

# Factors Contributing to Poor Academic Performance among Undergraduates at Gollis University

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**Abstract:-** This study investigates the causes of poor academic performance among undergraduate students at Gollis University, Hargeisa, Somaliland. Utilizing a cross-sectional design, a quantitative survey was conducted with 93 respondents from a target population of 310 freshmen students. The research identifies multiple contributing factors categorized into student-related, teacher-related, and family-related factors. Key findings indicate that lack of home study, high absenteeism, peer influence, and negative student attitudes are significant student-related factors. Teacher-related factors include inadequate teaching skills, lack of subject knowledge, and poor teaching methodologies. Additionally, family-related factors such as parents' educational levels, financial problems, and lack of parental involvement significantly affect students' academic performance. The study underscores the need for comprehensive interventions addressing these multifaceted issues to enhance academic performance.

**Keywords:-** Poor Academic Performance; Undergraduate Student; Gollis University; Hargeisa; Somaliland.

## I. INTRODUCTION

According to Morakinyo (2003), the teacher's failure to adopt a verbal reinforcement method is to blame for the decline in academic achievement. Others discovered that certain instructors' attitudes towards their jobs are reflected in their poor attendance at lessons, tardiness to school, unsavoury comments about student performance that may harm their ego, bad teaching methods, and the like, all of which have an impact on students' academic achievement [1].

Academic achievement is an important predictor of a student's success in their school path and future professional goals. However, low academic performance among undergraduate students remains a major concern in higher education institutions around the world. Understanding the root causes of this issue at Gollis University in Hargeisa, Somaliland, is critical for developing effective treatments and boosting student achievement.

It is determined that low academic achievement is a severe issue that requires attention. Knowing what caused it is essential to coming up with the best solution (You are Mom,

2021). Poor academic performance may have internal or external factors. According to Alami's (2016) study, "Causes of Poor Academic Performance Among Students," factors relating to the students themselves have the greatest influence on their performance. Concerns around how teenagers utilise it are also becoming more prevalent.

Studies have also found associations between academic performance and adolescent psychosocial well-being (Archer & Garcia, 2014; Gilman & Huebner, 2006) (consisting of life satisfaction, experiencing happiness, achieving self-determination, and the presence of positive social and societal relations) as an aspect of mental health.

However, psychosocial well-being and particular symptoms of dysfunction such as depression and anxiety have traditionally not been evaluated simultaneously, despite the dual-continua paradigm, which proposes that mental illness/dysfunction and mental well-being are different but connected elements of overall mental health [2].

Understanding educational goals and students' needs is essential for a successful educational system. Surfing the Internet and Googling, we come across a large number of articles and studies undertaken to determine the elements that influence students' academic performance in various circumstances and nations (Cascio 2015; Rahamneh, 2012). The findings provide some key elements, among which are: bad teaching methods, unsuitable evaluation instruments, stress, and emotional aspects such as feelings towards the teacher, subject, and learning environment, and the gap between teaching materials and the student's needs [4].

The British (1898-1969) and socialist countries' educational ideals (1970-1990) encouraged the development of Western education in Somaliland during colonial times. Furthermore, the impact of Western educational ideologies remained in the post-conflict reform eras (after 1990) through foreign NGOs and UN organisations with the purpose of rehabilitating and developing Somaliland's education [9].

Ahmed and Bradford (2011) categorised Somaliland's colonial education history into three periods: colonial rule (1937-1960), post-colonial education (1960-1990), and post-conflict transformation (1990-present). (brew et al., 2021).

Recently, internet systems in education have increased, and student digital data has reached large data sizes.

This makes it possible to draw rules and predictions about the students by processing educational data with data mining techniques. All kinds of information about the student's ethnicity, parental level of education, lunch, test preparation course, math score, [3].

Understanding the elements that contribute to students' academic accomplishment has long been a priority for educators, colleges, and politicians in higher education. Individual students' academic achievement has significant and far-reaching implications in terms of personal, educational, and professional development. It improves students' self-esteem, well-being, motivation, and learning perseverance and has an impact on their profession choice, personal income, level of achievement, and community participation (Durden and Ellis, 1995; Gainen, 1995; Hassel and Ridout, 2018) [6].

Poor academic performance or failure is frequently connected with attrition, decreased graduate output, and increased educational costs (Jayanthi et al., 2014; Bolton, 2019). Students' progress and success are critical components of institutional strategic directions and programs (Meer et al., 2018). In today's atmosphere of greater accountability, student performance demonstrates institutional effectiveness in producing competent, talented, and employable graduates (Osaikhiwu, 2014). More crucially, this helps to provide the skilled labour needed for a country's prosperity and international development, which is the aim of the higher education sector. These are convincing arguments for discussing the question of how students learn and succeed academically at university [5].

These technologies are drawing college and university students, as well as faculty members, to find ways to share and communicate with one another for learning reasons while remaining motivated to engage in productive tasks (Hughes 2009). Social media is used by university professors, students, and administrators to facilitate learning and education services (Junco et al., 2010). According to scholarly study, "social networking sites are web-based that allow individuals to generate a public, personal, or semi-public profile within defined limits, or a fluent list of users with whom they want to share their materials [8].

## II. MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study was conducted at Gollis University and used a quantitative method survey-questionnaire-the study population was basically composed of students and a questionnaire was constructed with a target population of 93 respondents-based approach to examine the factors of poor academic performance among undergraduate students at Gollis University to test the hypothesis that various socio-economic, personal, and institutional factors significantly affect academic performance:

### ➤ Research Design

A cross-sectional study was conducted at those areas mentioned above from March to July 2024 to assess the causes of poor academic performance among undergraduate Students at Gollis University first-year students.

### ➤ Study Population

The population of this study consisted of freshmen students.

### ➤ Sample Size

Despite the enormous number of freshmen students, students come to study during a variety of shifts, including morning, afternoon, and evening hours. The sample for this study consists of a subset of individuals or entities chosen from the target population to participate in data collecting and analysis. So, we chose 305 students as the study's target population and divided them into shift weights: 55 in the morning, 150 in the afternoon, and 100 in the evening. The Thumb's Rule was applied in this study, which suggests that if your target population is between 0 and 1000, your sample size should be 30% of that population.

$N = \text{target population}$

$n = \text{sample size}$

$n = N * 0.3$

$305 * 0.3 = 93$

$n = 91$

## III. RESULT

The study's results center on the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the collected data, which includes responses from questionnaires filled out by sampled students. The findings are displayed in tables, and detailed interpretations are given for each research objective, utilizing quantitative methods. The study's results are categorized into three groups, each representing a factor contributing to poor academic performance: student-related factors and teacher-related factors.

Table 1 Factors Related to the Students

Question	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Student failure due to not studying at home	Strongly Agree	27	29.7
	Agree	45	49.4
	Disagree	17	18.7
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.2
Finding subjects difficult/boring affects performance	Strongly Agree	31	34.1
	Agree	58	63.7
	Disagree	2	2.2
	Strongly Disagree	0	0
Absenteeism affects performance	Strongly Agree	33	36.3
	Agree	39	42.9
	Disagree	15	16.5
	Strongly Disagree	4	4.3
Feeling uncomfortable in mixed classes affects performance	Yes	58	63.7
	No	33	36.3
Playing games affects performance of the student	Strongly Agree	32	35.2
	Agree	25	27.5
	Disagree	23	25.2
	Strongly Disagree	11	12.1
Students' negative attitude affects performance	Yes	53	58.2
	No	38	41.8
Peer influence affects performance	Yes	67	73.6
	No	24	26.4
Understanding English Affects Performance	Strongly Agree	48	52.7
	Agree	31	34.1
	Disagree	6	6.6
	Strongly Disagree	6	6.6

➤ *Failure Due to Not Studying at Home:*

49.4% of students agree, and 29.7% strongly agree that not studying at home leads to academic failure. This indicates that a significant majority (79.1%) believe that insufficient study habits outside of school contribute to poor academic performance.

➤ *Difficulty/Boring with Subjects:*

A combined 97.8% (34.1% strongly agree, 63.7% agree) believe that finding subjects difficult or boring affects their academic performance. This suggests that student engagement is critical and that disinterest or challenges in understanding can severely hinder performance.

➤ *Absenteeism:*

36.3% of students strongly agree, and 42.9% agree that absenteeism negatively impacts academic performance, with a total of 79.2% acknowledging this issue.

➤ *Feeling Uncomfortable in Mixed Classes:*

63.7% of students feel uncomfortable in mixed-gender classes, which they believe affects their performance. This

highlights a potential issue with classroom dynamics that could be impacting student focus and participation.

➤ *Impact of Playing Games:*

35.2% strongly agree, and 27.5% agree that playing games affects their academic performance, with 62.7% acknowledging the negative impact of gaming.

➤ *Negative Attitude:*

58.2% of students believe that a negative attitude affects their academic performance, suggesting that mindset and motivation are important factors in student success.

➤ *Peer Influence:*

73.6% of students agree that peer influence affects their performance, indicating the significant role of social dynamics in academic outcomes.

➤ *Sleepiness/Lack of Focus:*

81.3% of students recognize that sleepiness or lack of focus affects their performance, underlining the importance of rest and concentration in academic achievement.

Table 2 Teacher Related Factors

Question	Response Option	Frequency	Percentage
Poor teacher status affects motivation	Yes	65	71.4
	No	26	28.6
Teachers not dedicated to subjects	Strongly Agree	15	16.5
	Agree	31	34.1
	Disagree	38	41.8
	Strongly Disagree	7	7.7
Inadequate teaching skills affect performance	Strongly Agree	43	47.3
	Agree	39	42.8
	Disagree	8	8.8
	Strongly Disagree	1	1.1
Teachers not innovative in methodology	Strongly Agree	12	13.2
	Agree	48	52.7
	Disagree	26	28.6
	Strongly Disagree	5	5.5
Teachers lack adequate subject knowledge	Yes	40	44.0
	No	51	56.0
Teacher's behavior affects performance	Strongly Agree	45	49.5
	Agree	25	27.5
	Disagree	19	20.9
	Strongly Disagree	2	2.2

➤ *Poor Teacher Status:*

71.4% of students believe that poor teacher status affects their motivation, indicating that the perceived value and treatment of teachers can influence student engagement and effort.

➤ *Dedication to Subjects:*

16.5% strongly agree, and 34.1% agree that teachers not being dedicated to their subjects affects student performance, with 50.6% expressing concern over teacher dedication.

➤ *Inadequate Teaching Skills:*

47.3% strongly agree, and 42.8% agree that inadequate teaching skills negatively impact academic performance, with a total of 90.1% seeing this as a significant issue.

➤ *Lack of Innovation in Teaching:*

13.2% strongly agree, and 52.7% agree that a lack of innovative teaching methods affects their learning, indicating a need for more engaging and effective teaching strategies.

➤ *Adequate Subject Knowledge:*

44.0% believe that teachers lack adequate subject knowledge, while 56.0% disagree, suggesting that while some students are satisfied, others see room for improvement in teacher expertise.

➤ *Teacher Behavior:*

49.5% strongly agree, and 27.5% agree that teacher behavior affects their academic performance, indicating that teacher-student interactions are crucial to academic success.

Table 3 Parents Related Factors

Question	Response Option	Frequency	Percentage
Parents' education affects performance	Yes	49	53.8
	No	42	46.2
Family financial problems affect performance	Strongly Agree	55	60.4
	Agree	26	28.6
	Disagree	4	4.4
	Strongly Disagree	6	6.6
Family issues affect performance	Strongly Agree	41	45.1
	Agree	23	25.3
	Disagree	13	14.3
	Strongly Disagree	14	15.3
Understanding English Affects Performance	Strongly Agree	48	52.7
	Agree	31	34.1
	Disagree	6	6.6
	Strongly Disagree	6	6.6

➤ *Parents' Education:*

53.8% believe that parents' education affects their academic performance, while 46.2% do not, indicating a near-even split on the perceived influence of parental education.

➤ *Family Financial Problems:*

60.4% strongly agree, and 28.6% agree that family financial problems affect their performance, suggesting that economic stability is a major factor in academic success.

➤ *Family Issues:*

45.1% strongly agree, and 25.3% agree that family issues affect their performance, indicating that personal and family-related stressors significantly impact academic outcomes.

➤ *Understanding English:*

52.7% strongly agree, and 34.1% agree that understanding English affects their performance, indicating that language proficiency is a critical factor in academic achievement.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

➤ *Student-Centric Factors:*

The results indicate that students' study habits, particularly their dedication to studying at home, are strongly correlated with their academic success. The high percentage of students who find subjects difficult or boring suggests that curriculum development should focus on making subjects more engaging and accessible to ensure better academic outcomes.

Absenteeism, as highlighted by a large portion of the students, is another critical factor that negatively affects performance. Schools may need to implement strategies to improve attendance and ensure that students are present and engaged in the learning process.

The discomfort in mixed-gender classes and the negative impact of gaming point to the need for creating more inclusive and balanced classroom environments, as well as promoting healthy extracurricular activities.

➤ *Teacher-Related Factors:*

Teacher motivation and behavior are seen as influential factors in student performance. The perception of poor teacher status affecting student motivation underscores the importance of teacher support, recognition, and professional development.

The concern over inadequate teaching skills and lack of innovation suggests that ongoing professional development for teachers is essential. Schools should focus on enhancing teaching methodologies to cater to diverse learning styles and needs.

Teacher-student relationships, as indicated by the impact of teacher behavior, are crucial. Positive interactions and a supportive classroom environment can significantly boost student performance.

➤ *Parental and Environmental Factors:*

The mixed perceptions of parents' education highlight that while it can be influential, other factors such as family financial stability and issues within the family are more consistently seen as impacting student performance.

Financial difficulties and family issues are significant stressors that can detract from a student's ability to focus and succeed academically. Schools might consider providing additional support to students facing these challenges.

The significant influence of understanding English on academic performance underscores the need for language support programs to help students who struggle with English proficiency.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The research identifies a range of factors contributing to poor academic performance among undergraduate students at Gollis University. The analysis reveals a complex interplay of factors influencing students' academic performance, involving the students themselves, their teachers, and their home environments. Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach that includes improving study habits, enhancing teacher effectiveness, supporting students with language barriers, and addressing personal and family-related challenges. By tackling these factors, schools can create a more conducive environment for academic success.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Enhance Home Study Habits:** Encouraging students to develop consistent and effective home study routines to improve academic performance.
- **Reduce Absenteeism:** Implementing policies and programs to reduce absenteeism among students, ensuring they attend classes regularly.
- **Mitigate Peer Influence:** Addressing the impact of negative peer influence by fostering a positive and supportive academic environment.
- **Improve Student Attitudes:** Promoting positive attitudes towards learning through motivational programs and student engagement activities.
- **Enhance Teaching Skills:** Providing professional development for teachers to improve their teaching skills and methodologies.
- **Increase Parental Involvement:** Encouraging greater parental involvement in students' academic lives, which has a significant positive impact on performance.
- **Address Financial Problems:** Providing financial support and resources to students facing financial difficulties to reduce the stress and distractions associated with financial problems.

- Focus on Teacher Competency: Ensuring that teachers have adequate subject knowledge and teaching skills to effectively deliver the curriculum.

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