Investigation on Facilitative and Restrictive Elements of Academic Results in Indian School Children's

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ABSTRACT:

This qualitative study explored how school children aged 10–15 years in municipal schools under the Delhi government perceive academic engagement and the factors that help their learning. A convenience sample of 20 children, with equal representation of boys and girls, was interviewed using a semi-structured schedule. Thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's framework was used to analyze the data. Seven major themes emerged, showing that academic construal is influenced by interest in studies, parental and teacher expectations, social identity, family pressure, perceived benefits of education, and environmental distractions such as television and mobile phone use. The findings suggest that children's academic outcomes are shaped by both supportive and restrictive conditions in their home, school, and social environments.

Keywords: Academic Construal Result, Indian School Children, Educational Motivation, Thematic Analysis, Socio-cultural Influences

1. Introduction

Academic success plays significant role in the overall development and future opportunities of children in India, with its diverse and complex educational system, academic achievement is often seen as the key to unlocking future prospects. However, despite extensive research on the impact of parental involvement, socio-economic status, and psychological factors on children's academic outcomes, there remains a significant gap in understanding how children themselves construe and make meaning of their academic experiences. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the academic construal of school children in India, particularly those aged 10 to 15 years, enrolled in municipal schools under the Delhi government.

The concept of academic construal refers to how children perceive and interpret their academic experiences, including the motivations, barriers, and social influences that shape their academic engagement. While existing literature has explored various external factors influencing academic performance, including family expectations and societal pressures (Singh, 2024; Sharma, 2023), little attention has been paid to how children themselves internalize and make sense of these influences. By centering the voices of school children, this study seeks to offer a deeper understanding of the multidimensional factors both facilitative and restraining that affect their academic outcomes.

Recent studies have highlighted the impact of family and societal expectations on children's academic performance, but there is a dearth of research focusing on the child's perspective in this context (Bharati, 2022). This research intends to bridge this gap by examining how children's motivations are shaped by their personal aspirations, as well as the socio-cultural contexts they inhabit. Key influences such as parental involvement, peer pressure, media narratives, and cognitive barriers will be explored to understand their role in facilitating or hindering academic engagement.

Furthermore, while the impact of cognitive abilities, environmental factors, and external expectations on academic success has been well documented, this study shifts the focus to children's own interpretations of their academic experiences. The findings suggest that children do not simply respond passively to school demands; instead, they actively interpret, negotiate, and internalize academic pressures within the context of their family, school, and social environment. This child-centered perspective offers a deeper understanding of how academic motivation develops and why some children feel encouraged while others feel constrained. It also highlights the importance of creating educational practices that reduce unnecessary pressure, strengthen confidence, and support meaningful engagement in learning

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative research approach to explore children's perceptions of academic engagement and school experience.

2.2 Sample

Children aged 10–15 years studying in Municipal schools under the Delhi government were selected through convenience sampling.

2.3 Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather detailed responses about school experiences, learning attitudes, family expectations, and perceived barriers to academic success.

2.4 Data Analysis

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis and a framework-based approach to identify repeated meanings and patterns across participants' accounts.

3. Results and Interpretation

Table 1: Results and Interpretation

Theme	Sub-Theme	Key Responses / Interpretation
Theme 1: Complex and multi-dimensional nature of academic construal	**Interest and motivation**	Children described study as a source of interest, future success, self-growth, and respect. Many said they want to become doctors, teachers, or achieve something meaningful in life.
		"I have a keen interest in studies and I want to become a doctor" (G-1). "I like studies because we can teach others and can also become a teacher" (G-9). "We can get a government job, can become a teacher and can also educate others" (B-5).
Theme 2: Multiple sources of academic construal	**Parental influence**	Parents were a major source of academic motivation. Children said fathers, mothers, and elders regularly asked them to study and go to school.
	Career	Many children linked study with future careers such as doctor, teacher, police officer, and government employee. Career dreams strongly shaped their motivation.
Theme 3: Positive outcomes in academic construal	**Positive emotional outcomes**	Children felt happy when they studied well because it made their parents happy and helped them do better in class.
	Enhancement of knowledge	Study was seen as a way to gain knowledge in subjects like Hindi, English, Maths, and Science.
	Intrinsic motivation	Some children expressed internal interest in reading and writing and believed that education would help them in the future.
	Protection from punishment	A few children studied out of fear of punishment, criticism, or scolding.
Theme 4: Social identity and social status as precursors	**Fame and social prestige**	Children linked education with respect, prestige, and family honor. They believed studying would help them become "big" and socially recognized.
	Social identity	Education was seen as a way to gain identity, status, and recognition in society.
	Positive engagement	Some children said they come to school because they get bored at home and enjoy learning with peers.
	Development	Children viewed education as a path to personal development and future progress.
Theme 5: Family and other sources of social	**Obligation**	Children reported pressure from parents, relatives, teachers, and friends to study well. This pressure created duty and expectation.

pressure impact academic construal	**Resources**	Some children mentioned lack of study materials, discomfort, and difficulty understanding lessons.
	Teacher and friends	Teachers and classmates influenced learning both positively and negatively. Some helped; others distracted.
	Environment	Home environment, noise, and household responsibilities affected study time and concentration.
Theme 6: Interest and perceived benefits of academic success	**Intelligence**	Children associated study with becoming intelligent and mentally strong.
	Subject difficulty	English and Mathematics were described as difficult subjects requiring extra support.
	Teacher help	Teacher support helped children understand difficult concepts and reduced fear.
	Help at home	Parents and siblings helped children with reading, writing, and difficult words.
	Punishment	Some children studied because of fear of punishment or scolding.
	Financial support	Parents paid fees, arranged tuition, and bought books and materials.
Theme 7: Perceived restraining factors of academic success	**Sources of negative outcomes**	Television and mobile phones were the biggest distractions. Children said these reduce attention and disturb study time.
	Positive use of media	A few children said mobile and internet help when used for searching doubts or watching educational content.
	Homework and study disturbance	Noise, cartoons, games, and phone use interrupted study and reduced focus.
	Lack of concentration	Children reported that too much screen time and household disturbance make it hard to read, write, and remember lessons.

4. Discussion

This study shows that academic construal among Indian school children is shaped by a mix of personal aspirations, family expectations, and social values. Children see education as a way to build a better future, gain respect, and fulfill parental hopes, but they also face pressure and distraction. These findings suggest that academic success is not only about ability; it is also deeply linked to identity, motivation, and environment.

Theme 1 shows that children understand study in a multidimensional way, especially as a route to careers, upward mobility, and family honor. Girls more often stressed happiness of parents and relational value, while boys more often focused on jobs and status. This fits well with the idea that children value education for different reasons: enjoyment, future usefulness, and social recognition.

Theme 2 highlights that academic motivation comes from many sources, including parents, siblings, teachers, and cultural role models. The home and school environments together shape how children think about study. This means academic values are learned socially, not developed in isolation.

Theme 3 shows that children experience several positive outcomes from study, such as happiness, knowledge gain, and personal satisfaction. Some also study to avoid punishment, which means both positive and negative motives are present. This

suggests teachers should strengthen interest and confidence rather than rely mainly on fear.

Theme 4 shows that children connect education with social identity and prestige. They believe study can improve their status, bring honor to their family, and help them become "somebody" in society. This shows that academic success has strong cultural meaning for them.

Theme 5 reveals the effect of family pressure, household responsibilities, limited resources, and teacher or peer influence. These pressures can motivate children, but they can also create stress. A supportive but less controlling environment would likely help children learn better.

Theme 6 indicates that children value education because they believe it improves intelligence, future opportunities, and career chances. Teacher help and family support were important in reducing difficulty, especially in subjects like English and Mathematics. This shows that academic confidence grows when children receive guidance and feel capable.

Theme 7 Major barriers include television, mobile phones, noise, and lack of concentration, which reduce study time and focus. However, some children use digital media for learning, showing that technology can be both a barrier and a support.

Overall, the findings show that children's academic experiences are shaped by a balance of motivation, pressure, support, and distraction. The study suggests that schools and families should create encouraging, low-stress, and child-friendly learning environments.

5.Conclusion

In this research find that children's academic experiences are shaped by both support and barriers, not just by individual ability. Their learning is influenced by family expectations, social values, school environment, and media distractions. The findings highlight that academic motivation is a socially and culturally embedded process. The study also suggests that girls and boys may view education differently, with girls focusing more on family approval and boys on future jobs and status. This means teachers and policymakers should use more child-centered, supportive, and context-sensitive strategies. Although the sample was limited, the study gives useful insight into how Indian school children understand education. Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples to explore these experiences in greater depth.

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