

The Relation between the Socio-Economic Status and the Social Well-being of the Pupils in the High Schools in the Triangle Area of Israel

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Abstract

This research aimed to examine the relationship between the socio-economic status (SES) and the Social Well-being of the Pupils. A quantitative research method was used. A simple random selection method was used where 242 male and female students aged between 15 – 18 years old selected and 110 parents. The study used questionnaires that were distributed to a large number of High school students of the Arab sector in the Triangle area in Israel. Many variables such as income, family status, house (property or rent), economic situation, parental education level, parental involvement alongside many other factors were analysed to assess the SES. The research was based on the Social Capital Theory and the Success Model that showed the relationship between variables.

The statistical analysis conducted was R programming language via R Studio. Further analysis using statistics such as t, F, Cramer v, Pearson correlation were used to measure the relationships between the different variables. Finally, a mediation analysis using the Sobel test was presented through several linear regression models with an aim to check the overall effect of each variable on achievement.

In this research, the results indicated that there is a positive relationship between the socio-economic status of Arab families and the student's Well-being. The research also indicated that well-being is affected by and shows a reciprocal relationship with three variables: motivation, achievement, and socio-economic status. However the results show there is a positive impact of the main variables, income, family status, housing (property or rent) and economic situation on the Social Well-Being.

Key words: The Socio-Economic Status (SES), Motivation to learn, Academic Achievement, Social Well-Being.

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I. Introduction

Gobena (2018) studied a group of variables including age, gender, demographic association, race, marital status, socioeconomic status (SES), the education level of the parents, parents' professions, language, level of income and the religious affiliation. Since this time there have been many theories and advancements in the understanding of this topic and several variables taken into consideration in examining the effects of low social-economic situation on children's scholarly evolution.

Socio-economic status (SES) is a criterion of a situation in terms of the material income of the family and the social status compared to others. When analyzing the socio-economic status of the family, the education of the mother, father, their profession and the family income (GOP, 2008) is taken into account.

Emory, Caughy, Harris, (2008) consider that the students' behavior, social habits and the behavior of friends in the environment surrounding the student, affect their Motivation to learn and achievements. They have claimed that the negative behavior of certain individuals can affect the students' behavior and thus the level of their achievements.

This study investigates if the different factors that affect the students' motivation to learn depend on the socio-economic situation in which the student lives. There are many economic and social indicators which may impact the students' academic achievement, many of these indicators have been researched and defined widely in the past. These different indicators will be considered and mentioned in order to appreciate how they could impact the students' Motivation to learn.

The following research focuses on Arab schools in Israel. Within the Arab community many students live in economically challenged environments which could impact their academic achievements and their future

profession. In order to improve motivation to learn and bring about a balanced society it is very important for those responsible for the Israeli education system to understand the contributing factors that may be causing the discrepancies in the Motivation to learn and academic achievements of the students in Israel.

Many studies have mentioned and researched a significant difference in the financial situation of the Jewish and Arab populations within Israel. The studies have quantified the differences in the financial situations and state many factors which maybe the cause of this difference.

Some research shows that in general, in 2014, the percentage of increase in the prevalence of poverty was less than in 2013 for families, people and children; the percentage of families living in poverty increased from 18.6% to 18.8%, and the percentage of people increased slightly from 21.8% to 22.0%, the proportion of children living in poor families increased from 30.8% to 31.0%. Thus, poverty rates in Arab families increased from 51.7% in 2013 to 52.6% in 2014. Although the rise was low the actual incidence of poverty within the Arab population is high (National Insurance Institute, 2016).

The Socio-economic Status

Socio-economic status includes several components and variables which include: family income, number of individuals in the family, household expenditure of the family, the place of residence, relationships between the children, relationships between the children and parents, relationship between the parents themselves, geographic location, the neighbourhood where they live, customs, society, traditions and their environment. Those variables can affect pupils ethically, on a behaviour level as well as their Well-being and achievements (Ali et al., 2009).

Socio-economic status is one of the most important factors affecting Well-being. Poor income as well as lack of financial income and educational aids have implications on the child's upbringing. All studies confirm that the rate of school failure has a more meaningful connotation in the inappropriate socio-economic environment (Claes & Comeau, 2005).

Research conducted by Mcleod (2011) during the summer holidays shows that the level of Well-being of pupils from middle class families was higher than the level of pupils coming from families with a lower socio-economic level.

The family's economic background and the family's good socio-economic level contribute in providing the material needs of the children, which give them more time to study. While the low economic situation of the family leads it to prioritising the provision of money, motivates the members to work even the children, and this makes children leave school early sometimes. In addition the lack of an appropriate environment to study, can also contribute to low Well-being (Mehmood, 2014).

Social Well-being

Keyes described social well-being as "the appraisal of one's circumstance and functioning in society" (Keyes, 1998) and identified five dimensions that are seen to cover this construct: social acceptance, social contribution, social actualization, social coherence and social integration (Radzyk, 2014).

The use of statistical data and indicators to study the well-being of children in particular is not new. Pioneering reports on the "State of the Child" were published as early as 1940s (Ben-Arieh 2008; Ben-Arieh et al. 2001). Many family and environmental factors affect the child's living conditions and development. The child's economic, health and safety conditions determine to a large extent the quality of his/her life in the present and future. Over the last decade, there was a continuous increase in the percentage of poor children in Israel, and today there is seen that every third child in Israel lives under conditions of economic distress. The poverty rate is one indication of many other changes that occurred over the years: decline in the average number of children in family, increase in the number of single parent families, increase in the number of pupils in the education system, all these and others are part of changing situation in everything related to the world and the living conditions of children in Israel, and their implications are both positive and negative.

The Concept of the Child's Well-being and Education

One of the success signs is well-being – a highly popular research subject in social sciences and human (Diener, 2000 & Gasper, 2010). Different studies mention similar definitions of well-being, as the most typical studies concern themselves with the individual's subjective feeling of general satisfaction in life. In this range we can find a number of definitions such as psychological well-being, subjective well-being, satisfaction in life, quality of life, lifestyle, standard of living and many others (Diener & Suh, 2000). Psychological well-being represents the acknowledgement of personal development and progress, having interpersonal and coping skills and the ability to make decisions independently. Subjective well-being includes all concepts of satisfaction in life (Tov & Au, 2013).

Dictionary definitions of well-being emphasize on a desirable state of being happy, healthy, or prosperous; that is, well-being refers to both subjective feelings and experiences as well as to living conditions.

Well-being is also related to the fulfillment of desires, to the balance of pleasure and pain, and to opportunities for development and self-fulfillment. The concept refers to many factors and aspects of a possible life that are dimensions of a good life or vice versa. Human rights institutes mentioned the idea of well-being, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It gives rights as indicated in its name to provide opportunities for well-being and help provide well-being in children's lives economically, emotionally, psychologically, socially, material and cultural environments as well as work to develop them.

There are inconsistencies and tensions in the research interest in the definition of well-being; these include dissent in terms of issues and goals relating to well being, as well as between individuals and the general communities in the challenges of the theories of well-being. This is even more complex to understand and define in relation to children; well-being encompasses both children's lives at the present and how the present influences their future and their development. Children's development is not only a psychological issue but is related to characteristics at the societal level; various societies not only influence social and cognitive development in various ways but also require different levels of competencies for its members at different ages or gender.

Social Well-being and Education

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Social acceptance means the "understanding of society through the character and qualities of other people as a general category" (Keyes, 1998). That means the individual feels good about other people and trusts them in being honest and diligent. This contributes to a general belief of positivity towards society.

Social contribution means "the evaluation of one's social value" (Keyes, 1998). In this sense the person feels that s/he is an active member of society. The person thinks that s/he can contribute in the social development. This implies that the individual thinks that s/he is able to perform certain actions and take social responsibility. Social actualization deals with "evaluation of the potential and the prospects of society" (Keyes, 1998). People believe that the full social potential of society can be realized through its people, government and institutions. The individual also contributes to that actualization by being optimistic about the society's future.

Social coherence is "the perception of the quality, organization and operation of the social world and it is concerned with the knowledge of the world" (Keyes, 1998). People feel involved and think that they can understand the world they live in. Although they are conscious about not living in the perfect world, they set goals to give purpose to their lives.

Social integration is "the evaluation of the quality of one's relationship to society" (Keyes, 1998). The person has a feeling of belonging to a group or community on the basis of norms and values. This group can be his neighborhood, friends, clubs or the society in which the person can get support. Keyes also states "themes of integration, social involvement, and public consciousness in classical sociological theory. Keyes also mentions the social challenges faced by adults." (Keyes, 1998) So what if adults fail to obtain these challenges? The result would be social exclusion.

The focus usually is on one dimension of the child's life in order to take care of his/her well-being, and it often depends on the results of adults in order to work on the development standards of children. This means that we have to take care of children in their early stages in order to prepare them to move to advanced stages in life and monitoring their growth and development (Bronfenbrenner & Evans, 2000).

Nevertheless, Arieh (2006) stated that in order to work on the welfare of children, one should pay attention to two perspectives, firstly the rights of children. Secondly, the childhood is an important stage of a child's identity and is not just one of the stages of his/her development until s/he becomes an adult. The term well-being is used to emphasize on the future of the child (i.e. bringing up and preparing the child for the happy stage of adulthood in the future).

Qvortrup (1999) sets the foundation for considering children's well-being by claiming that the traditional preoccupation with what is called "next generation" is a preoccupation with adults, however anyone interested in children and childhood should venture an interest of present childhood as well as future childhood. The basic assumption of the traditional view of childhood is that the end justifies the means; therefore producing successful adults is the main criterion of the analysis.

Dealing with children as a component of human capital focuses our attention on results, not only on the child's daily life. In addition, childhood is the stage in which needs are attained until gains are achieved in adulthood (Ben-Arieh et al., 2001), therefore the children's well-being in childhood means: that children have the right to obtain dignity and guarantee the necessary human rights, and that their childhood is an important stage of their lives that requires attention and respect.

Studies deal with children's well-being and focus on general aspects are concerned with the essential fundamentals of growth and well-being, as they strive to address risks and difficulties and provide an appropri-

ate environment to help in the child's development and prosperity (Moore & Lippman, 2005), as achieving goals increases happiness and well-being of the child (Howell, 2009). Moreover, the level of well-being is affected by the groups in which the individual or group compares to (Carbonell, 2005). Further, studies of well-being, and the system of indicators follow this concept, refer to specific areas of life and to the present as well as the future.

Identified trajectories are related not only to the life courses of children but also to societal characteristics; for example, conditions in early childhood may predict unemployment in adulthood (Caspi et al., 1998) which is related to the economic knowledge. Longitudinal studies also provide new opportunities for studying the relationship between biological and social factors and dynamics that through developmental processes reinforce initial inequalities among children.

Educational well-being can be evaluated with subjective indicators such as children's levels of enjoyment at school or by objective indicators such as investment in education. In research tools (questionnaire), educational well-being is indicated by an evaluation of scholastic performance and some other items.

This index refers to domains including life evaluation, emotional health, physical health, healthy behavior, and work environment. In addition to that what is called "basic access": a component of well-being related to satisfaction with the community or area, economic situation, medical treatment, health care, and other basic necessities.

Disagreements between children and adults regarding aspects of children's lives can be an important dimension of social life and of interpersonal and intergenerational relationships. For example, adolescents and young people in general are more often "risk takers" than adults; having new and amusing experiences are important for them. For adults "security" is more important. As a result, security procedures imposed by adults from their perspective on what is the best for young people may be considered as a reflection of an adult desire to control young people lives or limit their freedoms. Such disagreement might be better understood and more often alleviated if both children and adult' perspectives are considered in research.

The psychosocial context in which such disagreements occur is based on both adults and young people considering as contrasting social groups or categories. Their interactions occur in what social psychologists call processes of inter-group firm differentiation (Tajfel 1978; Casas 1996).

Measuring and Monitoring Children's Well-being

The use of statistical data and indicators to study the well-being of children in particular is not new. Pioneering reports on the "State of the Child" were published as early as 1940s (Ben-Arieh 2008; Ben-Arieh et al. 2001). Nevertheless, most researchers would agree that the current attention to child well-being indicators has its substantial origins in the "social indicators movement" in 1960s, which arose in a climate of rapid social change. Besides, there is a sense among social scientists and public officials that well measured and consistently collected indicators of children's well-being, in particular, are used by child advocacy groups, policymakers, researchers, media, and service providers for several purposes e.g., to describe the condition of children, monitor or track child outcomes, or set goals).

Although there are notable gaps and inadequacies in the existing child and family well-being indicators (Ben-Arieh 2000), there are also a lot of data series and indicators through which opinions and results can be concluded (Bradshaw et al. 2014).

Children's Own Perceptions of Well-being

Children's well-being should take into account: (1) children's conditions of living and "objective" procedures of their well-being; (2) Children's perceptions, evaluations, and aspirations regarding their own lives – including children's subjective well-being; (3) perceptions, evaluations, and ambitions of other relevant social agents (stakeholders) about children's lives and conditions of living, i.e., the opinions of their parents, teachers, paediatricians, educators, social professionals, and so on. In order to develop well-designed intervention programs, a better understanding of the conditions to be changed is essential. The present state of the art of well-being and quality of life research establish crucial findings, not specifically researched for children yet, but they would be valid to them:

1. Improving the quality of public services has a positive impact on people's quality of life, including subjective well-being.
2. Improving material conditions of living has a positive impact on people's quality of life. The lower the material conditions of living are, the higher the impact when they are improved.
3. It is difficult to improve the subjective well-being for people who are happy or well satisfied with life. However, it is easier to improve the subjective well-being of those who are unhappy or unsatisfied with their own living conditions. An important political recommendation rises from such evidence: In order to have a clear impact on the mean quality of life of any population globally, it is most effective to focus efforts on those who are living in the worst conditions.

4. In order to understand the quality of life of any population, one needs to know the point of view of all social agents involved, including children's points of view. Improving satisfactory interpersonal relationships is probably the best way to have a positive impact in people's subjective well-being.

The Composite Child Well-being Index in Israel

Many family and environmental factors affect the child's living conditions and development. The child's economic, health and safety conditions determine to a large extent the quality of his/her life in the present and future. Over the last decade, there was a continuous increase in the percentage of poor children in Israel, and today there is seen that every third child in Israel lives under conditions of economic distress. The poverty rate is one indication of many other changes that occurred over the years: decline in the average number of children in family, increase in the number of single parent families, increase in the number of pupils in the education system, all these and others are part of changing situation in everything related to the world and the living conditions of children in Israel, and their implications are both positive and negative.

This raises the question of whether it is possible to measure and monitor the children' well-being in Israel in general. If so, how and in what way such trends and indicators can be weighted into one combined metric? In the 1960s, industry researchers who measured quality of life argued that measuring and collecting social indicators consistently would provide a way to monitor the living conditions of different groups in society, including the children. The results of monitoring and knowledge accumulated as a result of this measurement since a long period provide a strategic basis for planning policy in the wider world, and to some extent in Israel as well, and for determining ways of dealing with important social issues. Indicators for the well-being of the groups in society in general, and of children in particular, were a useful tool for policymakers, researchers in the social sciences, communication among its various channels and the various social service providers. The use of social indicators for monitoring and measuring the well-being of children is essential for three purposes:

1. To describe the children's living conditions.
2. To monitor the results of policies and social services, which enable us to examine whether the child's well-being has improved or worsened over the years, to what extent and in what fields.
3. To set goals and objectives for the current social policy. In the United States, social indicators of child well-being have been used for more than four decades, partly because of the growing recognition of the importance of expanding administrative databases.

In fact, the social indicators are data received regularly from government organizations, research centers and various administrative systems. Over the years, social statistics have developed and reflected more and more the quality of life while at the same time they have enabled the monitoring of trends in different areas of life. The multiplicity of information and indicators in the United States in turn has led to the creation of a composite index of several social indicators that sum together to a single number that represents the well-being and quality of life of the children, thus enabling them to monitor the quality of childrens' life and well-being over a period of time. The society and its policy makers can take a relatively easy look at indicators that reflect the overall situation. This is in contrast to the need to relate to numbers of different indicators whose development directions may also be different. A composite index may consist of a number of areas related to the quality of life of the child and in each area a number of indicators representing the same area (for example, the infant mortality rate may be included in the health sector). The American composite index 2 consists of 28 indicators divided into seven areas of quality of life: family-economic welfare; health; safety; Education; Belonging to the community (degree of participation in educational or work institutions); Social relations (with family members and peer group members) and emotional / spiritual well-being).

The study of healthy behaviors among school-age children (HBSC), which was in 2014 presents a report summarizing the results of the seventh national survey on young people in Israel, in particular their dangerous behaviors, risk of injury, health and well-being. This poll was part of a multi-generational survey conducted by the World Health Organization (HBSC) funded and sponsored by the Ministry of Health.

The international survey is conducted once every four years with the participation of more than 40 countries in North America and Europe. Questionnaires are distributed to middle and high school students in each country in order to collect data. About 14,000 students from religious government schools and Arab schools in Israel participated in 2014.

The data from the HBSC survey indicated significant information about the daily life of young people in Israel in many fields, such as patterns of behavior that risk for health, emotional disorder, participation in violence, physical and psychological symptoms, school climate, parent participation, leisure and social activities and more. In addition to that, reports and comparisons are prepared among different countries by the study team, and it provides case reports on specific subgroups.

In conclusion, the survey findings describe a picture of everyday life of Israeli young people. Some areas appear in a positive sort, while others raise concern about behavioral patterns and negative experiences harmful to their well-being, health and safety.

Many of the encouraging findings relate to avoiding risk behaviors: a consistent decrease over the years in the proportion of young people experimenting with smoking cigarettes, consuming alcohol, and involving in violence. Other major findings are an increase in positive feelings towards home and school over the years, and an increase in the rate of volunteering and community involvement.

On the other hand, there are number of worrying findings: a higher sense of pressure from studies, a decrease in the time spent with friends, and an increase in the use of computers and other electronic devices. In addition, the percentage of students dieting to lose weight is higher than the European average, and situates Israel on the top in comparison with other countries. In the same connection, Israeli young people show low rates of physical exercise in comparison to other countries. These findings expose trends that require attention and making real systemic changes to benefit young people and their surroundings.

Israel is a complex country, and in many ways, unique country, due to its history, geo-political situation and demographic components. As a result of these layers of complexity, the well-being outcomes differ significantly according to the specific scale on which it was relied upon.

In general, according to international standards, the performance of Israel is considered good, and it is among the best in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) especially in regard to life satisfaction, health status and educational attainment, Israel also provides some minority results in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in several areas such as income poverty, housing and healthy environment. Some paradoxes are also present within individual well-being domains, such as in education, where high educational and secondary attainment rates contrast with low learning outcomes of students, as measured by PISA scores.

However, the average measures alone do not give a complete picture of well-being conditions: it is simply impossible to understand well-being outcomes in Israel without an in-depth examination of the distribution of outcomes and the differences between population groups.

For two population groups – Jews and Arabs – well-being outcomes differ significantly. Israeli Arabs are unambiguously disadvantaged across all dimensions for which measures are available, suffering from higher rates of poverty, and lower levels of labor force participation, educational attainment and health status. These multiple disadvantages are likely to be mutually reinforcing, with low educational attainment leading to unfavorable labor market outcomes, for example. These differences may reflect fundamental differences in values, while Arab disadvantage – although undoubtedly reflecting some cultural attitudes and values (e.g. family size, female participation in work) – is strongly influenced by broader factors.

According to General Social Survey data, there are inequalities by population groups (Jews and Arabs) in labor force participation and educational attainment (Berman, 2000). The Arab people are being much less likely to work or study than Jews, Arab having much lower labor force participation and educational study rates than Jews.

The Quantitative Method

The methodology that was chosen for this research is the quantitative method. The objectives of the study were to evaluate the socio-economic situation, and to what extent it affects student's motivation to learn. Data for the quantitative part of the research was collected through questionnaires which were distributed to students and parents in high schools in the Triangle Area of Israel.

II. Findings

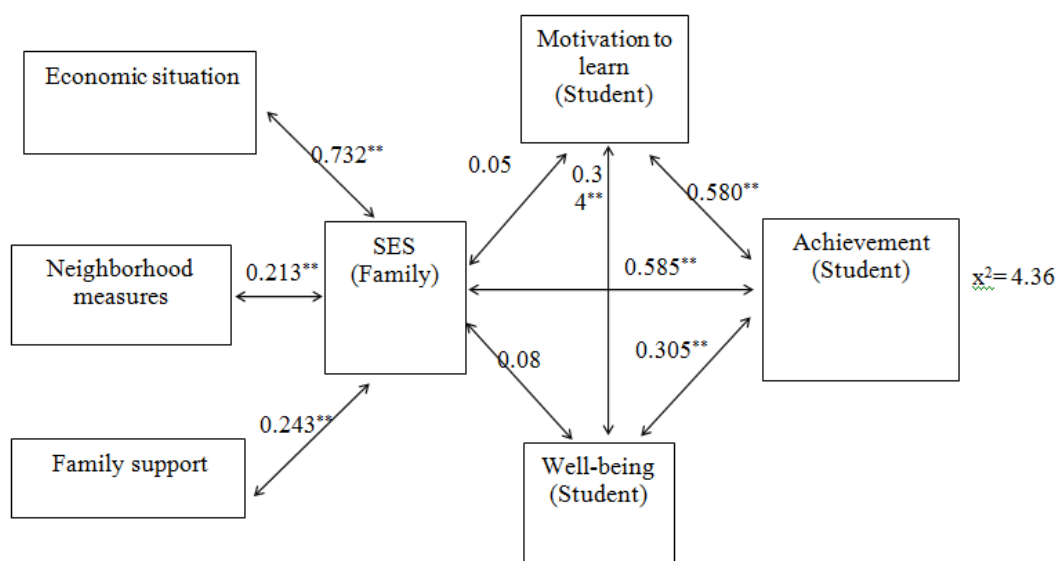


Figure 1. The relation between the family socio-economic status and student Well-being. ** $p < 0.01$

Table 1: Correlations of the Study Variables

	Grade average	Economic situation	Motivation to learn	Well-being	Social Support
Grade average					
Economic situation	0.19*				
Motivation to learn	0.58**	0.01			
students' Well-being	0.30**	0.60**	0.34**		
Social Support	0.24**	0.35**	0.61**	0.57**	

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Table 2. means, slandered deviation and differences between student gender in grade average, social support, economic situation, motivation, and students' Well-being:

	Male		female		difference t
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	
grade average	2.957	1.218	3.2531	1.0186	-1.985*
Social Support	3.7438	0.64	3.7784	0.666	-0.383
economic situation	3.1635	0.645	3.55274	0.9456	-3.309**
Motivation to learn	3.439	0.8374	3.745	0.8712	-2.593*
students' Well-being	3.5496	0.767	3.6658	0.7279	-1.1429

Note: * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$.

III. Discussion

The current study deals with the socio-economic background of students and their relationship with their Well-being, whereby the results that we obtained after analyzing the forms that were distributed to students as well as to the parents are discussed in this chapter.

According to (Yang, 2010) the level of the local community and the family in which the individual lives have a direct impact on the student's Well-being and educational achievements, as students' affiliation with

a particular socio-economic situation affects their performance in school achievement and behavior, in addition to the relationship with their peers. The prevailing social and economic conditions in society have an important role in influencing students' Well-being and school success among children (Radia, 2016). Parents' participation in the school and their cooperation with the administration and teachers help to build a good relationship between the two parties, thus enhancing the student's supportive environment whether at home or at school, which would positively impact his performance at school as well as his Well-being (Grenfell & James, 2004).

The main aim of the research was to examine the relationship between the student's socio-economic status and its impact on his/her Well-being.

The results of this research are consistent with the theory that states the family is the first factor that affects the individual and helps to develop the characteristics and values s/he has. These characteristics, which are transmitted from one generation to another, help one's success and distinction, including in the field of study (Radia, 2016).

The results of the current study indicated that there is a positive relationship between the student's socio-economic status and Well-being ($P < 0.001$), as the student's relationship with the parents positively affects his/her motivation to learn from the parents' point of view. Also, the students indicated the positive impact of good relationship between the student's parents and the surrounding environment of the student ($r_s = 0.23$, $P < 0.001$), among neighbors and friends, on the student's academic performance and academic achievement ($r_s = 0.4$, $P < 0.001$). Although this was a low value indicating a weak positive relationship it nevertheless shows there is a link present.

A study of Valiente et al., (2012) among high school students found a clear positive relationship between emotion, motivation, and academic achievement. It was found that motivated students have the ability to maintain a positive attitude in dealing with learning problems and it exhibits higher levels of intrinsic motivation. Because motivation is positively related to school love, class attendance, homework preparation, self-ability, perseverance, orientation toward expertise, and negatively to exam anxiety and to avoid failure.

The findings of the current study indicate clearly a correlation between motivation and student achievement ($r_s = 0.6$, $p < 0.001$), as students experience school as a pleasant and safe environment, they achieve better academic achievements and their sense of success increases.

Bernard et al., (2008) presented in their research a plan for a supportive environment to the child's well-being since childhood, compared to other normal environment, and they concluded that the child's social environment has a great role in influencing his/her well-being and psychological health (having positive feelings more than negative feelings). Thus, these results support that the social environment in support of the student since childhood is the basis for well-being and good academic performance.

These studies support the results obtained in this study as there is a positive relationship between the socio-economic situation and the student's well-being ($r_s = 0.4$, $P < 0.001$), as the student's standard of living and the student's social relationships at home and school affect his/her psyche and well-being ($r_s = 0.68$, $P < 0.001$). When the socio-economic situation is good, the student's psyche and well-being are good, so the researcher has to take care of the student's environment from the base to get a stable student psychologically and socially.

IV. Conclusion

The socio-economic status of the country and the level of well-being and services affect the socio-economic status of the population.

The ruling authority plays a major role in influencing the standard of living and poverty in the country.

The socio-economic situation greatly affects the student not only in achievement, but it also affects his/her well-being, standard of living and his/her motivation to learn.

There is a correlation between student well-being and motivation, and there is a two-way effect.

Student performance and achievement affects his/her motivation to learn and his/her arrival to school.

Most of the families are in the first level in terms of socio-economic status (low).

The student's social relationships with his/her colleagues and friends in school or in the neighborhood affect his/her motivation to learn.

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