

# Exploring the Impact of Social Factors on Learners' English Proficiency Levels

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**Abstract:-** The primary objective of this research is to examine how social factors influence English language learning outcomes among elementary school students in the municipality of Gjilan, with a specific focus on "SelamiHallaqi" Elementary School. The study aims to address various social issues that students face in the current economic, cultural, and educational context in Kosovo.

Despite the potential benefits of globalization, the educational system in Kosovo has been adversely affected, creating a host of difficulties. The research employed quantitative methods to collect data and revealed that economic issues, among other social factors, significantly impact the English language acquisition abilities of elementary school students in Gjilan. As these factors are interconnected, one issue can affect another, leading to complex challenges.

**Keywords:-** social, influence, factors, teaching, learning, motivation, education.

## I. INTRODUCTION

English plays a significant role in daily life, both within our culture and worldwide, serving as the most widely used foreign language in both spoken and written forms. It is employed and practiced not only globally but also in our country. The English language, now a crucial necessity, stands as one of the primary factors influencing students' development and success in Kosovo's high schools and universities. The ability to navigate the internet for serious works and research by numerous authors, primarily in English, depends on one's proficiency in the language.

Various factors, such as age, psychosocial elements, family dynamics, parents' educational backgrounds, financial situations, neighborhood environments, accessibility of technology at home and school, and a student's familiarity with using technology, directly impact the effectiveness of English language learning.

### A. Research Aims and Objectives

This study utilized deductive and analytical methods to collect and analyze primary school data, leading to similar conclusions in both cases. The primary focus is to examine social factors that positively or negatively influence the English language learning abilities of students. The research aims not only to identify and analyze social aspects in urban schools but also to create a list and establish connections between these factors. The paper aims to investigate how social issues influence students' ability to overcome difficulties in learning English. By analyzing data from two elementary schools in Gjilan, this paper intends to shed light

on the impact of social factors on the English proficiency of elementary school children.

### B. Research Questions

This study is based on the following research questions:

- What are the most significant social factors influencing students in Gjilan concerning their English language learning proficiency?
- What effects do these social aspects have on students, and how are they interrelated?
- What changes are necessary to improve the current English learning environment among students in Gjilan, considering the negative impact of social factors?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Theory of Psycho-social Development

Erikson's perspective (1963) on the psychosocial development stage emphasizes the role of environmental factors within the family more than Freud's theory does. Erikson values developmental crises in explaining how a healthy personality evolves, identifying two key principles:

- Every aspect of development has a specific strategy, and each component has a particular effect during a particular stage of development.
- The emergence of a new skill may threaten the ability that came earlier, leading to a crisis with two potential outcomes: positive or negative. Therefore, each factor must be developed at the appropriate time.

The formation of identity, a fundamental component of psychosocial theory, is described as a self-perception emerging from social interactions. Erickson contends that identity is the foundation of healthy, mature conduct, continually evolving with fresh experiences and knowledge gained from regular interactions.

### B. Learning Theories and Motivation

John Watson (1913) pioneered behaviorism, suggesting that knowledge and experience can help understand human behavior. Learning theories emphasize motivation and social context's influence on personality development. They argue that concepts explaining how one operates a computer or a bicycle can also explain a child's development of social skills, emotional self-control, thinking techniques, and physical abilities.

Skinner et al. (2008) focused on how instrumental conditioning affects human behavior, detailing effective methods for rewarding and punishing children. Jean Piaget (1952) and Lev Vygotsky (1978) presented cognitive development theories, with Vygotsky emphasizing the role of social relations in learning, asserting that learning is a social process occurring through interactions.

### C. Socio cultural Approach to Motivating Learning Proficiency

The sociocultural approach considers historical events within their context, focusing on situations over individuals. Vygotsky (1978) highlighted learning as the internalization and transformation of socially determined information, with language playing a crucial role. He emphasized that learning is a social process occurring through interactions, considering the interdependence of social context and personal development.

### D. The Effect of Social Factors on Students' English Proficiency

Social aspects of language learning are as crucial as economic factors, with family and school significantly influencing a child's socio psychological perspective. Disparities in language development among learners from different socioeconomic backgrounds result from these social factors. Parental support, encouragement, and access to reading material enhance a child's willingness to learn.

### E. The Impact of Parents' Education on Students' Performance in English Learning

There is a strong connection between a parent's level of education and their child's English performance. Well-educated parents serve as positive role models, leading to better behavior and academic performance. Parents' financial situation also correlates with a child's proficiency in English, with high levels of support positively impacting motivation and satisfaction. The literature demonstrates that educational wealth positively impacts students' achievement,

and there is a strong correlation between parents' educational level and their children's performance in learning the English language. Parents' occupation also has a significant impact on students' performance in the English language, regardless of their educational level and financial standing.

## III. METHODOLOGY

For the quantitative part of the study, a questionnaire consisting of fifteen multiple-choice questions was used to gather data from students and teachers of English. The questionnaire aimed to elicit their perceptions of social factors influencing English learning proficiency. A total of 80 students from the "SelamiHallaqi" school participated in the study, all in grades 7-9, representing both genders. Additionally, three male educators from the same school participated as co-workers.

## IV. FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we will examine the data gathered from our research, providing a comprehensive analysis and discussion. We employed various methods, including descriptive statistics, analytical tools, and discussion of results presented in charts and graphs, aiming to present a clear and detailed picture of the collected data and highlight trends, patterns, or insights. Through careful examination and interpretation, we aim to gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter and draw meaningful conclusions for future research and decision-making.

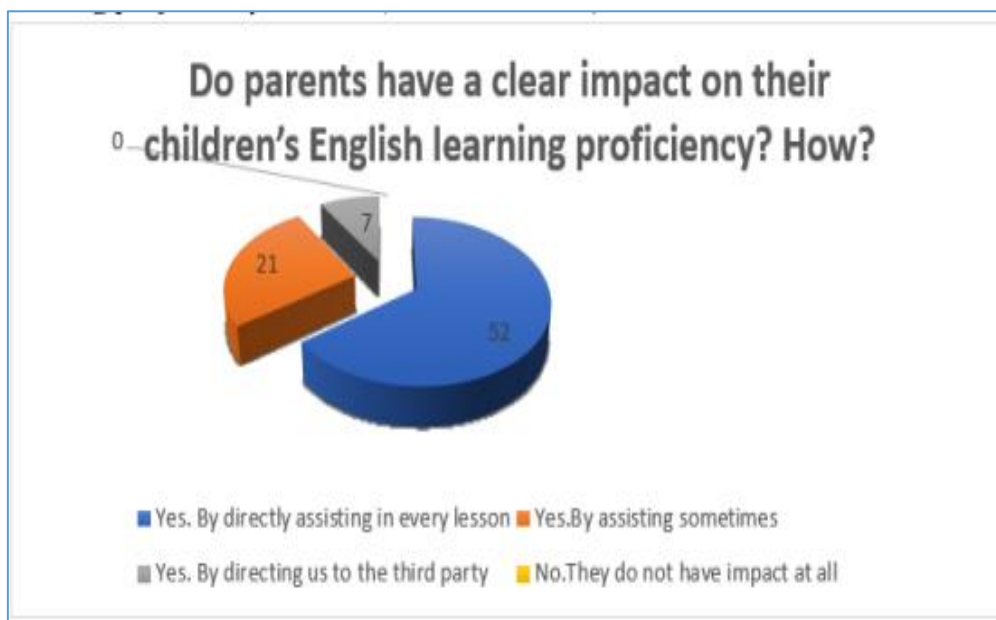


Fig. 1: Do parents have a clear impact on their children's English learning proficiency? How?(Students' views)

Based on the provided data, the majority of participants believe that parents play a significant role in their children's English language proficiency. Specifically, 52 respondents believe that parents are directly involved by providing assistance in every lesson, while 21 believe that parents offer help occasionally. Only 7 respondents think

that parents refer their children to a third party for assistance, and none believe that parents have no impact. These findings indicate that parental involvement is viewed as an important factor in children's English language learning, with direct assistance being the most common form.

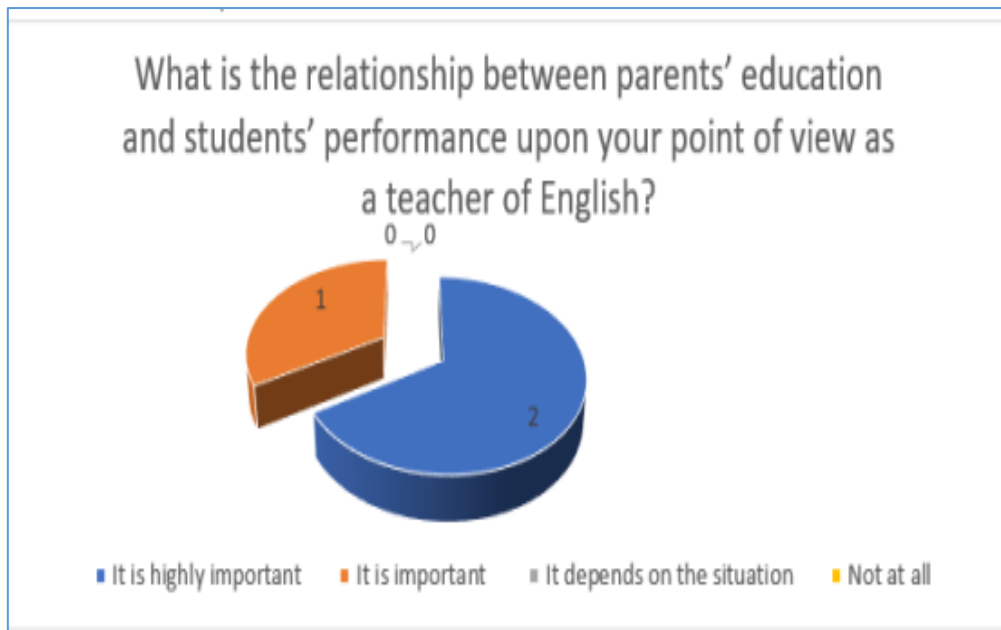


Fig. 2: What is the relationship between parents' education and students' performance upon your point of view as a teacher of English? (Teachers' views)

The data highlights English teachers' opinions about the potential impact of parents' education on their children's performance in English. Most teachers believe in a correlation between these factors, with varying degrees of importance. This variation in opinions could be attributed to

differences in experiences, backgrounds, or perceptions of parental involvement. Notably, none of the teachers felt that the relationship was not important or dependent on the situation, indicating a consensus on the importance of parental education.

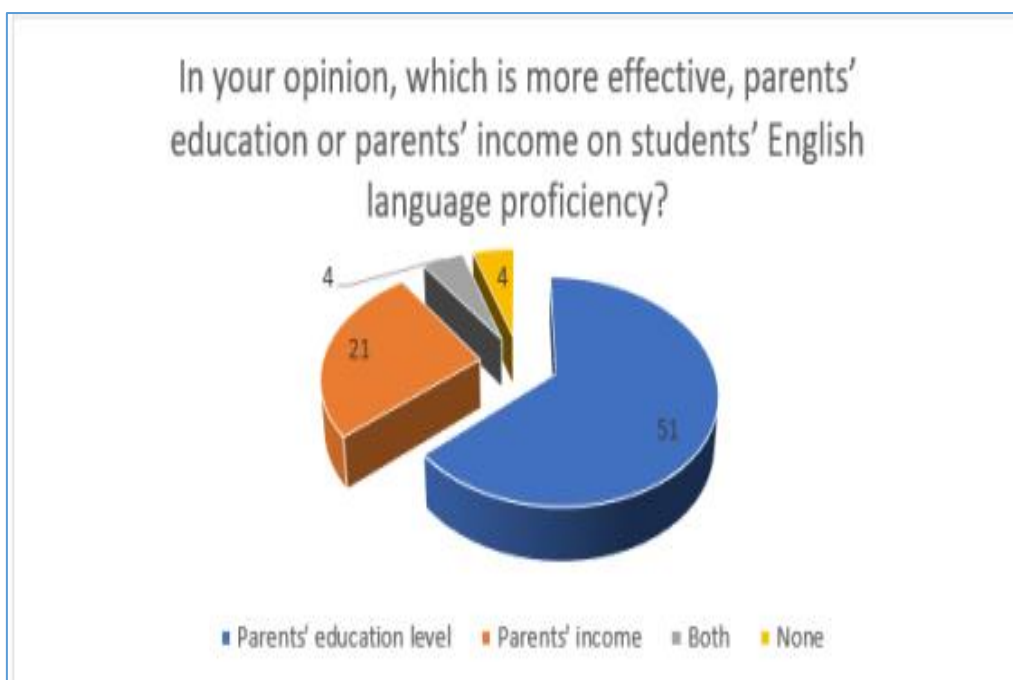


Fig. 3: In your opinion, which is more effective, parents' education or parents' income on students' English language proficiency? (Students' views)

The majority of participants believe that parents' education level has a greater impact on students' English language proficiency than parents' income. This indicates a perception that well-educated parents are better equipped to

support their children's learning and academic progress. The data, however, does not provide specific reasons for these beliefs, necessitating further research for a deeper understanding.

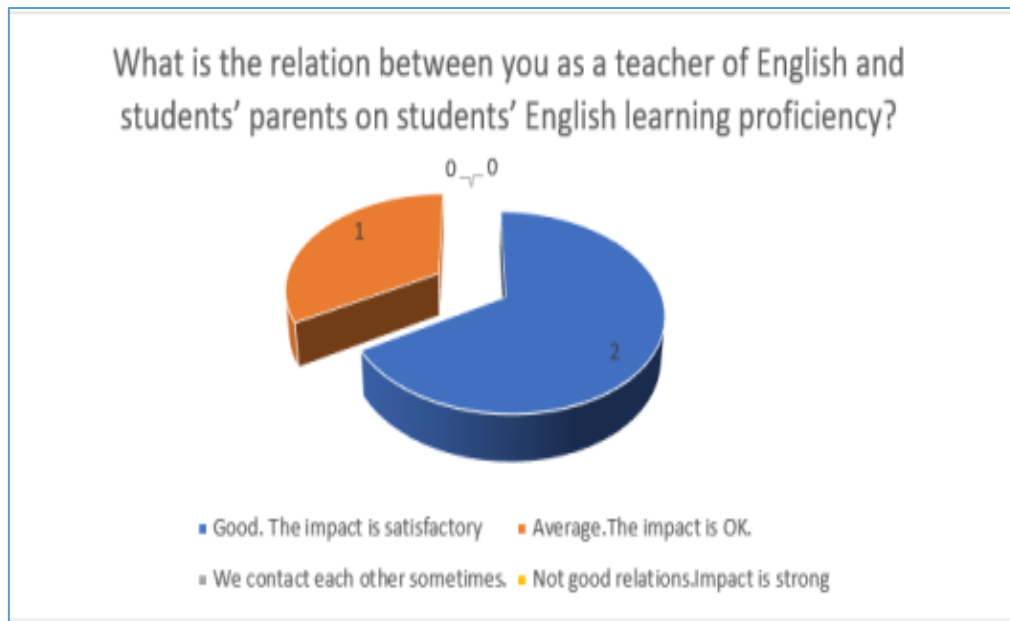


Fig. 4: What is the relation between you as a teacher of English and students' parents on students' English learning proficiency? (Teachers' views)

The data suggests that the relationship between English teachers and students' parents is generally positive. Two respondents reported a satisfactory impact, while one reported an average impact. Importantly, none reported a

strong impact due to poor relations with parents. A positive teacher-parent relationship is deemed crucial for students' motivation and success in learning English.

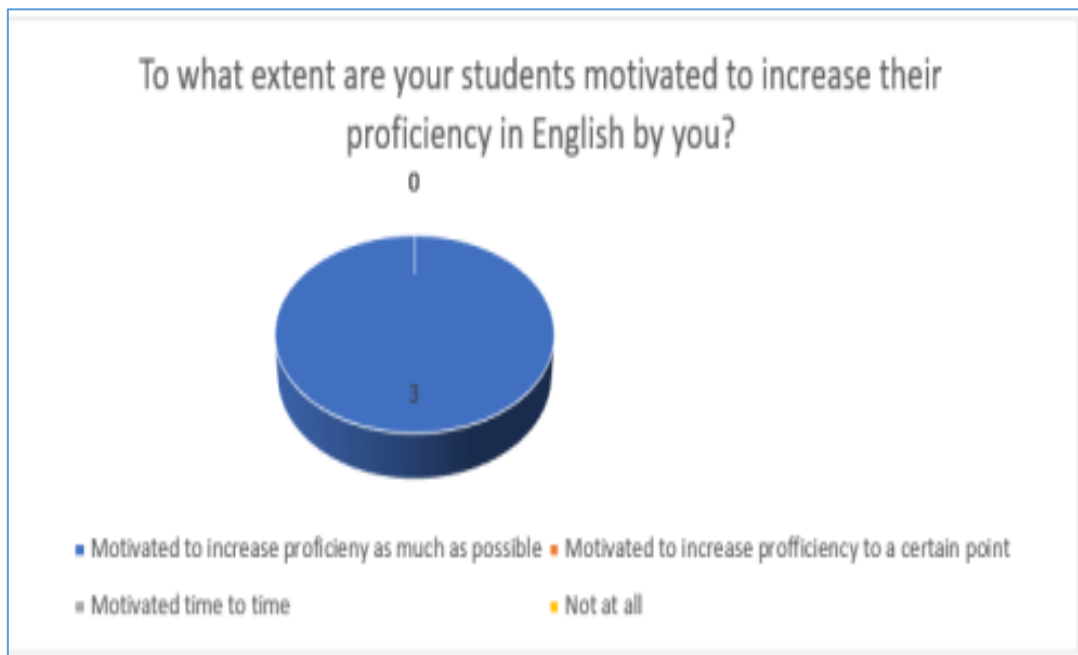


Fig. 5: To what extent are your students motivated to increase their proficiency in English by you? (Teachers' views)

The data indicates that the participants believe their students are highly motivated to increase their English proficiency regardless of teachers' efforts. All respondents reported that their students are motivated, with three

indicating the highest possible level. However, the data does not specify how teachers measure student motivation or the methods used, suggesting a need for further exploration.

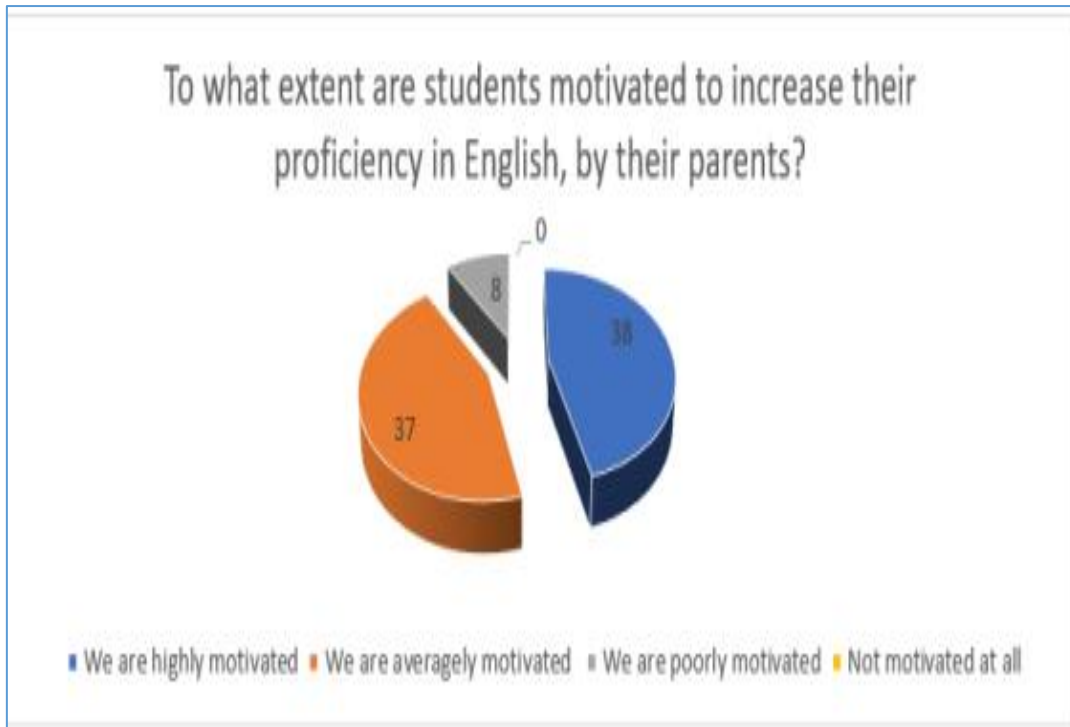


Fig. 6: To what extent are students motivated to increase their proficiency in English, by their parents? (Students’ views)

The majority of students (75%) report being motivated by their parents to increase proficiency in English. This underscores the significant role parental involvement and support play in student motivation and academic success.

However, the data does not detail the nature of this motivation or specific ways parents support their children's English learning, warranting further investigation.

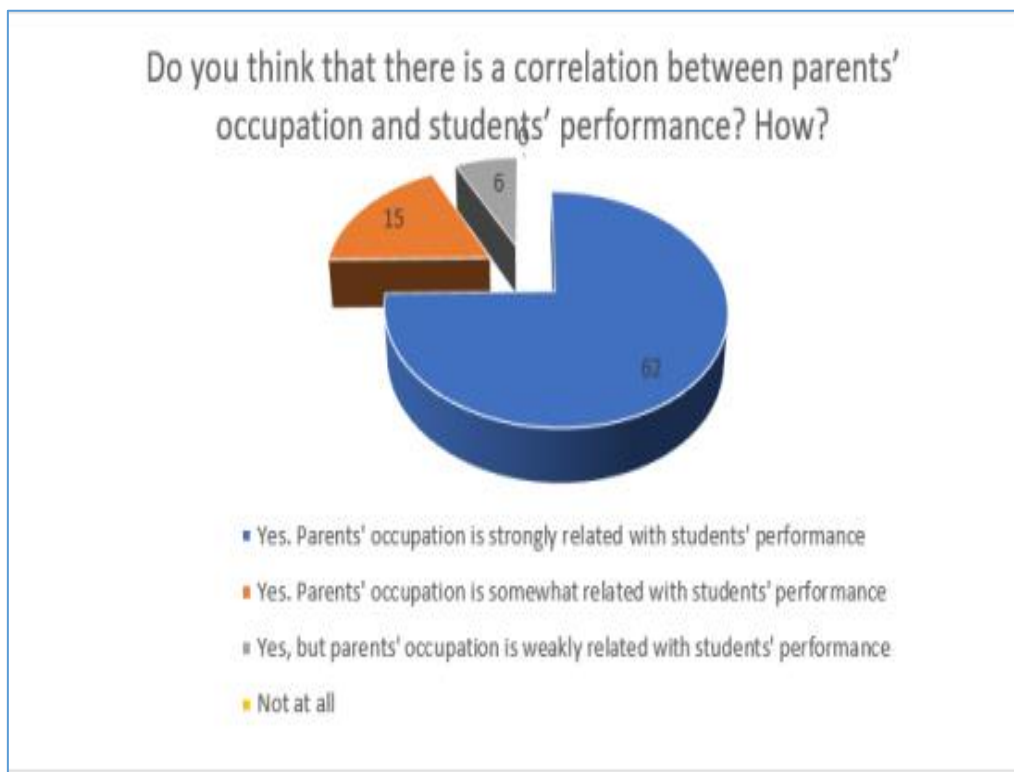


Fig. 7: Do you think that there is a correlation between parents’ occupation and students’ performance? How? (Students’ views)

A majority of participants (62 out of 80) believe in a strong correlation between parents’ occupation and students’ performance. This suggests a perceived link between a parent’s occupation and their child’s academic performance.

However, the data does not provide specific insights into the reasons for this correlation, necessitating further research to understand the relationship fully.



Fig. 8: Do you ever make visits outside of School, to various workplaces which are directly related to the topic you need to explain according to the plan in English Language teaching? If not, then why? (Students' views)

The data suggests that a majority of respondents (65 out of 80) rarely visit workplaces related to the topics taught in English language classes. This raises questions about the availability of resources or opportunities for such visits.

While not explicitly stated, the data implies a potential area for improvement in providing students with real-world applications of English language learning.

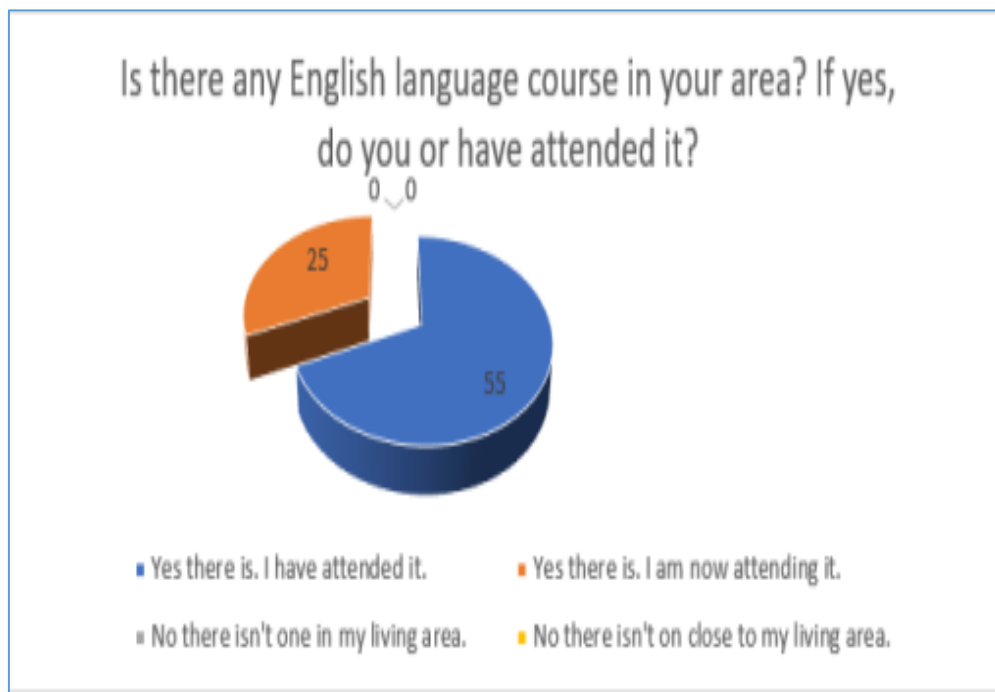


Fig. 9: Is there any English language course in your area? If yes, do you or have attended it? (Students' views)

The data indicates that English language courses are widely available in the respondents' area, with the majority having attended or currently attending such courses. This

reflects a significant demand for English language instruction in the region and suggests a positive attitude toward language learning opportunities.

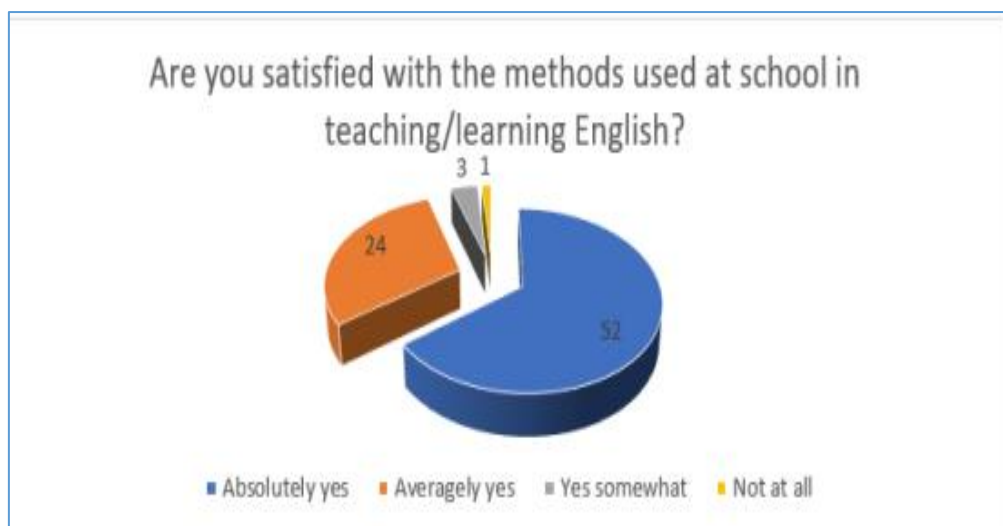


Fig. 10: Are you satisfied with the methods used at school in teaching/learning English? (Students' views)

Most students and teachers (52 out of 80) from the "SelamiHallaqi" school express satisfaction with the methods used for teaching and learning English. However, a portion of respondents gives an average rating, indicating room for improvement and adjustment to cater to diverse needs and preferences.

## V. CONCLUSION

The objective of this research was to assess the impact of social factors on students' English language proficiency in EFL classrooms in Gjilan, Republic of Kosovo. The study aimed to identify various social factors such as parents' education, financial status, occupation, municipal directorate of education approach, teacher approach, etc., to determine their significance in affecting students' English language proficiency at the elementary level. Additionally, the research sought to highlight the role of social factors affecting English language learning proficiency, including parents' social status (education, place of residence, employment) and school location. The study involved 80 students and three teachers in Gjilan, utilizing questionnaires as primary sources to address research questions.

Considering the research's aim, the questionnaires contained 10 mixed questions for both teachers and students, exploring aspects related to their school, family, and environment. The focus was on social and economic factors as the target of the study research. Factors influencing English language proficiency from the two main sources were analyzed comprehensively, incorporating primary sources from various authors for comparison and analysis.

Results indicate that in Gjilan, there are essential factors, particularly in the socio-economic realm, that require prompt improvement to minimize the negative impact of social factors on English language learning. Nigël's emphasis on correlating economic and social concepts with English language learners' performance is validated, stressing the significance of economic aspects in various life aspects, including learner performance in Gjilan.

Socio-economic factors are closely linked to language development, with studies suggesting that students from upper social classes typically possess more background knowledge and experience. The study reveals that students' and teachers' performance is influenced by school methods, resources, and attendance in English language courses, all of which tie back to economic factors. The research aims to define the relationship between economic and social factors and students' English language performance in Gjilan and the broader national context.

The analysis, conducted across different contexts, consistently concludes that various social factors significantly impact students' English language proficiency levels. Importantly, learners from families with better socio-economic and cultural situations are more likely to achieve higher success in English. However, the study underscores the need to examine how parents, as primary educators, can guide the development of foreign language skills through integrated literacy techniques at home and school.

This study unequivocally establishes the strong impact of social factors on students' English language proficiency. Recognizing the vital role of the teacher-student-parent collaboration triangle, there is a call to set and enhance this collaboration at the desired level. The findings are expected to serve as a foundation for future researchers to conduct further investigations and devise solutions based on the discerned results.

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