



## 2nd World Conference on Psychology and Behavioral Sciences

London, United Kingdom

19\_ 21 July 2024

# The Impact of Poverty-Related Cues on Cognitive Performance

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### **Abstract**

The impact of financial scarcity on cognitive performance likely varies with socioeconomic status, potentially leading to a decline in performance among lower-income individuals. Duquenois (2023) demonstrated in a quasi-experimental study that children from lower-income families perform worse when exam questions include more money-related terms. Other laboratory studies on this effect have shown mixed and contradictory results. In the present work, I investigated this effect through three studies. The first was a replication study, conceptually revisiting the research by Mani et al. (2013). In the second and third experiments, building on Mani and colleagues' methods, we collected data from a demographically diverse sample. Participants created associations for words related to financial scarcity and sleep (control). They then completed tasks measuring attention, fluid intelligence (Study 2), and numeracy (Study 3). I found no evidence that the salience of financial scarcity impacts cognitive performance. This absence of positive results may not necessarily indicate a lack of effect but could be due to participant demotivation or the use of measurement tools insufficiently sensitive to cognitive performance differences.

**Keywords:** poverty, cognition, policy, alleviation