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Understanding Culture of Poverty within PASS framework in Primary School Children

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the relationship between cognitive processes (Planning, Attention, Simultaneous, and Successive processing, or PASS) and Reading and Math competence among English Language Learners (ELL) in Grades 4 and 5 from low-SES regions of Odisha, India. The study compares 80 students from slum areas with 70 students from better-off schools. The present study has 2 parts of analysis; using Structural Equation Modelling, results indicate that Word Decoding is best predicted by Planning, Successive, and Simultaneous processing, while Comprehension relies more on Successive and Simultaneous processing. Math competence is primarily influenced by Simultaneous processing and, to a lesser extent, Planning. Chronic poverty negatively impacts these cognitive abilities due to limited exposure to language and reading materials. In the second part the study, findings suggest that the slum students performed slightly lower across all PASS measures but remained within half a standard deviation of American CAS norms. This suggests that the school environment may act as a protective factor, mitigating the adverse effects of poverty. The findings align with previous research and highlight the role of school climate, analysed through Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework. The study emphasizes the need for further research on the intersection of ELL status, poverty, and cognitive development, particularly in underrepresented populations.

Keywords: Comprehension; Math Competence; PASS Processes; Reading