum academic potential. Furthermore, we will convey in full the most interesting explanations of their answers:

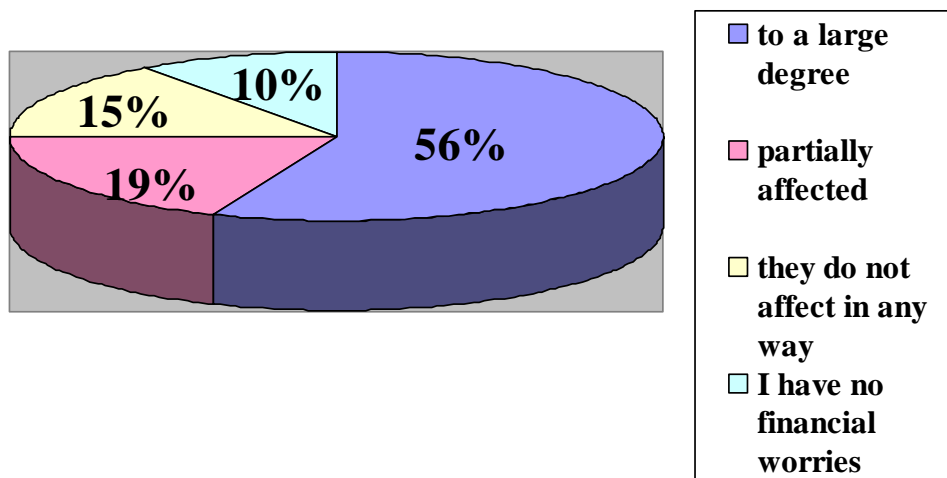
"If I didn't constantly worry about surviving on a budget, I would have a higher average and I would study with more enthusiasm."

"Financial problems - paying tuition on time, rent and paying bills, often occupy me to the extent that I neglect my student obligations."

"I would like to have no burdens in terms of remaining on the budget as a condition for continuing further studies, since my parents cannot finance the amount of tuition."

"If I didn't work, I would definitely dedicate myself more to lecturing and learning for exams."

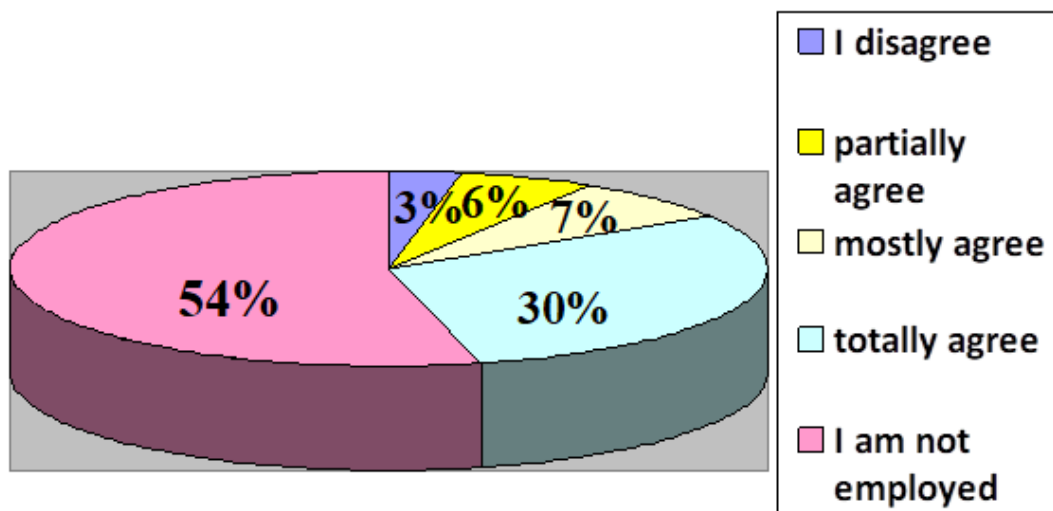
We further examined the extent to which financial concerns affect students' levels of academic achievement.



Graph 3. Percentage of respondents' answers to the question To what extent do financial concerns affect your academic achievement?

From the obtained results, we can conclude that a very small percentage of students stated that they have no financial worries, which is a big problem for the entire higher education system, because students who are burdened with worries of this type certainly cannot give their maximum in academic achievements. Consequently, there is a high percentage of students who recognize this problem as something that greatly affects their success - 56%. Also, students who do not achieve good results due to financial difficulties can develop a higher degree of stress, anxiety, feelings of inferiority, which can certainly affect their further life.

We further examined whether employment prevents students from attending lectures regularly and devoting one hundred percent to student obligations.



Graph 4. The impact of the employment of respondents on the performance of student obligations

From the above, it can be concluded that a large percentage of employed students (37%) express the opinion that their work affects the quality of performing their duties at the faculty. Such a fact can directly reflect on their level of academic achievement in terms of lagging behind unemployed colleagues, extending years of study, and even dropping them.

To the question: *Do you think that your grade point average during the previous years of study would be better, if you did not have to worry about paying tuition, rent / home and living expenses?* the students almost unanimously replied that they agreed with the above. Namely, 59% of them circled that they completely agree, 34% mostly agree and 7% partially disagree. No student completely disagreed. This fact supports the confirmation of the general hypothesis of the research - that the socio-economic status of students is a great indicator of their quality of study.

We also examined whether students interrupted their studies due to financial difficulties of the family. In this case, not a large percentage of students stated that they had to interrupt their studies for more than a year, more precisely, 14% of them encountered this problem.

Table 6. Discontinuation of studies due to financial difficulties (%)

Without interruption for more than a year	25
About a year	61
More than a year	14

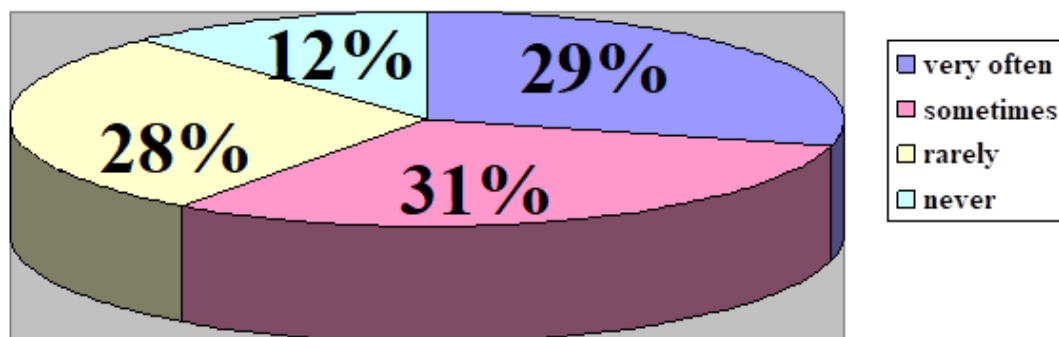
We were also interested in whether students receive support from their families to achieve the best possible results and regularly follow the study program. A high percentage of respondents answered that their family supports them in everything - 74%, while 17% of them stated that they rarely have an incentive for better progress during their studies than their family. The percentage of respondents who concluded that their family is not interested in their studies is not negligible, although it is low (9%) since each person primarily seeks support and wants to get it from their family, this can have a demotivating effect on them.

Table 7. Attitudes of students about the support they receive from their families during their studies (%)

My family supports me in everything	74
I rarely get encouragement from my family	17
My family is not interested in my studies	9

Respondents also gave an explanation of their answers. The most common answer is that the family insists on taking regular exams and moving on to the next year due to the financial expenses they have due to the costs of studies. One of the frequent explanations is that the family is interested in the final results, and not in the process that preceded them.

The last question from the questionnaire referred to students' thoughts about dropping out due to financial difficulties. The results will be shown in Graph 5.



Graph 5. Attitudes of students about the termination of studies due to financial difficulties

From the obtained data, we conclude that a very high percentage (60%) of students were tempted to discontinue their studies, which points us to previous research that has dealt with this topic, and which are presented in this paper. Namely, in the Republic of Serbia, a large number of students drop out of study or take a break due to the inability to pay tuition or other expenses. This situation is not at all favorable for the educational policy of our country, because on an annual level, a large number of young people decide to leave their studies, get a job outside their profession or go abroad.

CONCLUSION

Only one of the negative phenomena that occur due to the low level of academic achievement are the consequences for the psychological structure of the individual and they are directly related to the development of the young person's personality. Also, the negative consequences are reflected in the motivation for further self-improvement, significantly reduced ambitions, the desire to succeed, as well as the search for better employment. There is also a loss of confidence in personal abilities due to the constant experience of failure and the development of feelings of inferiority compared to other fellow students. As a result, the duration of studies may be slowed down and extended, or even interrupted. The social factors that occur due to the appearance of a low level of academic achievement often include the appearance of dropping out of studies. The economic consequences of the above stem from different levels of financial condition of the student's family. Many studies have addressed the connection between class affiliation and academic success, and on that occasion examined the possible connection between the lower socio-economic status of the family and achievement. The results of the research indicate that generally low family income is a key predictor of lower levels of academic achievement, since the financial situation in all segments reflects on the life of one family. (Komlenović, Malinić & Gašić Pavišić, 2009) Economic difficulties and daily

worries about finances make parents depressed, reduce the ability to interact with their children, as well as the degree of warmth and support in the relationship, and directly increase inconsistency in education and discipline, which further results by a general diminution of children's ability to achieve a higher level of academic achievement. (Jovanović & Jelić, 2011, p. 81)

As already mentioned, research indicates that the level of achievement of a person is significantly influenced by the level of education of parents, and more than the environment that surrounds them. (Havelka, 2000)

From all the above in the paper and the research, we can conclude that the general hypothesis X0: Socio-economic status of students has a relevant impact on the level of student achievement, confirmed.

In our society, it is evident that there are differences in the material and social position of young people, which have a relevant role in their education, especially when choosing a college. Young people are aware that their goal - social success is achieved if, first, they make a "good" choice of education, then invest enough effort and commitment during school and, finally, manage to get a job. In that way, the results of their engagement and work will be socially visible and evaluated in an adequate way.

Student youth is in a specific, dependent position, and it is financial dependence that prevents their equal position in the world of adults. Namely, students represent one of the most sensitive social groups when it comes to finances. High tuition fees, additional costs, and a budget for everyday student expenses can certainly be a burden on any average student. That is why we chose this topic as the subject of our research, having in mind its relevance and topicality.

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