# A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS ON EMERGENCY ELECTRONIC LEARNINGDURING THE CORONAVIRUS LOCKDOWN IN SELECTED SCHOOL AT KANYAKUMARI DISTRICT

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***ABSTRACT***

*As a consequence of COVID-19, schools worldwide resulted in shutting down, leaving over 1.2 billion students out of their classrooms (Li and Lalani, 2020). As a rapid response, home learning was suggested to close the educational gap that might occur. Many countries across the globe shifted to e-Learning as a means to continue education during this pandemic. The present study was conducted the Study on the Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Emergency Electronic Learning during the Coronavirus Lockdown In order to achieve the objectives of the study, a descriptive design was adopted purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample. The data was collected from 50 respondents though online survey. The results from the statistics proved that despite the availability of resources, other agents also affected the students' e-Learning; it can be comfort (having stable Internet connection, the right amount of devices, personal study space) or through parental involvement as suggested by the theory. Given the amount of time to conduct the research, there are still underlying issues needed for future research. First, even if the students classified themselves coming from middle-class families, there are insufficient data to prove the accuracy of their SES. Second, it is highly-suggested to do another quantitative study with a larger amount of respondents from other schools to test different hypotheses (especially when the students starts the educational shift this academic year 2020-2021 via blended or distance learning due to the pandemic). Lastly, it is also recommended to do a qualitative approach to view this case in a different perspective.*

***Key Words:*** *Socioeconomic Status, Emergency Electronic Learning, Coronavirus, Lockdown.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

As a consequence of COVID-19, schools worldwide resulted in shutting down, leaving over 1.2 billion students out of their classrooms (Li and Lalani, 2020). As a rapid response, home learning was suggested to close the educational gap that might occur. Many countries across the globe shifted to e-Learning as a means to continue education during this pandemic. In the United Kingdom, education providers with the support of their Department of Education developed *LendEd*, a website where schools and teachers can search for resources for effective home learning (GOV.UK, 2020). In France, the National Ministry of Education developed *Ma classe à la maison* (My classroom at home) site that provides learning opportunities for everyone (education.gouv.fr, 2020; The World Bank, 2020). Japan, on the other hand, came up with a centralized website developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) which includes strategies that schools in the country have been usingfor their e-Learning (The World Bank, 2020).

Though the intention is good, many countries admit that they will face many struggles in implementing distance learning, and the most apparent among these issues will be access to technology. The problem lies in the larger social problem of digital inequality – only the privileged can continue their education without being compromised (Aldama, 2020). As an example, there is a term coined "*homework gap*" in the United States which describes the barriers students face in their education when there is no access to a high-speed connection at their homes (Kelly, 2020). This has been a constant problem their country is trying to solve for many years even before COVID-19 and will be more prevalent during the pandemic. Even in the United Kingdom, another first-world country, around 1.9 million households do not have access to the internet and are relying on pay-as-you-go services (Kelly, 2020). This has also been the case even before COVID-19 struck their nation. If these well-developed countries are facing a digital divide, the least developed countries (LDCs) will become more susceptible to this issue. They will lag farthest behind in digital readiness and the education gap will keep expanding (UNCTAD, 2020).

Historically, new technologies have always benefited those with financial capital, and those who do not will always be left behind. Unfortunately, accessibility is highly related to SES, and this is where the digital divide begins. Children who come from low-SES households develop academic skills slower than those who are from higher SES families (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier, & Maczuga, 2009); primarily because poor households have less access to learning materials which promote a positive literacy environment (Bradley, Corwyn, McAdoo, & García Coll, 2001). For an instance, a study conducted among three hundred and ninety-nine (399) students in California State University San Marcos concluded that those at an economic disadvantage are exposed to higher chances of experiencing difficulties accessing materials online (Añover, Ng, & Pellicia, n.d.). Another research done by Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and Institute of Education (IoE) from England reported that children from poorer families spend less time learning at home during the lockdown due to the lack of study spaces and online resources (Andrew, Cattan, Costa Dias et al., 2020). Both studies show that there is a relationship between socio-economic status and accessibility; the lower a household's social status is, the higher the possibility their accessibility to education will be affected negatively.

Based on the studies discussed above, this mini-study aims to explore the relationship of SES in students' e-Learning experience during the COVID-19 lockdown. The researchers will only focus on accessibility's impact on the students' e-Learning journeys.

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

"A study on the impact of socioeconomic status on emergency electronic learningduring the coronavirus lockdown in selected school at Kanyakumari district"

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

**Research approach:** Quantitative approach.

**Research design:** descriptive design

**Setting of the study:** Conducted in selected school at Kanyakumari district.

**Sample and sample size:** 50 school students, consisting of both male and female in selected school at Kanyakumari district.

**Sample Technique:** Purposive sampling

**Data collection duration:** 3 weeks

**RESULTS:**

The study aimed to know if the SES of the respondents impacted their access to resources needed for their e-Learning sessions during the lockdown period. In return, if accessibility was affected, the researchers wanted to know if this influenced the students' academic achievement. Ten (10) questions following a five-point Likert scale design that ranges from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree was conceptualized to measure the degree of students' responses. These points have assigned numerical values and will be discussed at a later point in this study.

In the following paragraphs, the researchers present the results from the online survey. The first question asked if students have gadgets or devices that can be used for their Zoom classes. Figure I shows that of all the students who participated, five (5) students (33%) strongly agreed they have gadgets to use during their e-Learning sessions; whereas the remaining ten
(10) students (67%) agreed that they have gadgets for e-Learning. These results show that these students do not have problems with the accessibility of devices for online learning.

The next question in the survey asked if the students have an Internet connection at home. Despite the positive results from owning gadgets, the next question, on the other hand, yielded to a different direction. Among the respondents, one (1) student (6.5%) strongly agreed and (9) students (60%) agreed they have an Internet connection; whereas one (1) student (6.5%) disagreed and four (4) students (27%) highly disagreed they have Internet. This result still leaned on the positive side, however, proved there are inequalities with resources.

The students were asked if learning resources and materials were easily accessible online. Among the respondents, one (1) strongly agreed (6.5%) and four (4) agreed (27%); whereas one (1) student (6.5%) was neutral and nine (9) students (60%) disagreed.

They have been questioned if access to devices and the Internet is more expensive compared to using offline materials such as books and handouts. Seven (7) students (47%) strongly agreed while five (5) students agreed (33%); a small number of three (3) students disagreed (20%).

Next, students were queried if they encountered any connection issues during their e- Learning. Eleven (11) students strongly agreed, while one (1) student agreed; the remaining three (3) students strongly disagreed.

The respondents were also questioned if they were comfortable taking their lessons via Zoom (and other platforms they used during e-Learning). One (1) student (7%) was neutral, four (4) students (27%) disagreed, and the remaining ten (10) students strongly disagreed(66%).

Next, the students were asked if their teachers had a hard time addressing their concerns during their Zoom lessons. The responses leaned on one side whereas eleven (11) students (73%) strongly agreed and the remaining four (4) students (27%) agreed.

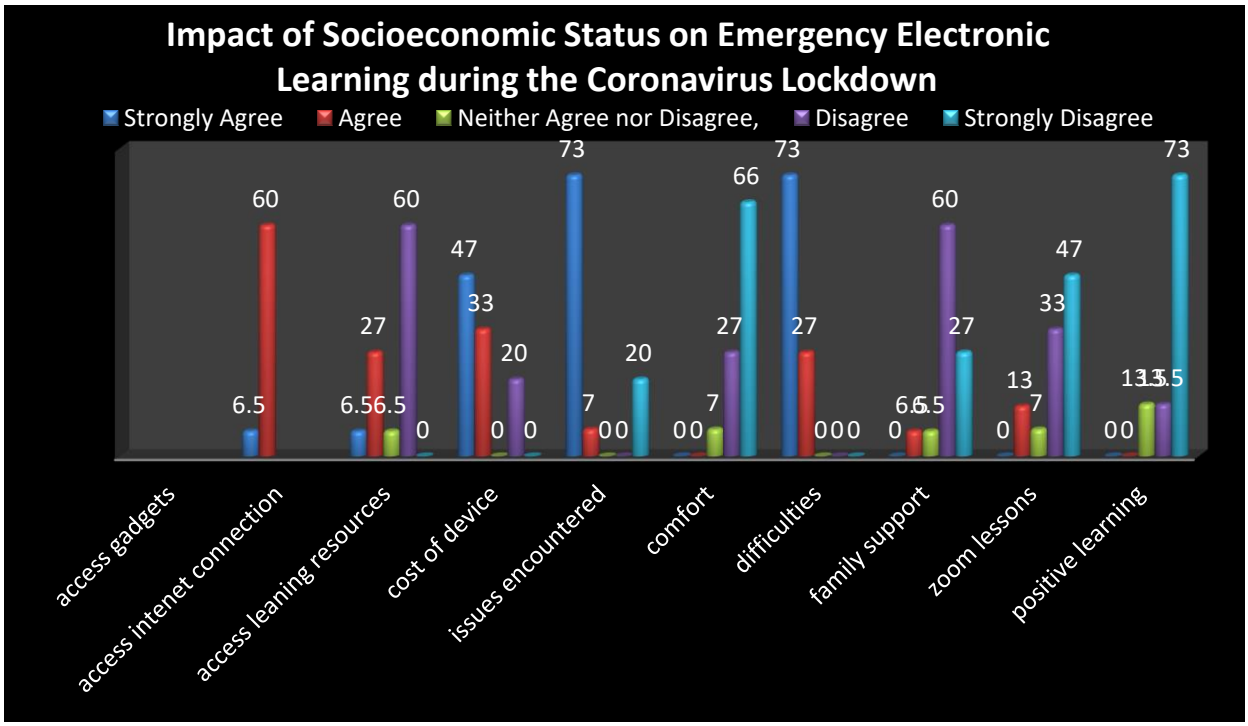


**Fig: 1 Column diagram showing Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Emergency Electronic Learning during the Coronavirus Lockdown**

They were also asked if their families provided support during their e-Learning journey. Only one (1) student (6.5%) said s/he had support, one (1) student (6.5%) neither agreed nor disagreed; while nine (9) students (60%) disagreed and four (4) strongly disagreed (27%).

They were also asked if they understood all their lessons during the three weeks they shifted to Zoom classes. Among the fifteen (15) respondents, only two (2) students (13%) agreed while one (1) student neither agreed

nor disagreed (7%); five (5) students (33%) disagreed and seven (7) students (47%) strongly disagreed.
Lastly, the students were asked if they had a positive experience throughout their e- Learning and if they were motivated as well. Only two (2) students (13.5%) remained neutral, while two (2) students (13.5%) disagreed with the statement and the remaining eleven (11)students (73%) strongly disagreed.

**DISCUSSION:**

On the first part of the online survey, the researchers asked questions concerning accessibility of resources needed for online learning. While the results yielded to a confirmed ownership of devices, the survey showed that these students do not have equal access with an Internet connection. Though thriving, there is unequal and asymmetrical access to information communication technology (ICT) across different socioeconomic classes. Concerning this, students also confirmed having issues accessing learning materials online. This result is somehow the same with a study done in California State University San Marcos, whereas the researchers found a connection between household income and problems accessing materials for online courses. The result of their study concluded that students at disadvantaged backgrounds higher chances of experiencing difficulties accessing online course materials (Añover, Ng, & Pellicia, n.d.). A big percentage confirmed that it is more expensive for them to acquire these, and only very few disagreed. Still, the students were able to have access with these resources since they are from middle- class families. The impact of SES can be seen here through the family's financial support. And as the human capital theory stresses, the economic resources of a family has an impact in students' academic achievements (Li & Qiu, 2018).

The second part of the online survey tackled questions relating to students' wellbeing while e-Learning at home. They were asked if they encountered issues and only three (3) disagreed while the rest agreed. When asked if they were comfortable having Zoom lessons, only one remained neutral and the rest responded negatively. This study does not seek why, but there is a possibility that this might be related to lack of personal spaces at home. Teacher support was also questioned, and majority of the students confirmed that their teachers had a hard time addressing their concerns during e-Learning. This proved that the students needed extra assistance during those sessions. Concerning this, the students were asked if they received any kind of support from their families regarding their e-Learning. Majority responded negatively; this was inevitable as for some parents or guardians, homeschooling children are a burden due to other obligations at home (Daguno-Bersamina & Relativo, 2020). The students were also queried if they understood all their lessons online and a high-percentage responded negatively. Though resources are present, if the support from the family is absent this will still impact the student's academic achievement. If there is a high degree of parent participation, the student's academic performance will also be better. The last question asked if the students had a positive e-Learning experience and the results yielded more on the negative response. Considering the results shown above, it is expected that the students did not have a pleasant encounter during the three weeks their school shifted to Zoom classes due to different elements that affected their e-Learning.

**CONCLUSION**

Many studies are explaining different agents that affect students' e-Learning experiences and one of these is the family's SES. Several researchers have already made significant contributions to determining how SES relates to student performance (Lee and Burkam, 2002). Though there may be many factors affecting a student's performance, the family's SES has the greatest impact (Li & Qiu, 2018). Through this study, the researchers found out that though it is indirect, socioeconomic factors such as accessibility to resources and parental support both affected the students' e-Learning experience.

Guided by the lens of human capital theory, the study showed two ways a family can invest in their child to have a better educational experience: 1) through financial support such as resources and; 2) through parent participation/involvement. In return, these two factors will influence the child's academic performance. In this case where the students suddenly shifted to Zoom classes, the researchers saw a link between their SES and e-Learning experience. The results from the statistics proved that despite the availability of resources, other agents also affected the students' e-Learning; it can be comfort (having stable Internet connection, the right amount of devices, personal study space) or through parental involvement as suggested by the theory. Given the amount of time to conduct the research, there are still underlying issues needed for future research. First, even if the students classified themselves coming from middle-class families, there are insufficient data to prove the accuracy of their SES. Second, it is highly-suggested to do another quantitative study with a larger amount of respondents from other schools to test different hypotheses (especially when the students start the educational shift this academic year 2020-2021 via blended or distance learning due to the pandemic). Lastly, it is also recommended to do a qualitative approach to view this case in a different perspective.

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