The Impact of Language Proficiency and Other Factors on Students' Academic Performance: In Case of the Accounting Study of NUM

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Abstract

Students' academic performance is widely recognized as a critical indicator of the effectiveness of educational institutions. Prior empirical studies consistently highlight the role of English language proficiency as a significant determinant of academic achievement. At the same time, researchers have emphasized that academic performance is a multidimensional construct, influenced by a range of cognitive, social, and institutional factors, including student motivation, teacher competence, school governance, curriculum design, and individual attitudes.

This study investigates the combined effects of English language proficiency and other contextual variables on the academic performance of undergraduate accounting students at the National University of Mongolia (NUM). Primary data were obtained from accounting majors and subsequently analyzed by the researchers using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

The study specifically examined the influence of English language proficiency, family support, career orientation, institutional environment (infrastructure and faculty), peer influence, and student attitudes. The average age of respondents was 20.5 years, with 81% of participants aged between 18–21 years and 19% aged between 22–25 years. Male students accounted for 75% of the sample, while 25% were female. Approximately 70% of respondents reported a parental monthly income of up to 3 million tugriks. In terms of family size, 55.6% of students came from households with 3–5 members, while 30.6% reported more than six members. With regard to academic achievement, 88.5% of students demonstrated average to good performance, 8.6% exhibited high performance, and 2.9% performed poorly.

Regression analysis was employed to determine the relative impact of the independent variables on students' academic success. The model yielded an R^2 value of 0.199, indicating that approximately 20% of the variance in academic performance could be explained by the selected predictors. The findings revealed that English language proficiency accounted for the largest share of positive variation (45.6%) in student performance. Student attitude contributed 5.1%, career orientation 5.8%, peer influence 5.7%, and the institutional environment (infrastructure and teaching quality) 1.7% positive variation. Family support, however, showed a negative effect (−8.3%), although its level of statistical significance was relatively low.

Overall, the results underscore that English language proficiency is the most influential factor, explaining 45.6% of the variation in the academic performance of accounting students at NUM.

Keywords: *English language proficiency, grade point average, regression analysis, academic achievement, accounting profession*

INTRODUCTION

Academic success is a critical prerequisite for the effective social integration of young people [48]. The overarching aim of higher education is to equip students with advanced knowledge and skills, which are largely developed through individual effort. Such effort is commonly assessed through performance indicators. Within higher education, academic performance constitutes a central component of institutional information systems and serves as a benchmark for evaluating the quality of learning outcomes. Prior studies suggest that students' cognitive performance remains a significant proxy for measuring academic success [5, 43].

In international higher education practice, academic performance is most often represented by the grade point average (GPA). GPA reflects the extent to which educational institutions, instructors, and students have achieved both short-term and long-term academic objectives [11]. This measurement is based on cumulative results derived from formative and summative assessments, including quizzes, mid-term and final examinations, and a variety of classroom activities requiring student engagement [15].

The determinants of students' academic achievement are multifaceted. Existing literature identifies a wide range of influencing factors, such as gender, high school performance, parental education, socioeconomic status, language of instruction, family background, residential location, previous academic records, class participation, test and assignment performance, attendance, study behavior, time management, family support, type of admission, accommodation, and parental qualifications. These variables are frequently categorized into personal, family, academic, institutional, and social dimensions [25].

Language proficiency, particularly in foreign languages, enhances students' access to diverse academic resources. Proficiency can be understood as the ability to employ language knowledge effectively to achieve specific communicative and academic purposes [23]. In contemporary higher education, English functions as a global lingua franca. It is widely acknowledged that the majority of scientific publications are disseminated in English. In this study, approximately 97% of accounting students surveyed identified English as their primary foreign language of study, underscoring its relevance within the research context. A considerable body of international research has examined the link between English language proficiency (ELP) and academic achievement among university students [22, 24, 27, 30, 33, 34, 47, 52]. Findings consistently indicate that ELP significantly contributes not only to academic outcomes but also to the development of generic skills essential for undergraduate education [49]. Multiple studies have confirmed the positive correlation between English language proficiency and students' academic performance [17, 18]. Conversely, in many developing countries, limited English proficiency, coupled with linguistic diversity, has been identified as a major barrier to educational attainment [32, 38].

At the national level, the significance of research on factors affecting student achievement has been formally recognized in Mongolia's "Vision-2050" Development Policy (2021–2030). Article 2.1.218 mandates continuous investigation of determinants of academic success to inform evidence-based policymaking, highlighting the relevance of this study. Academic performance, moreover, is widely acknowledged as a multidimensional construct influencing not only educational but also social, psychological, economic, and environmental integration [47, 56].

Against this backdrop, the present research focuses on the academic outcomes of students at the National University of Mongolia (NUM), with particular attention to the role of English language proficiency alongside other determinants of academic performance across an academic year.

LITERATURE REVIEW

❖ Students' performance

Students' academic performance is not only a reflection of individual achievement but also an indicator of the effectiveness of higher education institutions and their systems of instruction [2]. Academic success is typically understood as the extent to which students master the prescribed curriculum and develop professional competencies. It also functions as a diagnostic tool, offering predictive insights into students' future professional potential while serving as a measure of institutional effectiveness in addressing educational challenges [37].

To operationalize academic performance, researchers frequently employ metrics such as GPA, standardized test results, and prior academic records [10, 14, 20, 21]. In the present study, GPA was adopted as the principal indicator of student performance.

❖ English language proficiency

English language proficiency (ELP) is increasingly critical in higher education and the global professional environment. Within the accounting discipline, its importance in Mongolia is amplified by the mandatory application of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), which are issued in English. Strong proficiency not only facilitates engagement with international partners but also enables students to interpret global trends and utilize scholarly resources published predominantly in English [8]. According to Ghenghesh [16], proficiency encompasses students' ability to employ English for academic advancement, informed decision-making, and effective communication in both written and spoken contexts. Kong et al. [29] further observed that students with higher levels of English proficiency are better positioned to engage with instructional content and achieve superior outcomes in English-medium courses. Studies confirm that non-native English-speaking students who are fluent in English tend to achieve better academic results than peers with lower proficiency levels [26].

However, research findings are mixed. A meta-analysis of 22 studies (1987–2009) reported that TOEFL scores had only modest predictive power for GPA among international students [51]. By contrast, Bobe and Cooper [6] found that students with higher English proficiency are more likely to adopt deep learning

approaches, while lower proficiency is associated with surface-level learning and reduced satisfaction with courses. Moreover, in many developing countries, challenges linked to multilingualism and limited English proficiency have been identified as key contributors to declining student performance [32, 39].

❖ Students' attitude

Student attitudes toward learning are strongly associated with academic outcomes. Zhukova [54] emphasized that the primary role of students lies in acquiring professional knowledge, skills, and practices. Students who demonstrate motivation and readiness for professional mastery exhibit higher indicators of learning success, whereas those who enter university primarily to obtain a degree demonstrate comparatively lower levels of preparedness. Attitudes influence students' goal-setting, problem-solving abilities, beliefs about learning, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, thereby shaping academic outcomes. Lyashenko [35] highlighted that motivational factors are mediated by institutional conditions, including the creation of structured educational guidelines and supportive learning environments.

❖ Profession/career choice

Career choice also emerges as a determinant of academic success. While factors such as academic major, family preferences, teacher guidance, and career training significantly influence students' decisions, gender and social status appear to exert minimal effects [44]. The choice of field of study has been shown to influence academic performance, with students' achievements varying according to their professional orientation [36].

❖ Family support

Family support contributes both directly and indirectly to academic achievement. Research suggests that students who experience supportive family environments demonstrate higher performance levels due to enhanced motivation and resource availability [42]. Azhar et al. [4] found a correlation between family income and GPA, with students from higher-income households achieving better outcomes. Conversely, families with limited financial resources often allocate more effort to meeting basic needs, reducing the time and energy available to support children's education.

❖ Institutional environment (materiality and teachers)

The quality of the institutional environment—particularly the availability of learning resources and the competence of instructors—is a decisive factor in academic achievement. Alos et al. (2015) highlighted that the effectiveness of educational programs depends on the quality of teaching staff. Weaknesses at this level have cascading negative effects on program outcomes. Dewett (2007) further observed that effective instructors continuously innovate by integrating diverse teaching methods and instructional materials to enhance student learning.

❖ Peer influence (Friends)

Peer networks exert a significant influence on academic performance. The university environment extends beyond formal instruction to include peer interactions, which shape study behaviors, motivation, and academic engagement. A study published in PLoS ONE reported that while tutors alone may not significantly impact student outcomes, peer influence plays a critical role. Students who associate with high-performing peers tend to adopt more effective study habits and demonstrate improved outcomes [12]. Friendships also provide academic support, access to resources, and motivation, amplifying the benefits of higher achievement within student networks.

Research objective

The central aim of this study is to examine the impact of English language proficiency on the academic performance of accounting students at the National University of Mongolia (NUM). While numerous studies have explored the relationship between English proficiency and GPA among international and foreign-language students, limited research has focused on Mongolian students in professional disciplines such as accounting.

The contribution of this study lies in its examination of multiple determinants of student performance, including English language proficiency, institutional environment, family support, student attitudes, career choice, and peer influence. By contextualizing the analysis within Mongolia, this research offers

insights into the ways ELP can strengthen both academic outcomes and professional readiness in accounting education.

Theoretical backgraund and hypotheses development
Students' performance is an actual factor on learning quality. The following hypotheses are made within the scope of this research.
H1: There is a positive and direct relationship between the students' performance and English language proficiency, family support, profession/career choice, institute environment, friends, and students' attitude.
H2: Students' English language proficiency is affected by their daily frequency and usage of English..

METHODOLOGY
This study employed regression analysis to evaluate the effects of the independent variables—English language proficiency, family support, career choice, institutional environment, peer influence, and student attitude—on the dependent variable of student academic performance (measured by GPA).

**Factors affecting student's academic performance: result of research**
A structured, closed-ended questionnaire consisting of 15 items was employed to collect data. The first eight questions focused on demographic and background characteristics, including age, gender, level of study, academic performance, and family information. Questions 9–15 were designed to identify the major factors influencing students' academic outcomes.

General characteristics of the study participants

The average age of respondents was 20 years. The majority (81%) were between 18 and 21 years, while 19% were within the 22–25 age range. Approximately 75% of participants were female, and 25% were male.
With respect to geographical origin, most respondents (56%) were from rural areas. In terms of housing, 56% reported living in their own apartments, 25% resided in rental accommodations, and 14% lived in university dormitories. Furthermore, 67% indicated that their residences were located in close proximity to the university. These findings suggest that students' residential conditions and educational environments are generally adequate and supportive of academic engagement.

Figure 1. Number of people in family
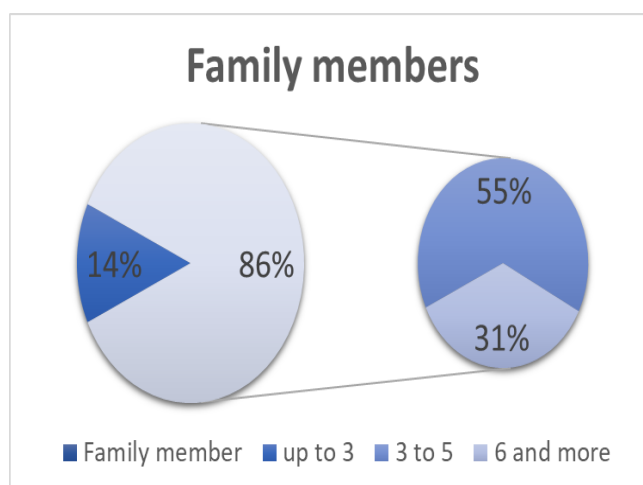
According to the available data, 89% of families have two to three children and 31% have more than three.

Figure 2. Household income
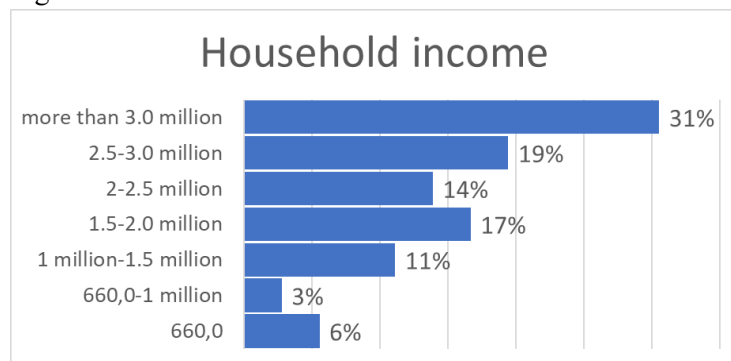
Additionally, 64% of these families have a household income exceeding 2 million, suggesting that family support is not inadequate.

Considering the academic data presented in the table, a linear correlation exists between GPA of English and university scores, indicating a positive academic performance among students.

Table 1. Students' academic achievements

GPA score	GPA during the period of studing at num		GPA of English	
up to 500	D	7%	D	15%
501-600	C	33%	C	36%
601-700	B	53%	B	47%
701 and above	A	7%	A	2%

This table shows that: Only 2% of the students who participated in the study had excellent English GPA, 83% had average and above average, and 15% had below average.

During their studies at the National University of Mongolia, 7% had excellent GPA, 86% had average and above average, and 7% had below average GPA.

The curriculum of the National University of Mongolia includes many foreign languages.

Table 2. Students' choice of foreign languages

Foreign languages						Summary
English	Germany	China	Russian	Korea	Other	
96.7%	0	1%	0.3%	1%	0	100%

This table 2 shows that 96.7% of the respondents chose English, 1% Chinese, 1% Korean, and 0.3% Russian.

Therefore, the indicator of English language proficiency was considered in the research.

To confirm the hypothesis, the relationship between GPA and factors influencing it was examined. A linear regression model was used in the study.

Table 3. Regression model summary

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.446[a]	.199	.171	.669

a. Predictors: (Constant), Students attitude, Profession choice, Family support, Friends, E.L.P. , Environment
b. Dependent Variable: GPA.num

Table 3 presents the results of the regression analysis examining the influence of multiple factors on students' academic performance. The model produced an R value of 0.446, indicating a moderate positive correlation between the dependent variable (academic performance) and the set of independent variables.

The R^2 value of 0.199 suggests that approximately 20% of the variance in students' academic performance can be explained collectively by the independent variables: English language proficiency, family support, career/profession choice, institutional environment, peer influence, and student attitudes.

The F-statistic for the regression model was statistically significant, indicating that the set of independent variables reliably predicts students' academic performance. This result confirms that these factors, taken together, have a measurable and meaningful impact on student outcomes.

Table 4. Factors affecting GPA

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.265	.566		2.235	.027
	E.L.P.	.456	.089	.358	5.132	<.001
	Family support	-.083	.044	-.130	-1.887	.061
	Profession choice	.058	.091	.045	.643	.521
	Environment	.170	.099	.120	1.720	.087
	Friends	.057	.055	.071	1.021	.309
	Students attitude	.051	.057	.061	.889	.375

a. Dependent Variable: GPA.num

Table 4 presents the significance and contribution of each independent variable in the regression model. The unstandardized coefficients (B) indicate the relative impact of each factor on students' academic performance (GPA).

● English Language Proficiency (ELP) contributed 45.6% of the positive variation in academic performance, with a statistically significant t-value, confirming its strong predictive effect.

● Career/Profession Choice accounted for 5.8% of positive variation.

● Institutional Environment explained 17% of the positive variation, reflecting the importance of teaching quality and resources.

● Peer Influence (Friends) contributed 5.7% of positive variation.

● Student Attitude was associated with a 5.1% positive variation.

In contrast, Family Support was associated with an 8.3% negative variation in student performance; however, the t-value was not statistically significant, indicating that its effect was not reliably different from zero in this sample.

Additionally, the interrelationships among ELP and the other independent variables were examined, highlighting potential correlations that may influence the overall academic outcomes.

Table 5. The relationship between the ELP and other factors

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.230[a]	.053	.026	.569

a. Predictors: (Constant), Students attitude, Profession choice, Family support, Friends, Environment
b. Dependent Variable: E.L.P.

Table 5 shows the relationship between the family support, profession/career choice, institute environment, friends, and students' attitude.
We can see that 23% variation in ELP value is explained by the other 5 factors.
In addition to reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, students' English proficiency is influenced by factors such as their English GPA and the frequency of daily use /practice of English. We examined how this is affected.

Table 6 Relationship within the ELP and frequency English

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.776[a]	.602	.597	.40044

a. Predictors: (Constant), Practice, GPA.Eng

The value of R .776 percent is a relationship between the English language proficiency and the GPA-English, and practice.

Table 7. ELP and GPA

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.004	.143		7.008	<.001
	GPA.Eng	.107	.030	.172	3.536	<.001
	Practice	.529	.036	.719	14.826	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: English

Table 7 indicates that GPA in English accounted for 10.7% and daily English practice/usage accounted for 52.9% of the positive variation in English language proficiency among accounting students, with both effects being statistically significant (t-values significant).
Based on these findings:
● **Hypothesis H1**, stating that "There is a positive and direct relationship between students' academic performance and English language proficiency, family support, career/profession choice, institutional environment, peer influence, and students' attitude," was not fully confirmed.
● **Hypothesis H2**, asserting that "Students' English language proficiency is influenced by their daily frequency and practical usage of English," was accepted.

CONCLUSION
This study investigated English language proficiency and other key factors influencing the academic performance of accounting students at the National University of Mongolia (NUM). Two hypotheses were tested to assess the effects of multiple independent variables on students' academic outcomes.

The analysis revealed that English language proficiency, family support, student attitudes, career/profession choice, institutional environment, and peer influence all contribute to variations in academic performance. Among these factors, English language proficiency emerged as the most critical determinant of GPA for accounting students at NUM. Moreover, students' ELP was significantly influenced by the frequency and practical use of English in daily activities, highlighting the importance of consistent language engagement.

Overall, the study underscores the central role of English language proficiency in shaping academic achievement and suggests that targeted strategies to enhance daily English usage can improve student outcomes in professional disciplines such as accounting.

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