



RESEARCH PAPER

The Effects of Household's Income and Parental Educational on Children's School Enrollment in Easter Region of Afghanistan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines that how household income and parents' education effects the children's school enrolment in the Eastern Region of Afghanistan. A quantitative research approach was employed with the use of primary data that were gathered from 265 school-age children's households using a structured questionnaire. Multiple regression analysis was used to explore the association between the socioeconomic factors of the household and child's school enrolment. The descriptive statistics showed that the school enrolment rate, household income, and parental education standard were relatively high among the sampled households. Children's school enrolment showed strong and statistically significant positive relationship with household income ($r = 0.785$, $p < 0.01$) while parents education showed strong and statistically significant positive relationship with school enrolment ($r = 0.752$, $p < 0.01$) and household income ($r = 0.741$, $p < 0.01$). The regression model had a high explanatory power ($R = 0.825$ and $R^2 = 0.680$), meaning that the model is able to explain 68.0% of the variation in children's school enrolment based on household income and parents' education. The overall model was significant as indicated by the ANOVA results ($F = 278.994$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, the regression coefficients showed that household income and parents' education have positive and significant impact on school enrolment. Household income emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.505$, $p < 0.001$), followed by parents' education ($\beta = 0.378$, $p < 0.05$). These results indicate that the economic capacity and education of the parents are important factors in explaining children's access to education. The study ends with the conclusion that policies regarding poverty reduction, educational support and adult education programs are crucial to enhance school enrolment and educational opportunities in Afghanistan in an equitable manner.

KEYWORDS Parental Education, Household Income, Children's School Enrollment

1. Introduction

It is a universal fact that education is a basic human right and an important force for economic growth, poverty alleviation and social progress. Primary and secondary school participation rates are important measures of educational access and human capital development. Many studies have found that parental education and family economic status are significant factors that affect educational outcomes of children, such as school enrolment, attendance and achievement (Becker, 1993; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2008; UNESCO, 2023). Educated parents are more likely to value the long-term importance of schooling, offer educational support at home, and encourage their child to go to school. Likewise, an increase in household income allows families to cover direct and indirect educational expenses including opportunity costs of child labor (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018), school supplies, transportation, and uniforms. Parental education and family income have therefore always been among the most significant factors influencing children's educational involvement in developing countries. Afghanistan has faced many difficulties in the education sector over the past few decades, which have been caused by conflict, political instability, poverty, displacement, and poor educational infrastructure. While significant strides were made after 2001, millions of Afghan children are still out-of-school, especially in disadvantaged and rural communities. UNICEF estimates that about 3.7 million children

are out of school in Afghanistan, with almost 60 percent of those being girls. Parents' illiteracy, cultural norms, geographical barriers, poverty and insecurity continue to limit school participation among children (UNICEF, 2025; UNICEF, 2018). Studies on the schooling system in Afghanistan have shown that the prevalence of education associated with the household level significantly influences children's decision to attend school or not, particularly through the medium of parental education and economic status. In Afghanistan, parental education, family background, and socioeconomic conditions have been identified as some of the strongest determinants of school attendance, and may thus be more important than supply-side educational factors, according to Guimbert et al. (2008).

The eastern region of Afghanistan, which includes Afghanistan's Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, and Nuristan provinces, is of particular interest in the context of parental education and family income and school enrolment. The area is plagued by a series of security problems, forced migration, trans-border migration and different levels of socio-economic development. Economic hardship remains a challenge for many households, and they are unable to invest in children's learning. In addition, parents' literacy levels are still relatively low in some of the rural communities, further limiting awareness of the benefits of schooling in the long-term. The previous international studies consistently found that children from educated and economically stable homes had higher chances of school enrollment and staying in school during their education (Filmer & Pritchett, 1999; Huisman & Smits, 2009; UNESCO, 2023). But there is a lack of empirical research specifically on Eastern Afghanistan, which means that there is a huge gap in knowledge regarding local factors affecting school enrolment in this area. Considering the strategic role of education in the socio-economic development of Afghanistan, it is important to understand how parental education and income of the household affect children's school enrolment for the purposes of designing evidence-based educational policies and interventions. These relationships in Eastern Afghanistan can offer us some clues about the challenges and opportunities for school access for school-age children. The results of this research will add to the existing body of knowledge by offering empirical evidence of the influence of family socioeconomic attributes on enrollment decisions in the region. Furthermore, the findings could be helpful for policy makers, educational planners, government authorities and international development organizations in designing specific policies to enhance school enrolment, minimize educational inequalities and advance inclusive educational development in Afghanistan. The objectives of the study is two folds: Firstly, to investigate the effects of parent's education on children school enrollment in eastern region of Afghanistan. Secondly, to examine the effects of household's income on children school enrollment in eastern region.

2. Literature Review

Parental education is among the most widely recognized determinants of children's educational participation and enrollment. Human Capital Theory suggests that educated parents possess greater knowledge, skills, and awareness regarding the long-term benefits of education, which positively influences their investment decisions concerning their children's schooling (Becker, 1993). Educated parents are more likely to value formal education, provide learning support at home, communicate effectively with teachers, and create an environment that encourages academic achievement. As a result, children from educated households generally exhibit higher enrollment rates, lower dropout rates, and better educational outcomes than children from less educated families (Holmlund et al., 2011). Empirical evidence from both developed and developing countries consistently demonstrates a strong positive relationship between parental educational attainment and children's school enrollment. A large-scale study conducted across 30 developing countries found that parental education significantly influences enrollment decisions, even after controlling for other household and community characteristics. Furthermore, the effect of parental education often interacts with contextual factors such as school accessibility, gender norms, and regional development levels (Huisman & Smits, 2009).

Numerous studies have highlighted the intergenerational transmission of educational attainment. Holmlund et al. (2011) reviewed extensive empirical evidence and concluded that children of educated parents are substantially more likely to complete higher levels of education than children of less educated parents. The authors argue that parental education influences children's educational trajectories through various mechanisms, including academic guidance, educational expectations, and socioeconomic advantages. Similarly, recent systematic reviews indicate that parents' educational levels significantly affect educational decision-making, school choice, and educational investments. Educated parents are generally more capable of navigating educational systems, understanding school requirements, and advocating for their children's educational opportunities (Bekele & Kenea, 2024).

In the context of developing countries, parental education assumes even greater importance because educational decisions are often made within constrained economic and social environments.

Studies have shown that parental literacy contributes to increased awareness regarding the economic and social returns to education, particularly for girls. Educated mothers, in particular, have been found to exert a substantial positive influence on children's enrollment and retention in school. Their educational attainment often enhances household decision-making, health awareness, and educational aspirations, thereby improving children's access to schooling (Filmer & Pritchett, 1999; Huisman & Smits, 2009). In addition, parental education affects attitudes toward gender equality and educational investments, which are particularly relevant in societies where cultural norms may restrict educational opportunities for certain groups.

Household income represents another critical factor affecting school enrollment decisions. According to Household Investment Theory, families allocate resources among competing needs, including food, healthcare, housing, and education. When household income is limited, families may prioritize immediate consumption needs over educational investments, reducing children's likelihood of enrollment or increasing the probability of school dropout (Becker, 1993). Higher household income enables families to cover both direct educational costs, such as tuition fees, uniforms, books, and transportation, and indirect costs associated with foregone child labor income. Consequently, children from wealthier households generally experience greater educational access and continuity than children from poorer households.

Empirical evidence strongly supports the positive relationship between household income and school enrollment. Grimm (2011) found that household income significantly influences school enrollment decisions in rural Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly among households facing liquidity constraints and limited access to credit markets. The study demonstrated that increases in household income substantially improve children's likelihood of attending school. Similarly, research conducted in Thailand revealed that household income is among the strongest predictors of school enrollment, particularly for female students. The study further concluded that differences in household income account for a significant portion of educational disparities between urban and rural populations (Kaewkiriya & Vacharakulksemsuk, 2013).

Several studies suggest that the influence of household income extends beyond financial affordability. Higher-income households often reside in communities with better educational infrastructure, greater school availability, and improved educational quality. Furthermore, economically secure families can invest in supplementary educational resources such as tutoring, technology, and extracurricular activities, thereby enhancing children's educational opportunities. A systematic review of parental educational investment decisions found that household income consistently emerges as a major determinant of educational participation across developing countries. Families with greater financial resources tend to demonstrate stronger commitments to long-term educational investments due to their capacity to absorb educational costs and uncertainty (Bekele & Kenea, 2024; Siti et al., 2022).

While parental education and household income independently affect school enrollment, their combined influence is often more significant than either factor alone. Educated parents typically possess higher earning potential, leading to improved household economic conditions that facilitate educational investments. Conversely, low-income households with educated parents may still prioritize schooling because they better understand its future returns. Research has shown that parental education can partially offset the adverse effects of poverty by increasing educational aspirations and encouraging resource allocation toward schooling. Likewise, adequate household income may mitigate some disadvantages associated with low parental educational attainment by enabling access to quality educational services and support mechanisms (Holmlund et al., 2011; Grimm, 2011).

The interaction between parental education and household income is particularly important in developing countries where educational access remains uneven. Studies indicate that children from households characterized by both low parental education and low income face the greatest risk of educational exclusion. Conversely, children from households with educated parents and stable incomes enjoy significantly higher enrollment probabilities and educational attainment levels. These findings suggest that policies designed to improve educational participation should simultaneously address both economic barriers and educational disadvantages among parents (Huisman & Smits, 2009; Bekele & Kenea, 2024).

In Afghanistan, educational participation is influenced by a combination of socioeconomic, cultural, and geographic factors. Among these determinants, parental education and household economic status have consistently emerged as significant predictors of school enrollment. Guimbert, Miwa, and Nguyen (2008) conducted one of the most comprehensive studies on school enrollment in

Afghanistan and found that demand-side factors, particularly parental education, household characteristics, and community-level socioeconomic conditions, play a more important role than educational supply factors alone. Their analysis demonstrated that children whose parents possess higher educational attainment are significantly more likely to enroll in school, irrespective of school availability. The study further emphasized that family background and socioeconomic characteristics substantially influence educational participation across Afghanistan's diverse regions.

The Afghan context presents unique challenges that intensify the effects of parental education and household income on enrollment decisions. Persistent poverty, rural isolation, conflict, displacement, and limited educational infrastructure increase the financial and social costs of schooling. Households with limited resources frequently depend on children's labor contributions, reducing enrollment rates. Simultaneously, parental illiteracy restricts awareness of educational benefits and diminishes parental involvement in children's learning. These challenges are particularly pronounced in rural provinces, where educational opportunities remain constrained. Consequently, understanding the relationship between parental education, household income, and school enrollment is essential for designing effective educational interventions and policies aimed at improving educational access and reducing inequalities in Afghanistan.

3. Material and Methods

The quantitative research method was used in this research to address the impact of parents' education and family income on children's enrollment in school in the Eastern Region of Afghanistan. The quantitative method was deemed suitable as it allows for gathering and analysing numerical data to establish relationships between variables and make objective inferences. Primary data was collected from the households using a structured questionnaire, which was used to obtain information on the education level of the parents, income level of the household and enrollment status of the children in the schools. Households with school-age children were selected as the target population and adequate sampling of the study area was achieved by using an appropriate sampling technique. Collected data was coded, entered and analyzed using statistical software to ensure the data is analyzed accurately and reliable. The main econometric technique used to investigate the relationship between independent variables and dependent variable was the multiple regression analysis technique. School enrollment was the dependent variable in this study and parents' education and family income were used as the primary independent variables. Multiple regression analysis was chosen because it can be used to simultaneously analyse the effects of several explanatory variables on the same outcome variable and to control the effects of other variables. The regression model was designed to predict the strength and direction of the association between parents' education and parents' income as well as children's enrollment in school. The coefficient estimates, t-statistics, p-values, and coefficient of determination (R^2) were used to determine the statistical significance and model explanatory power from the results of the regression analysis. Following model is estimated to examine the effects of parent's education and household income on children school enrollment.

$$CSE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 HI + \beta_2 PE + \varepsilon$$

Where, CSE stand for Children's School Enrollment, HI stand for Household Income, and PE stand for Parent's Education, β_0 stand for Constant term, β_1 , β_2 stand for coefficient of the explanatory variables, and ε depicts for Error term.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Children's School Enrolment	265	3.50	5.00	4.9160	.20477
Household Income	265	3.75	5.00	4.9038	.21472
Parent's Education	265	3.00	5.00	4.9214	.29419

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for the major variables used in this study. The results show that the mean scores of all the variables are relatively high, which is the indication of good condition among the surveyed households. The mean value of children's school enrollment was 4.9160 with a standard deviation of 0.20477, which showed high level of school attendance of most respondents with responses clustered around the mean. Likewise, the mean score for household income was 4.9038 and the standard deviation 0.21472, indicating that household income level was relatively high and limited in variation among the respondents. The means and standard deviations of parent's education revealed that the mean was the highest at 4.9214 while the SD was the lowest at 0.29419, indicating that parents in the study sample generally had relatively high educational enrollment although there was slightly more variability in this variable than the other. Moreover, the minimum and maximum values showed that the responses of all the variables were in the moderate to very high range which indicates that the educational and socioeconomic profile of the households surveyed was fairly positive. The standard deviations for all variables were relatively small, indicating consistency in the answers given by the respondents and that the data were clustered around the mean values, thus increasing the reliability of the statistical analysis that follows.

4.2 Correlation Matrix

Table 2

Correlation Matrix

Variables		Children's School Enrolment	Household Income	Parent Education
Children's School Enrolment	Pearson Correlation	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	265		
Household Income	Pearson Correlation	.785**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		
	N	265	265	
Parent Education	Pearson Correlation	.752**	.741**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	265	265	265

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The Pearson correlation coefficients between the school enrolment, the household income, and parents' education among 265 respondents are given in Table 2. The results showed that there is a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between the household income and children's school enrolment ($r = 0.785$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that the higher the income level, the higher the level of children's school enrolment. Likewise, there is a significant positive correlation between parent education and child school enrollment ($r = 0.752$, $p < 0.01$) and this suggests that children of parents with higher educational enrollment are more likely to be attending school. Also, household income and the education level of parents are highly positively correlated ($r = 0.741$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that a higher level of education is associated with higher household income. The results show that all correlation coefficients are positive and significant at 1% level indicating that household income and parent's education are important factors associated with school enrolment of children. All the correlation coefficients are less than the widely accepted level for severe multicollinearity (0.80–0.90) which signifies that the variables are related but not highly related to each other to pursue any further regression analysis.

4.3 Regression Result

Table 3
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.825 ^a	.680	.678	.11619

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parent's Education, Household Income

The model summary for the multiple regression model, which looks at the effects of household income and parents' education on school enrolment, is shown in Table 3. The results reveal that the multiple correlation coefficient (R) is 0.825, which means that there is a strong positive correlation between the independent variables (household income and parents' education) and the dependent variables (school enrolment of children). The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.680, indicating that the variation in children's school enrolment is explained by household income and parents' education together are 68.0%. The Adjusted R^2 value of 0.678 also reinforces the strength of the model; it shows that after accounting for the number of predictors, the model accounts for about 67.8% of the variance in the enrolment of children in school. The slight difference between R^2 and Adjusted R^2 indicates that the predictors do not cause overfitting and are contributing to the model. Further, the standard error of the estimate is 0.11619, which suggests a relatively small amount of error in the estimation process, and that the regression model fits the data well. Overall, the results indicate that family income and education of parents are good predictors of children's school enrollment and together account for a significant share of the variation in enrollment results.

Table 4
Analysis of Variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7.532	2	3.766	278.994	.000b
Residual	3.537	262	.013		
Total	11.069	264			

a. Dependent Variable: Children's School Enrolment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Household's Income, Parent's Education

The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results for the regression model predicting the school enrolment of children on the basis of parents' education and household income are shown in Table 4. The results show that the regression model is statistically significant, with an F-value of 278.994 and a significance level of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$). This suggests that parents' education and household income are a strong determinant of differences in children's school enrolment. The regression sum of squares (7.532) is significantly larger than the residual sum of squares (3.537), indicating that a larger percentage of the variance in the dependent variable is accounted for by the model than is not accounted for. The mean square of regression (3.766) is also much larger than the mean square of residual (0.013), which further substantiates the high explanatory power of the model. The significance value is far below 0.01, which means that the null hypothesis, that is, the model does not account for the data, is rejected. This implies that the combination of two variables, household income and parents' education, has a statistically significant impact on the school enrolment of children. The ANOVA results suggest that the regression model is very good and the predictors are significant in explaining the differences in enrolment levels in school.

Table 5

Regression Result					
Model	Standardized		Coefficients	t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients	B			
(Constant)	1.260	.163		7.709	.000
Household's Income	.481	.050	.505	9.711	.000
Parent's Education	.263	.036	.378	7.279	.018

a. Dependent Variable: Children's School Enrolment

The effect of household income and parent education on the school enrolment of children is presented in multiple regression analysis in Table 5. Both unstandardized (B) and standardized (Beta) coefficients, t-values and significance levels are included in the model. The constant term is 1.260 ($p < 0.001$), which represents the expected value of children's school enrolment if the income of the household and the parents were both equal to zero, but is not readily interpretable in real-life terms. There is a positive and statistically significant relationship between household income and children's school enrolment ($B = 0.481$, $Beta = 0.505$, $t = 9.711$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that, for every increase in household income by one unit, children's school enrolment rises by 0.481 units, while parents' education remains unchanged. Household income has a higher standardized coefficient ($Beta = 0.505$) than parents' education, indicating that it is the better predictor. Parents' education also positively and significantly effects children's school enrolment ($B = 0.263$, $Beta = 0.378$). This suggests that for every level up in parents' education, children's school enrolment goes up by 0.263 level, keeping constant household income.

5. Discussion

The results of this study suggest that children's school enrollment is positively correlated and statistically significant with household income. This finding is in line with the human capital theory that suggests that households invest in education if they have adequate financial resources (Becker, 1964). For children in low- and middle-income settings, direct and indirect expenses of schooling (e.g., school fees, transport, opportunity costs of child labor) can be significant obstacles to enrolment. This means that higher income households are better able to compensate for these limitations and thus participate more in school. There is also similar evidence in global studies that poverty continues to be one of the most significant factors influencing school non-enrolment (UNESCO, 2020; World Bank, 2018). The regression results also show that the level of education of parents is a significant determinant of children's enrolment in school. Well-educated parents have a better understanding of the benefits of schooling and are more likely to value schooling for their children. This is consistent with the intergenerational human capital transmission theory which suggests that the education of parents influences children's education through economic and non-economic channels (Oreopoulos et al., 2006). Better-educated parents are also better able to help children with school assignments and to move through the education system, which helps to ensure that children stay in school and drop out rates are lower. Empirical research in developing countries has consistently revealed positive relationships between maternal and paternal education and children's schooling outcomes (Davis-Kean, 2005; Glewwe & Kremer, 2006). Moreover, the amount of variance explained by the two variables of household income and parental education ($R^2 = 0.680$) suggests that these two socioeconomic factors are the most important factors in explaining school enrolment among children. This finding indicates that much of educational inequality is due to socioeconomic inequality within the home. It also confirms the overall development economics theory that educational outcomes are significantly influenced by the other factors of the household, not just individual ability (Todaro & Smith, 2020). The large F-statistic also indicates that the model is very robust, which further highlights the role of socioeconomic factors as determinants of access to education. Overall, the findings point to the need for income-based policies as well as parental awareness policies. Financial support measures like school subsidies, conditional cash transfers and scholarships can mitigate economic barriers to school enrolment and adult education and awareness building initiatives can increase parental awareness of the importance of education. Results in several countries demonstrate that reinforcing financial

support with awareness-raising efforts results in increased enrolment and retention rates (Fiszbein & Schady, 2009; World Bank, 2018). Thus, the solutions to increasing school enrolment of children should be based on comprehensive policies to tackle economic and educational disadvantages at the household level.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study clearly indicate that parents' income and education are important variables in explaining children's school enrolment. The regression analysis reveals that the household income is the most significant predictor, suggesting that economic ability is a key determinant of family access to and maintenance of children's education. This discovery validates the notion that financial limitations continue to be a key obstacle to schooling, especially among households with limited financial resources to cover the direct and indirect costs of education. Furthermore, the education of parents also has a significant positive association, which implies that more educated parents are more inclined towards giving importance and supporting their children's education and hence increase enrolment rates. Overall, the model accounts for a significant amount of variation in children's school enrolment, which provides further evidence of the very positive interaction between the socioeconomic factors and educational outcomes. The findings point to the need to tackle constraints to access to education, both financial and parental awareness, at the same time. It is therefore important to have policies that are directed at poverty reduction and improving adult education to improve enrolment and ensure equity of access to education.

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