



Research Article/ Parental Education

The Correlation between Parental Education and Student Outcomes in Nepal: Sustainable Development in Education from the Student Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Parental education is a key factor influencing students' academic performance, motivation, and engagement in the sustainable educational development. This study aims to explore the correlation between parental education and student outcomes using a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive perspective from students themselves. Data were collected from 102 students in the selected secondary level

schools in Pokhara Metropolitan City, comprising 50 male and 52 female respondents. The stratified random sampling was employed for the survey, while the semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected students and parents to enrich the quantitative finding. Data analysis was conducted manually using the descriptive statistics and correlation techniques to maintain clarity and transparency. The results of the study indicated a moderate positive relationship between parental education and students' academic outcomes. Students with more educated parents reported the higher academic performance, stronger motivation, and better access to the learning resources. The parental involvement and supportive home environments were identified as important mediating factors, demonstrating that parental education affects the academic achievement directly and indirectly. Despite lower parental education, some students achieved the satisfactory outcomes, highlighting the role of personal motivation and supportive school environments. Parental education significantly contributes to students' academic success and the promotion of sustainable educational development in Nepal. The policies aimed at enhancing the parental awareness, fostering the school-family collaboration, and providing the targeted support to students

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from less educated households are essential to reduce the educational inequalities and foster the long-term human development.

KEYWORDS: Parental education, academic performance, student motivation, sustainable education

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as a cornerstone of human development, social mobility, and sustainable societal progress. In the contemporary society, an educational attainment not only equips individuals with knowledge and skills but also broadens their life opportunities, improves the employment prospects, and enhances the social participation. In Nepal, a substantial progress has been made in increasing an access to education; however, the significant disparities remain in the learning outcomes, quality of schooling, and opportunities for the academic advancement, particularly across the socio-economic and regional divides.

Parental education has emerged as a critical determinant of students' academic success globally. Parents with the higher levels of education are generally more capable of providing an intellectual guidance, fostering the positive learning attitudes, and creating the conducive home learning environments (Davis-Kean, 2005). Beyond their direct academic support, the educated parents often set high expectations, monitor their children's progress, and encourage their participation in the cognitively enriching activities. These practices strengthen students' motivation, engagement, and capacity for their independent learning, which are the essential components of sustainable educational development (Jeynes, 2005). It shows that the background of parents plays an important role in shaping the learning environment.

In the Nepali context, however, the impact of parental education is influenced by various contextual factors, including

the socio-economic status, access to educational resources, and cultural norms around schooling. Disparities in parental literacy and educational attainment contribute to the differences in students' access to the learning materials, homework supervision, and academic guidance. Research shows that children from the families with the higher educational backgrounds tend to perform better academically and possess the stronger aspirations for higher education (Bhattarai & Maharjan, 2019; Rana & Ranjitkar, 2020). Yet, the direct effect of parental education can be moderated by the external factors, such as the quality of teachers, school infrastructure, and community support systems (UNICEF, 2019). From a sustainable development perspective, parental education plays a vital role in cultivating the life-long learning attitudes, resilience, and informed decision-making skills among students. According to Sen's (1999) capability approach, parental education expands the household capabilities, empowering the families to make their choices that enhance children's educational outcomes and long-term opportunities. In addition, parental education fosters a social capital within the households by facilitating better communication with schools, encouraging an active involvement in children's learning, and promoting the adaptive learning behaviors (Coleman, 1988; Spera, 2005). The role of parents is crucial in learning and creating the effective communications.

Despite the growing recognition of parental education's importance, few empirical studies examining its influence in Nepal remain limited, particularly those capturing students' perspectives. Understanding how parental education shapes an academic performance, motivation, and engagement in sustainable learning is crucial for designing the interventions that address the educational inequities and support the national

development goals. This study, therefore, seeks to analyze the correlation between parental education and students' outcomes in Nepal, providing both quantitative and qualitative insights. By highlighting the mechanisms through which parental education influences learning, this study contributes to the evidence-based strategies that foster the academic achievement, equitable access to education, and sustainable development within the country.

Among the various factors influencing the academic performance, parental education has received a significant attention in the educational research. The educated parents are often able to guide their children academically, encourage the disciplined study habits, and provide a supportive home learning environment (Davis-Kean, 2005). The international studies suggest that parental education shapes children's academic motivation, expectations, and aspirations, which in turn influence the educational achievement (Jeynes, 2005). Jeynes elaborates that the role of parents leads to academic success shaping better aspirations.

In the Nepali context, the parental education levels vary widely due to the historical, economic, and regional inequalities. Many students come from the households where parents have the limited formal education, which may restrict the academic support available at home (Rana & Ranjitkar, 2020). Understanding how parental education influences students' outcomes is therefore essential for addressing educational inequality and promoting sustainable development in education. This study seeks to examine the correlation between parental education and students' academic outcomes from the student's perspective.

Although the school enrollment in Nepal has improved, students' learning outcomes remain uneven, and the noticeable gaps persist between children from highly educated families and those

from less educated households (UNICEF, 2019). While parental education is commonly assumed to have a strong influence on students' academic success, the findings of the study are not entirely consistent. Some studies report a strong positive relationship between parental education and academic performance (Davis-Kean, 2005), whereas others emphasize the mediating role of socio-economic status and parental involvement (Williams & Sánchez, 2013). This study mainly focus on the relation between parental education and the student outcomes in Nepal.

This situation raises some important research questions: How does parental education influence students' academic performance and motivation in Nepal? ; What is the relationship between parental education and students' academic performance? How does parental education affect students' academic motivation and home learning environment.

Research across many contexts shows that parents' educational background plays a crucial role in shaping how well children perform in schools. Davis-Kean (2005) notes that parents with the higher levels of education tend to influence their children's learning not only by helping directly but also by forming the expectations and providing the educational resources at home. Even in the low-income urban settings, the parental engagement has been found to improve students' academic results, regardless of how much schooling the parents themselves have received (Jeynes, 2005). Numerous studies have identified parental education as one of the most reliable indicators of students' academic achievement (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). Parents who are educated often create more supportive learning environments and expose their children to the cognitively enriching activities (Hannum & Buchmann, 2003). The human capital theory argues that

parents' knowledge and abilities contribute directly to children's educational development (Becker, as cited in Graetz, 1995), while the social capital theory highlights the ways the educated parents communicate with schools, maintain expectations, and stay involved in their children's learning (Coleman, 1988). Williams and Sánchez (2013) further show that communication within the family and parental monitoring play the mediating roles in students' school success.

In Nepal, parental education and the socio-economic backgrounds remain the significant predictors of students' school performance (Bhattarai & Maharjan, 2019; Rana & Ranjitkar, 2020). However, these patterns are not uniform across all households. Some children do well academically even when their parents have the limited formal education due to their strong personal drive or the availability of supportive teachers and school environments. This suggests that while parental education matters, it is not the sole factor determining the student outcomes.

The development economists argue that higher parental education can help break the cycle of poverty and encourage the upward social mobility (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). Sen's (1999) capability approach also underlines the significance of parental education in widening the households' abilities such as literacy, reasoning, and informed decision-making, which eventually opens better opportunities for the next generation. Thus, parental education should be understood not only as an individual achievement but also as an important contributor to the long-term development.

From a human capital standpoint, parents with more education possess the skills and resources necessary to foster children's intellectual and academic progress (Graetz, 1995). Davis-Kean (2005) suggests that parental education

influences the academic achievement both through direct interactions, like reading or tutoring, and through the indirect processes such as shaping expectations and enhancing the socio-economic conditions. Parents who are educated typically encourage the disciplined study routines and communicate the clear academic aspirations, which tends to improve the performance.

The parental participation in schooling often acts as a mechanism that links parental education to the academic achievement. According to Jeynes (2005), the active engagement by parents significantly boosts students' learning outcomes in the urban settings. Williams and Sánchez (2013) similarly report that a supportive home environment, monitoring of study habits, and positive communication amplify the benefits of parental education. The educated parents generally feel more confident assisting with schoolwork, supervising homework, and guiding academic decisions.

In many developing contexts, parental education plays a vital role in reducing disparities. Hannum and Buchmann (2003) point out that parents with their limited education may lack the skills needed to provide an academic guidance, resulting in the unequal learning experiences. Banerjee and Duflo (2011) note that parental education also improves other aspects of children's well-being, such as health and nutrition, which indirectly support their learning. In South Asia, parental education strongly influences school attendance, literacy engagement at home, and performance on examinations (Rana & Ranjitkar, 2020). Many studies in Nepal show that children whose parents completed the higher levels of education often perform better due to more access to the learning materials and an encouraging home environment (Bhattarai & Maharjan, 2019). Yet UNICEF (2019) highlights that when the economic conditions and household

environments are considered, the direct effect of parental education decreases, suggesting that the academic outcomes are shaped by the multiple overlapping factors. OECD (2016) also emphasizes that parental education interacts with the broader socio-economic structures, meaning that children's school outcomes must be understood within a wider context.

Parental education is also closely linked to the development of social capital. Coleman (1988) argues that communication, supervision, and school involvement are often stronger among the educated parents, providing children with better academic support. Spera (2005) adds that the parenting styles shaped by education level affect students' motivation and achievement. From the perspective of human development, Sen (1999) argues that parental education strengthens the household capabilities, enabling the families to make more effective investments in their children's education and future choices.

Taking together, the literature clearly shows that parental education affects students' academic performance both directly through the cognitive and instructional support and indirectly through the factors such as parental involvement, home learning conditions, and socio-economic backgrounds. Within Nepal, these influences are intertwined with the broader structural inequalities, pointing to the need for the policies that simultaneously address the educational disadvantages and deeper socio-economic disparities.

RESEARCH METHODS

The present study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both the quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. A greater emphasis was placed on the quantitative component, which involved the collection of survey

data from students, while the qualitative insights were obtained through the open-ended questionnaire responses to support and enrich the numerical findings. This combination of methods allowed the researcher to capture not only the measurable trends but also students' perspectives and experiences related to parental education and the sustainable educational outcomes.

The study was conducted at Shree Tribhuvan Shanti Secondary School, located in Pokhara Metropolitan City-30, Kaski District. The target population comprised students enrolled at the secondary and higher secondary levels, specifically those studying in Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12. These grade levels were selected to ensure the representation of students at different stages of secondary education.

A total of 102 students participated in the study. Among them, 50 respondents (49%) were male, and 52 respondents (51%) were female, indicating a nearly balanced gender representation. Such proportional representation was considered useful for minimizing the gender bias in the analysis and interpretation of results.

To select the participants, stratified random sampling was employed for the quantitative survey. Students were first grouped according to their grade level, and the respondents were then randomly selected from each stratum to ensure a fair representation across all classes. For the qualitative component, the purposive sampling was used to identify the respondents who were willing and able to provide more detailed opinions through the open-ended responses.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which was designed to gather information on students' demographic profiles, parental educational background, academic performance, parental involvement in education, and students' perceptions related to sustainable education. The questionnaire included

both the close-ended items for quantitative analysis and a limited number of open-ended questions to capture the qualitative insights.

The collected data were analyzed using the simple manual analytical techniques. These included the frequency counts, percentage distribution, and comparative interpretation of responses. Advanced statistical software such as SPSS was not used, as the study aimed to present the findings in a clear and accessible manner suitable for the descriptive and interpretive analysis.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process. The informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection. The respondents were clearly informed about the purpose of the study, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and no personal identifying information was disclosed. The participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative consequences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

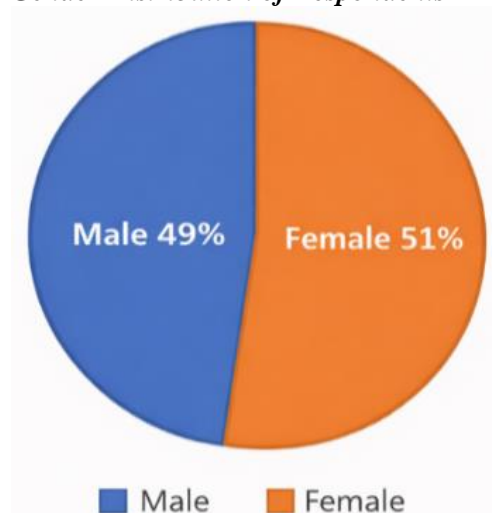
The study shows that parental education influences students' academic performance and motivation in Nepal. Students with more educated parents tend to do better and are more motivated, as they receive guidance, support, and access to the learning resources at home. However, some students from less educated families also perform well, highlighting the importance of personal effort, supportive teachers, and school environment. Strengthening the family involvement and school support can help all students succeed and promote sustainable education.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study based on the analysis of the collected data. The results are organized

using the frequency and percentage distributions and are presented in the tables for clarity and ease of interpretation. The analysis focuses on three main aspects: the gender distribution of respondents, the relationship between the parental education level and students' academic performance, and the association between parental education and academic motivation. The findings are discussed in relation to the existing educational perspectives to highlight the key patterns and implications.

Figure 1
Gender Distribution of Respondents



Note: Total number of respondents was $N = 102$

Table 1
Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	50	49%
Female	52	51%
Total	102	100%

Note. The table presents the frequency and percentage of participants by gender.

Table 1 and Figure 1 illustrate the gender-wise distribution of the respondents included in the study. Out of a total of 102 students, 50 respondents (49%) were male, and 52 respondents

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(51%) were female. The graphical representation further confirms that the proportion of male and female participants is almost equal, with only a marginal difference of two respondents between the two groups.

The data reveal a balanced gender composition within this sample. Such near-equal representation suggests that both male and female students participated in the study in the comparable numbers. According to Feak and Swales' approach to academic data commentary, this pattern is noteworthy because it indicates the absence of dominance by any single gender group.

This balanced distribution is methodologically important, as it minimizes the potential gender bias in the interpretation of results. Consequently, the findings derived from the study can be considered more reliable and representative of the broader student population. The nearly equal participation of male and female students enhances the credibility of comparisons and interpretations related to academic performance, parental education, and perceptions of sustainable education.

Overall, the gender distribution shown in Table 1 and Figure 1 provides a sound demographic foundation for subsequent analyses, ensuring that the study's

conclusions reflect the perspectives of students from both genders in a fair and proportionate manner.

Table 2
Parental Education Level and Students Academic Performance

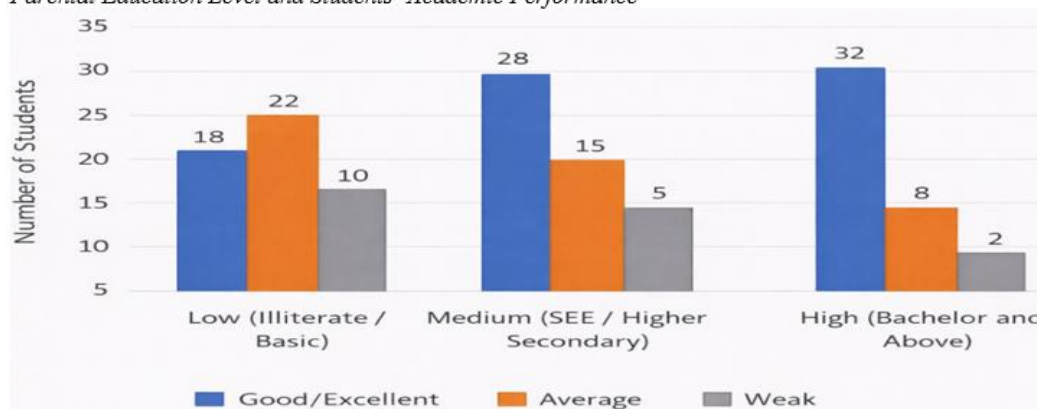
Parental Education Level	Good/Excellent	Average	Weak
Low (Illiterate / Basic)	18	22	10
Medium (SEE / Higher Secondary)	28	15	5
High (Bachelor and Above)	32	8	2

Table 2 displays meaning academic performance scores, where a higher score indicates better performance. The measure and scale (e.g., GPA out of 4.0) should be defined in the text.

Table 2 and Figure 2 present the relationship between the parental education level and students' academic performance. An overall pattern evident in both the table and the figure is that students' academic performance improves as the level of parental education increases.

Students whose parents possess the higher educational qualifications (Bachelor's degree and above)

Figure 2
Parental Education Level and Students' Academic Performance



Note: Mean academic performance scores by parental education level and student performance category. Error bars represent one standard error. SEE = Secondary Education Examination.

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demonstrate the strongest academic outcomes. Within this group, 32 students fall into the good or excellent performance category, while only 8 students report average performance and a very small number (2 students) are classified as weak. This distribution indicates a strong concentration of higher achievement among students from the highly educated family backgrounds.

A similar but less pronounced trend is observed among students whose parents have a medium level of education (SEE or Higher Secondary). In this category, 28 students demonstrate good or excellent performance, whereas 15 students fall into the average category and 5 students exhibit the weak academic performance. This suggests that the moderate parental education still provides a meaningful academic support, although the outcomes are less favorable compared to the high-education group.

In contrast, students from the families with low parental education (illiterate or basic education) show comparatively the weaker academic outcomes. Only 18 students achieve the good or excellent performance, while a larger proportion fall into the average (22 students) and weak (10 students) categories. This distribution highlights a greater academic vulnerability among students whose parents have the limited formal education.

The observed pattern suggests a positive association between parental education and students' academic achievement. The higher parental education may contribute to better academic guidance, closer monitoring of school activities, and increased access to learning resources at home. Conversely, the limited parental education may restrict the parents' ability to provide an academic support, which could negatively influence the students' performance.

Overall, the data displayed in Table 2 and Chart 2 support the view that parental education plays a significant role in

shaping students' academic performance, thereby reinforcing the importance of family background in discussions of educational equity and sustainable educational development.

Table 3
Parental Education and Academic Motivation

Parental Education Level	High Motivation	Moderate	Low
Low Education	20	18	12
Medium Education	30	14	6
High Education	35	6	3

Note. The table presents frequency counts of students across categories of parental education and self-reported academic motivation.

Table 3 presents the relationship between the parental education level and students' academic motivation. An overall trend clear from both the table and the figure is that students' levels of academic motivation increase as the parental education level rises.

Among students whose parents have a high level of education, the largest proportion (35 students) report high academic motivation. In contrast, only 6 students fall into the moderate motivation category, and a very small number (3 students) report low motivation. This distribution indicates a strong concentration of highly motivated students within the families where parents have higher educational attainment.

A similar but less pronounced pattern is observed among students from the medium-sized parental education backgrounds. In this group, 30 students demonstrate high motivation, while 14 students report moderate motivation and six students show low motivation. Although most students in this category remain highly motivated, the proportion of moderate and low motivation is higher

than that observed in the high-education group.

In comparison, students whose parents have the low educational backgrounds display relatively the lower levels of academic motivation. Only 20 students in this group report high motivation, whereas 18 students fall into the moderate category and 12 students report low motivation. This distribution suggests a wider spread of motivation levels, with a noticeably higher presence of moderate and low motivation compared to students from more educated families.

These findings suggest a positive association between parental education and students' academic motivation. The higher parental education may contribute to a greater awareness of the value of education, stronger encouragement, and more effective academic guidance at home. Conversely, the limited parental education may reduce the level of academic stimulation and motivational support available to students.

Overall, the pattern shown in Table 3 and Figure 3 highlights the important role of parental educational background in shaping students' academic motivation, which has significant implications for educational planning and the promotion of sustainable learning outcomes.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide a clear evidence of the relationship between parental education and students' academic performance and motivation. The gender distribution of respondents shows an almost equal representation of male (49%) and female (51%) students, which strengthens the reliability of the findings by minimizing the gender-related bias. This balanced sample allows the results to reflect students' academic experiences more accurately across genders.

The analysis of parental education and academic performance reveals a consistent pattern. Students whose parents possess

the higher levels of education demonstrate the better academic outcomes, with a larger proportion reporting good or excellent performance. In contrast, students from the low parental education backgrounds show the higher frequencies of average and weak performance. This trend suggests that educated parents are more likely to support their children academically through guidance, supervision, and encouragement. Such parents may also have a better understanding of academic expectations and school requirements, enabling them to assist their children more effectively.

Similarly, academic motivation appears to increase with the parental education level. The data show that students from the highly educated families report the highest levels of motivation, while low motivation is more prevalent among students whose parents have limited education. This indicates that parental education influences not only the academic results but also students' attitudes toward learning. The educated parents may foster their positive learning behaviors by setting their academic goals, emphasizing the value of education, and creating the structured study environments at home.

However, the results also suggest that parental education is not the only factor affecting academic success. Some students from less educated families still demonstrate strong performance and motivation, highlighting the importance of individual effort, teacher support, and school environment. These findings align with the previous studies emphasizing that while parental education is influential, the educational outcomes are shaped by the multiple social and institutional factors. From a broader perspective, improving parental awareness and involvement can contribute to more equitable and sustainable educational development, particularly in the Nepali context.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study indicate a meaningful relationship between parental education and students' academic performance and motivation. Students whose parents have the higher educational qualifications tend to achieve the better academic results and demonstrate stronger motivation toward their learning. The findings suggest that the educated parents are more actively involved in their children's education by monitoring their academic progress, encouraging their regular study habits, and offering guidance when needed. This involvement creates a supportive learning environment that positively influences students' confidence and academic engagement.

The study also highlights the disparities in an access to the educational resources. Students from the families with the higher parental education are more likely to have an access to the books, internet facilities, and additional learning support, which contribute to their improved academic preparation and performance. These resources help students manage the academic tasks more effectively and plan for the future educational opportunities. Conversely, a limited access to such resources may place students from the less educated households at a disadvantage.

Despite these trends, the findings make it clear that parental education alone does not determine the academic success. Several students from the low parental education backgrounds reported good academic performance and strong motivation. This demonstrates the important role of personal effort, effective teaching, and a supportive school environment in overcoming such educational disadvantages. Schools and teachers therefore play a critical role in reducing these inequalities linked to the family background.

In conclusion, parental education significantly influences students' academic outcomes and motivation in Nepal, but it

operates alongside other key factors. To promote the inclusive and sustainable educational development, the policies should focus not only on improving the school infrastructure and teaching quality but also on enhancing the parental awareness and involvement. Strengthening the family-school partnerships may help ensure that all students, regardless of parental education level, have the equal opportunities to succeed academically.

Based on the findings and scope of this study, several directions are suggested for future research. First, future studies may expand the geographical coverage beyond Pokhara Metropolitan City to include the rural and remote areas of Nepal. This would allow for a broader generalization and a deeper understanding of regional variations in the parental education and student outcomes.

Second, the future researchers are encouraged to employ the longitudinal research designs to examine how parental education influences students' academic performance and motivation over time. Such designs would help identify the long-term patterns and causal relationships that cannot be fully captured through the cross-sectional studies.

Third, while this study relied primarily on students' self-reported data, future research may incorporate the multiple sources of data, such as parents, teachers, and school records. Triangulating the data from the different perspectives can enhance the reliability and validity of findings.

Fourth, the future studies may apply more advanced analytical techniques, including the regression or structural equation modeling, to explore the mediating roles of socio-economic status, parental involvement, and school environment in the relationship between the parental education and academic outcomes.

Finally, the future researchers may consider the qualitative approaches, such

as the in-depth interviews or case studies, to gain a richer insight into how parental education shapes students' motivation, aspirations, and learning experiences. Such qualitative evidence can complement the quantitative findings and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of sustainable educational development in Nepal.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest. This research was conducted independently without financial, political, or personal relationships that could inappropriately influence the study's findings or interpretations.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

I declare that this manuscript is my original work.

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