Chapter 4

Pupil Factors

4.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses on the relationship between pupil factors and educational achievement of PTSSR pupils in the UPSR examination. Some of the pupil factors examined are sex, SES, IQ, kindergarten education, rate of absenteeism, self-perception of ability in class, taking of tuition, and pupils'academic and occupational aspirations. Where academic achievement is concerned, the measure used is the aggregated points of six UPSR papers namely, Tamil (Comprehension and Composition), Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension and Composition), English Language and Mathematics. The cut-off points, based on the distribution of cases in the normal distribution curve, were 0-9 points (low achievers), 10-20 points (medium achievers) and 21-30 points (high achievers).

4.2 Academic Achievement of PTSSR Pupils in UPSR

The data in Table 4.1 shows the performance of Standard VI pupils of PTSSR in the UPSR, 1991. A total of 142 pupils sat for the UPSR examination, 1991. Two

Table 4.1

Academic Achievement of PTSSR Pupils in UPSR, 1991

Level of Academic Achievement	Aggregate Score of six UPSR Papers	Percentage Pupils
Low	06 - 09	26.4 (37)
Medium	10 - 20	55.0 (77)
High	21 - 30	18.6 (26)

Note. For Tables 4.1 to 4.21, figures given are in percentages However, figures in brackets indicate frequencies.

were absent for Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), Bahasa Malaysia (Composition) and Mathematics. As such, frequencies for the above three papers is 140. Of the 140 pupils, 26.4% of them were low achievers while 55.0% were in the medium category. Only a small minority of 18.6% of the pupils were high achievers.

Student performance in subjects, in terms of grades A, B and C (passes) and D and E (failures), is shown in Table 4.2. Three quarters of the pupils (75.4%) performed best in Tamil (comprehension). This was followed by 52.8% in Tamil (composition), Mathematics (51.4%), English Language (50.0%), Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), (42.1%) and Bahasa Malaysia (Composition) (28.6%). Conversely, the highest proportion of failures was in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), (71.4%), representing almost three quarters of Standard VI pupils in PTSSR. Poor performance in other subjects was reported in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension) (55.7%), English Language (50.0%), Mathematics (48.6), Tamil (Composition) 47.2% and Tamil (Comprehension) 24.6%.

When the PTSSR results in 1991 were compared with the nationalnorm for Tamil schools (Table 4.3), it

Table 4.2

Academic Achievement of PTSSR Pupils by Subjects in UPSR, 1991

Subjects	Pass			Total Passes	Fail		Total Failures
	A	B	C	A+B+C	D	E	(D+E)
Tamil Comprehension	26.8 (38)	32.4 (46)	16.2 (23)	75.4 (107)	9.1 (13)	15.5 (22)	24.6 (35)
Tamil Composition	3.5 (5)	21.8 (31)	27.5 (39)	52.8 (75)	27.5 (39)	19.7 (28)	47.2 (67)
Bahasa Malaysia Comprehesnion	2.1 (3)	10.0 (14)	32.2 (45)	44.3 (62)	24.3 (34)	31.4 (44)	55.7 (78)
Bahasa Malaysia Composition	0.7 (1)	4.3 (6)	23.6 (33)	28.6 (40)	50.7 (71)	20.7 (29)	71.4 (100)
English Language	6.3 (9)	12.0 (17)	31.7 (45)	50.0 (71)	26.1 (37)	23.9 (34)	50.0 (71)
Mathematics	4.3 (6)	11.4 (16)	35.7 (50)	51.4 (72)	14.3 (20)	34.3 (48)	48.6 (68)

indicated a similar pattern in most of the subjects. In Tamil (Comprehension) PTSSR performance was slightly better than the national norm. PTSSR obtained 75.4% passes compared to 73.5% for the national norm. However, in Tamil (Composition), PTSSR obtained 52.8% as compared to 53.0% for the national norm.

With regard to the Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), the school had obtained 44.3% passes. This is marginally better than the national norm for Tamil schools which was 40.9%. In Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), the school performance was better than the national norm. PTSSR obtained 28.6% passes as compared to 18.8% passes for the national norm for Tamil school.

In the Mathematics paper, the school result was slightly better than the national norm for Tamil school with the school scoring 51.4 % passes as compared to 49.9% for the national norm. In English Language, the school obtained 50.0% passes as compared to the national norm for Tamil school of 50.5%. From the above data, one can conclude that the PTSSR results were higher than the national norm for Tamil school, in terms of percentage passes, for Tamil (Comprehension), Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension and Composition) and Mathemat-

Table 4.3

Comparison   of   Percentage   Passes   in   the   UPSR
Examination   of   the   PTSSR   with   the   National-
Norm of Tamil Schools (1991)

UPSR Subjects	Comparison of Percentage Passes					
	PTSSR Grades			National-Norm Grades		
	A	B	C	A	B	C
Tamil Language						
Comprehension	75.4			73.5		
Composition	52.8			53.0		
Bahasa Malaysia						
Comprehension	44.3			40.9		
Composition	28.6			18.8		
English Language	50.0			50.5		
Mathematics	51.4			49.9		

Source. Based on records of PTSSR and UPSR results of
Examination Syndicate, 1991.

ics. The PTSSR'S results were slightly below the national norm for Tamil (Composition) and English.

The UPSR results for the PTSSR pupils indicate very clearly that a great deal of effort has to be made by the school (pupils, teachers and parents) to improve its performance in Bahasa Malaysia, especially in the Composition paper and in English Language. Pupils will have to use Bahasa Malaysia and English Language more frequently in the classrooms, school and home. Presently, Bahasa Malaysia is taught for a total of 200 minutes per week (40 minutes per period x 5 periods per week) and English for a total of 180 minutes (30 minutes per period x 6 periods per week). Based on observation and feedback from pupils, teachers and parents, the use of Bahasa Malaysia and English is confined mainly to the duration in which both the languages are taught in the classroom. This does not permit an adequate and frequent usage of Bahasa Malaysia and English, whether the form is oral or written.

In contrast, pupils' performance is far better in Tamil than in Bahasa Malaysia and English. This may be due to the fact that at the primary level, Tamil is

the medium of instruction in PTSSR. Also, most of the students tend to converse in Tamil outside instructional hours and at home. Thus, usage of the Tamil language, whether for educational or social purposes, is more frequent than Bahasa Malaysia or English.

Pupils' comprehension and composition skills are tested in Tamil and Mandarin (the vernacular languages) and Bahasa Malaysia (the national language). It is to be noted that irrespective of the language (Tamil and Bahasa Malaysia in the case of PTSSR), pupils performed better in comprehension than composition exercises. For example, only 3.5% of the pupils obtained grade `A' in Tamil (Composition) as compared to 26.8% who scored grade `A' in Tamil (Comprehension). Similarly, 0.7% of the pupils gained (grade) `A' in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition) while 2.1% received grades `A' in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension). It appears necessary for the language teachers in PTSSR to conduct diagnostic tests to ascertain the weaknesses of pupils in composition before remedial measures can be taken to improve their performance.

4.3 Sex and Academic Achievement

As shown in Table 4.4, female pupils achieved better results than their male counterparts in the UPSR, in 1991. A higher proportion of Standard VI girls (21.8%) was in the high achievers category as compared to the boys (15.5%). Also, a smaller proportion of girls (24.6%) were low achievers when contrasted with the proportion of boys (28.2%).

Table 4.4

Sex by Pupil Academic Achievement
in UPSR Subjects, 1991

Sex	Level of Achievement			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Male	28.2 (20)	56.3 (40)	15.5 (11)	50.7 (71)
Female	24.6 (17)	53.6 (37)	21.8 (15)	49.3 (69)

In analysing the UPSR, 1991 performance in PTSSR, pupils who scored grades A, B and C were considered to have passed the subjects. Pupils who scored D and E would have been considered as having failed the subjects. Table 4.5 shows that, on the whole, girls performed better than boys in five of the six papers, namely, Tamil (Comprehension), Tamil (Composition), Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), and English Language.

However, the performance of the boys in Mathematics was superior to that of the girls. While 56.3% of the boys passed Mathematics, only 47.8% of the girls were in the `pass' category. This finding is similar to that of some British studies (Douglas, 1964 and Davie and et al. others, 1972) as well as Malaysian studies (Leong and others,1990). It is to be noted, however, that no significant relationship was found between academic achievement in Tamil (Comprehension), Tamil (Composition), Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), English Language and Mathematics (six UPSR papers) and the variable `sex' at the

Table 4.5

Sex by Pupil Academic Achievement
in UPSR Subjects, 1991

UPSR Subjects	Sex				
	Male		Female		
					Signi-
					ficance
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Level
Tamil Comprehension	70.4 (50)	29.6 (21)	80.3 (57)	19.7 (14)	.243
Tamil Composition	50.7 (36)	49.3 (35)	54.9 (39)	45.1 (32)	.737
Bahasa Melaysia Comprehension	42.3 (30)	57.7 (41)	44.9 (31)	55.1 (38)	.882
Bahasa Melaysia Composition	26.8 (19)	73.2 (52)	30.4 (21)	69.6 (48)	.769
English Language	47.9 (34)	52.1 (37)	52.1 (37)	47.9 (34)	.737
Mathematics	56.3 (40)	43.7 (31)	47.8 (33)	52.2 (36)	.402

0.05 level. This result reinforces the findings of Henderson, Mieszkowski and Sauvageau (1976) and Linn and Hyde (1989).

4.4 SES and Academic Achievement

The SES of pupils has been shown consistently to be an important factor in explaining their academic achievement. Regardless of the research methodology used, one or all of the SES variables have shown to be positive and significant with regard to academic achievement. The variables used are parental educational attainment, and occupation and family income.

In this study, the father's educational level was used as the basis for classification of SES. The father's attainment of PTSSR pupils were categorized into three groups, namely, primary education and lower secondary (Forms 1 -3) and upper secondary (Forms 4 and 5). Table 4.6 shows that the higher the educational level attained by the father, the higher is the academic achievement cf the pupil, even though none of the fathers received an education above secondary school

level. For example, those fathers with primary education had only 12.7.% of their children in the high achievement category. In fact, 36.7% of their children were in the low category. In contrast, fathers with upper secondary (Forms 4-5) education had

Table 4.6

Father's Highest Academic Qualification by
Pupil Academic Achievement in UPSR, 1991

Father's Highest Academic Qualification	Level of Achievement			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Primary Education	36.7 (29)	50.6 (40)	12.7 (10)	56.4 (79)
Form 1-3	12.0 (6)	64.0 (32)	24.0 (12)	35.7 (50)
Form 4-5	18.1 (2)	45.5 (5)	36.4 (4)	7.9 (11)

36.4% their children in the high achieving category and only 18.1% in the low achievement category. The difference in the educational achievement of the pupils resulting from the level of father's educational attainment was statistically significant. The chi-square indicated that there is a significant relationship between overall pupil achievement and father's education at the .05 level.

As shown in Table 4.7, the relationship between father's level of educational attainment and the child's educational achievement is positive in the UPSR results of PTSSR. A higher proportion of pupils whose father had upper secondary education performed well in all six UPSR papers. The children of fathers who had upper secondary education obtained 90.9% passes in Tamil (comprehension), 63.6% in Tamil (Composition), 54.5% in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 45.5% in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition). 45.5% in English Language and 81.8% in Mathematics. In contrast, pupils whose father had primary education only scored less

Table 4.7

Father's Highest Academic Qualification by Pupil Academic Achievement
in UPSR Subjects, 1991

UPSR Subjects	Father's Highest Academic Qualification						Signi-
	Primary Education		Form 1-3		Form 4-5		ficance Level
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	
Tamil Comprehension	66.7 (54)	33.3 (27)	86.0 (43)	14.0 (7)	90.9 (10)	9.1 (1)	.021
Tamil Composition	43.2 (35)	56.8 (46)	66.0 (33)	34.0 (17)	63.6 (7)	36.4 (4)	.030
Bahasa Melaysia Comprehension	31.6 (25)	68.4 (54)	60.0 (30)	40.0 (20)	54.5 (6)	45.5 (5)	.005
Bahasa Melaysia Composition	17.7 (14)	82.3 (65)	42.0 (21)	58.0 (29)	45.5 (5)	54.5 (6)	.005
English Language	39.5 (32)	60.5 (49)	68.0 (34)	32.0 (16)	45.5 (5)	54.5 (6)	.006
Mathematics	37.9 (30)	62.1 (49)	68.0 (34)	32.0 (16)	81.8 (9)	18.2 (2)	.001

than 44% of passes in all papers' except for Tamil (Comprehension) in which they scored 66.7%. They obtained 43.2% in Tamil (Composition), 31.6% in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 17.7% in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), 39.5% in English Language and 37.9% in Mathematics. The data suggests that the SES of a pupil as measured by the father's educational level influences his or her performance in school.

4.5 Intelligence Quotient and Academic Achievement

The variable intellegence quotient (IQ) was chosen as it is positively related to school success. In this study, the Cattell Culture-Fair Intelligence Test (CCFIT) was used to measure the IQ of pupils. This test was chosen because it is culture-free, figural and non-verbal, thus making it suitable for the sample population.

The PTSSR pupils were categorised into low, average and high groups based on their performance in the CCFIT. Table 4.8 shows that the pupils with high IQ

Table 4.8

Intelligence Quotient by Pupil Academic Achievement
in UPSR, 1991

Intelligence Quotient	Level of Achievement			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Low Scores	61.7 (29)	36.2 (17)	2.1 (1)	33.6 (47)
Average Scores	11.1 (8)	68.1 (49)	20.8 (15)	51.4 (72)
High Scores	0 (0)	52.4 (11)	47.6 (10)	15.0 (21)

scores had better results in the UPSR subjects. For example, only 2.1% of the pupils who had low scores in CCFIT were in the high achievers category. Conversely, 47.6% of the high scorers in IQ were in the high achievers' category. As for the high scorers in CCFIT, none of them were in the low achieving category. About 61.7% of the low IQ scorers were low achievers. This means that IQ is a factor influencing the academic achievement of pupils in the UPSR, 1991.

The analysis of the UPSR subjects and CCFIT is
summarized in Table 4.9. On the whole, the pupils who
had high scores in CCFIT performed better than pupils
with low scores. Performance of high achievers was
commendable when they scored 100% passes in Tamil
(Comprehension), and 76.2% passes in Tamil (Composi-
tion), Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension) and English
Language. Also, they obtained 71.4% passes in Bahasa
Malaysia (Composition) and 81.0% in Mathematics. An
interesting point to note is the performance of high
achievers in Tamil and Bahasa Malaysia (Composition)
papers. PTSSR results indicate only 52.8% passes in
Tamil (Composition) and a low 28.6% passes in Bahasa
Malaysia (Composition). In contrast, the high achievers
in CCFIT obtained 76.2% passes in Tamil (Composi-
tion) and 71.4% passes in Bahasa Malaysia
(Composition). This is an indication of IQ's influence
on academic achievement of PTSSR pupils in UPSR sub-
jects.

On the other hand, the perfomance of pupils with
low scores in CCFIT was unsatisfactory. They gained
46.9% passes in Tamil (Comprehension) but only 18.4%
passes in Tamil (Composition). Their performance in
other subjects was not encouraging, with 12.8% passes

Table 4.9

Intelligence Quotient by Pupil Academic Achievement
in UPSR Subjects, 1991

UPSR Subjects	Intelligence Quotient						Signi-ficance Level
	Low Scores		Average scores		High Scores		
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	
Tamil Comprehension	46.9 (23)	53.1 (26)	87.5 (63)	12.5 (9)	100.0 (21)	0 (0)	.000
Tamil Composition	18.4 (9)	81.6 (40)	69.4 (50)	30.6 (22)	76.2 (16)	23.8 (5)	.000
Bahasa Melaysia Comprehension	12.8 (6)	87.2 (41)	54.2 (39)	45.8 (33)	76.2 (16)	23.8 (5)	.000
Bahasa Melaysia Composition	6.4 (3)	93.6 (44)	30.6 (22)	69.4 (50)	71.4 (15)	28.6 (6)	.000
English Language	18.4 (9)	81.6 (40)	63.9 (46)	36.1 (26)	76.2 (16)	23.8 (5)	.000
Mathematics	25.5 (12)	74.5 (35)	61.1 (44)	38.9 (28)	81.0 (17)	19.0 (4)	.000

in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 6.4% in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), 18.4% in English Language and 25.5% in Mathematics.

Many studies (Jencks, 1973, Messe and others, 1979, Entwistle and Hayduk, 1981, Wirawan, 1986 and Nil Sovic et al. 1994) indicate that there is a significant relationship between intelligence and school achievement. This research lends support to these claims because the findings show that there is a significant relationship between IQ and the PTSSR pupils' academic performance in UPSR.

4.6 Kindergarten and Academic Achievement

Attendance in kindergarten provides the opportunity for children to be better prepared for school entry in terms of cognitive and social skills. Several studies have shown that those who attended kindergarten perform better in school than those who have not done so. Kratt et al.(1965), Abraham (1978) and Cohen (1981) stated that changes in IQ indicate that preschool training provided children with a better background for success in the regular school.

The data in Table 4.10 shows that there is not much difference between those who have attended kintergarden and those who had not done so. A total of 23.9% of the pupils in the high achievers' category were without kindergarten education. Conversely, only 16.0% of the the pupils who attended kindergarten education were in the high achievers group.

Table 4.10

Kindergarten by Pupil Academic Achievement
in UPSR, 1991

Kindergarten	Level of Achievement			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Without Kindergarten	32.6 (15)	43.5 (20)	23.9 (11)	32.9 (46)
With Kindergarten	23.4 (22)	60.6 (57)	16.0 (15)	67.1 (94)

At the same time, 32.6% of the pupils without kindergarten were in the low achievers' group compared to 23.4% of pupils with kindergarten education. Eggen and Kauchak (1992) concluded that research results were mixed about the effects of kindergarten education. He indicated that pupils generally performed better academically in the lower grade but unfortunately, these gains appeared to have faded away as pupils progress through the higher grades.

In analysing the UPSR 1991 performance in PTSSR, the variation between the pupils who attended kindergarten and those who had not done so, was small and insignificant (Table 4.11). Pupils with kindergarten education scored 76.8% passes in Tamil (Comprehension) compared to 72.3% passes from the group without kindergarten education. In Tamil (Composition), pupils with kindergarten exposure performed slightly better with 54.7% passes compared to 48.9% passes from pupils without kindergarten experience . Similarly, pupils with kindergarten training scored 43.6% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 28.7% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), 55.8% passes in English Language and 53.2% pases in Mathematics. In comparison, pupils with-

Table 4.11

Kindergarten by Pupil Academic Achievement
in UPSR Subjects, 1991

UPSR Subjects	Without Kindergarten		With Kindergarten		Signi- ficance Level
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	
Tamil Comprehension	72.3 (34)	27.7 (13)	76.8 (73)	23.2 (22)	.705
Tamil Composition	48.9 (23)	51.1 (24)	54.7 (52)	45.3 (43)	.636
Bahasa Melaysia Comprehension	43.5 (20)	56.5 (26)	43.6 (41)	56.4 (53)	1.000
Bahasa Melaysia Composition	28.3 (13)	71.7 (33)	28.7 (27)	71.3 (67)	1.000
English Language	38.3 (18)	61.7 (29)	55.8 (53)	44.2 (42)	.075
Mathematics	50.0 (23)	50.0 (23)	53.2 (50)	46.8 (44)	.861

out kindergarten obtained 43.5% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 28.3% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), 38.3% passes in English Language and 50.0% passes in Mathematics.

In the light of these findings, a study worthy of mention is that carried by Coats and Napier (1980). This Mississipi study indicates that kindergarten experience benefits children. regardless of SES background, but uncovers evidence which suggests that attending kindergarten does not make up for past deficits related to SES.

4.7 Frequency of Being Absent from School and Academic Achievement

It is not suprising that frequency of absence from school is correlated negatively with academic achievement. Table 4.12 shows that, 28.6% of the pupils whose rate of absenteeism was less than a week were in the high achievers' category compared to 3.6% of the pupils whose rate of absenteeism was more than two weeks. Likewise, only 17.4% of the pupils who were absent for less than a week were in the low achievers'

Table 4.12

Frequency of Absence from School and Academic
Achievement in UPSR , 1991

Frequency of Absence	Level of Achievement			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Less Than 1 Week	17.4 (11)	54.0 (34)	28.6 (18)	45.0 (63)
1-2 Weeks	24.5 (12)	61.2 (30)	14.3 (7)	35.0 (49)
More Than 2 Weeks	50.0 (14)	46.4 (13)	3.6 (1)	20.0 (28)

group whereas 50.0% of the low achievers were absent for more than two weeks. This clearly indicates a relationship between school attendance and academic achievement. Wiseman (1967) in the West Riding Education Committee Report on attendance, concluded that

there seems little doubt that poor achievement produces poor attendance which, in turn, produces poorer achievement and yet poorer attendance. The effect is cumulative.

Table 4.13 indicates very clearly that the rate of absenteeism was significant in determinimg the school performance of PTSSR pupils in all subjects except Tamil (Comprehension) and (Composition). Pupils who were absent for a period of less than a week obtained more passes than pupils who were absent for more than two weeks. For example, pupils whose attendance was more regular scored 79.4% passes in Tamil (Comprehension), 58.7% passes in Tamil (Composition), and Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 38.1% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), 60.3% passes in English Language and 61.9% passes in Mathematics. In contrast, pupils who were absent frequently scored 58.6% in Tamil (Comprehension), 34.5% in Tamil (Composition), 21.4% in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 7.1% in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), 31.0% in English Language and 32.1% in Mathematics.

Table 4.13

Frequency of Absence from School and Academic Achievement
in UPSR Subjects, 1991

	Frequency of Absence						
	Less Than 1 week		1 - 2 - Weeks		More Than 2 weeks		Signi- ficance Level
UPSR Subjects	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	
Tamil Comprehension	79.4 (50)	20.6 (13)	80.0 (40)	20.0 (10)	58.6 (17)	41.4 (12)	.064
Tamil Composition	58.7 (37)	41.3 (26)	56.0 (28)	44.0 (22)	34.5 (10)	65.5 965.5	.082
Bahasa Melaysia Comprehension	58.7 (37)	41.3 (26)	36.7 (18)	63.3 (31)	21.4 (6)	78.6 (22)	.002
Bahasa Melaysia Composition	38.1 (24)	61.9 (39)	28.6 (14)	71.4 (35)	7.1 (2)	92.9 (26)	.011
English Language	60.3 (38)	39.7 (25)	48.0 (24)	52.0 (26)	31.0 (9)	69.0 (20)	.031
Mathematics	61.9 (39)	38.1 (24)	51.0 (25)	49.0 (24)	32.1 (9)	67.9 (19)	.031

PTSSR obtained 44.3% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension) and 28.6% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition) (Table 4.3). The pupils who attended school regularly (absent for less than a week), recorded 58.7% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension) and 38.1% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition). Conversely, pupils with poor attendance obtained 21.4% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension) and only 7.1% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition). A similar pattern was observed for English Language and Mathematics, where pupils with good atendance scored 60.3% passes in English Language and 61.9% passes in Mathematics. In contrast, pupils who were absent frequently, obtained 31.0% passes in English Language and 32.1% passes in Mathematics.

From the above discussion, it is evident that academic achievement is higher for pupils with good school attendance. Morover, the chi-square analysis indicates that there is a negative relationship between frequency of absence from school and academic achievement. Thus, the findings of this study concur with the findings of Wiseman (1967), Paige (1978),Sudarsono (1984), Fuller (1987) and Leong et al. (1990).

4.8   Self-perception   of   Ability   in   Class   and Academic Achievement

One   of   the   important   factors   that   influences academic   performance   is   the   motivation   of   one's   inner self   towards   success.   The   survey   by   Glasman   and   Binia-minow   (1981)   found   that   internal   locus   of   control, high   self-concept   and   high   academic   aspirations   affect achievement   in   a   positive   manner.   Coleman   (1966)   and Mayeske   (1972)   found   self-concept   to   be   a   strong determinant   of   academic   achievement.

Table   4.14   indicates   that   variation   in   academic performance   could   be   explained   in   terms   of   ability   in class.   For   example,   76.5%   of   pupils   who   were   in   the low   achievers'   category   perceived   themselves   to   be   the poorest   in   academic   performance.   In   contrast,   46.5%   of high   achievers   had   considered   themselves   as   above average'   pupils   in   their   respective   class.   Surpris-ingly,   none   of   the   high   achievers   indicated   themselves as   'amongst   the   best,'   reflecting   perhaps   the   'culture' of   modesty   among   Malaysians.   This   pattern   of   perception

was indicated by Aziz (1989) among the high-achieving Chinese pupils.

Table 4.14

Self-perception of Ability in Class and Academic Achievement in UPSR, 1991

Self-Perception of Ability in Class	Level of Achievement			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Among the Poorest	76.5 (13)	23.5 (4)	0 (0)	12.1 (17)
Below Average	43.8 (7)	56.2 (9)	0 (0)	11.4 (16)
Average	22.7 (10)	63.7 (28)	13.6 (6)	31.5 (44)
Above Average	9.3 (4)	44.2 (19)	46.5 (20)	30.7 (43)
Amongst the Best	15.0 (3)	85.0 (17)	0 (0)	14.3 (20)

Table 4.15 shows the perception of the pupils' own position in class and their performance in UPSR subjects. The data indicates that those who had higher positive perceptions of their position in the class performed well in all six UPSR papers. For example, 90.7% of pupils who considered themselves as above average passed in the Tamil (Comprehension) paper. Only 22.2% from the group which perceived themselves as weak pupils passed the same paper.

Likewise, the above average group performed better (76.7% passes) compared to the weakest group (11.1% passes) in Tamil (Composition). Similarly, pupils who considered themselves as above average recorded 74.4% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 58.8% in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), 72.1% in English Language and 72.1% in Mathematics. In contrast, the pupils who considered themselves as the poorest in academic performers scored 5.9% in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 0% in Bahasa Malaysia (Composition), 11.1% in English and 11.8% in Mathematics.

As indicated by Maznah (1987), Aziz (1989), Leong et al. (1990), Skaalvk (1994) and Vrugt (1994),

Table 4.15

Self-perception of Ability in Class by Academic
Achievements in UPSR Subjects

UPSR Subjects	Self-perception of Ability in Class										Signi-ficance Level
	Amongs Poorest		Below Average		Average		Above Average		Amongs the best		
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	
Tamil Comprehension	22.2 (4)	77.8 (14)	58.8 (10)	41.2 (7)	86.4 (38)	13.6 (6)	90.7 (39)	9.3 (4)	80.0 (16)	20.0 (4)	.000
Tamil Composition	11.1 (2)	88.9 (16)	52.9 (9)	47.1 (8)	54.5 (24)	45.5 (20)	76.7 (33)	23.3 (10)	35.0 (7)	65.0 (13)	.000
Bahasa Melaysia Comprehension	5.9 (1)	94.1 (16)	12.5 (2)	87.5 (14)	40.9 (18)	59.1 (26)	74.4 (32)	25.6 (11)	40.0 (8)	60.0 (12)	.000
Bahasa Melaysia Composition	0 (0)	100.0 (17)	6.3 (1)	93.8 (15)	25.0 (11)	75.0 (33)	55.8 (24)	44.2 (19)	20.0 (4)	80.0 (16)	.000
English Language	11.1 (2)	88.9 (16)	35.3 (4)	64.7 (11)	56.8 (25)	43.2 (19)	72.1 (31)	27.9 (12)	35.0 (7)	65.0 (13)	.000
Mathematics	11.8 (2)	88.2 (15)	25.0 (4)	75.0 (12)	65.9 (29)	34.1 (15)	72.1 (31)	27.9 (12)	35.0 (7)	65.0 (13)	.000

high self-perception predicted achievement to be above actual ability while the opposite is true for pupils who are low in self-efficacy. Research with low achievers indicates that they tend to be self-blaming for failures (such as low ability) and make external and unstable attributions for success (such as luck). They do not believe that their efforts are responsible for success or their lack of effort is responsible for failure. High achievers, by contrast, attribute success to internal and stable causes; they believe that they are smart, and when they work, they will succeed. If they fail in their tasks, they attribute it to external factors such as suggesting the test was unfair or internal factors such as not have worked hard enough (Stipek, 1988).

The findings suggest that PTSSR teachers should help pupils to set appropriate learning goals and help them to progress toward these goals. Any progress will lead to feelings of self-efficacy. Further, persistence and statements of confidence by teachers can also increase pupils' self-efficacy.

4.9 Tuition and Pupil Academic Achievement

Tuition has been identified as a variable that is correlated significantly with performance in Mathamatics and Science by Keeves (1972). Likewise, hiring a tutor to help the student in his studies is a significant factor in influencing academic achievement (Sudarsono,1984).

Table 4.16

Tuition by Academic Achievement
in UPSR , 1991

Tuition	Level of Achievement			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Without Tuition	32.2 (29)	53.3 (48)	14.5 (13)	64.3 (90)
With Tuition	16.0 (8)	58.0 (29)	26.0 (13)	35.7 (50)

Table 4.16 shows the relationship between pupils who took tuition and academic achievement in the UPSR. Of the pupils who took tuition, 26.0% were in the high achievement category and only 16.0% were in the low achievement group. Conversely, for those who did not take tuition, only 14.5 % were in the high achievers' category compared to 32.2% in the low achievers' category.

When the variable 'tuition' was analysed with UPSR subjects' the result was rather inconsistent. As shown in Table 4.17, tuition was significant for Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), English Language and Mathematics but it was found to be insignificant for the other three papers. About 82.0% of the pupils who took tuition passed Tamil (Comprehension) while suprisingly, a commendable 71.7% of the pupils who did not take tuition also passed the paper. This indicates that tuition does not have a strong effect on Tamil (Comprehension). The result for Tamil (Compositon) shows that tuiton can enhance pupils' performance. About 64.0% of the pupils who received tuition passed Tamil (Composition) as compared to 46.7% passes for those who

Table 4.17

Tuition by Academic Achievement
in UPSR Subjects, 1991

UPSR Subjects	Tuition				Signi-ficance Level
	Without Tuition		With Tuition		
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	
Tamil Comprehension	71.7 (66)	28.3 (26)	82.0 (41)	18.0 (9)	.250
Tamil Composition	46.7 (43)	53.3 (49)	64.0 (32)	36.0 (18)	.073
Bahasa Melaysia Comprehension	34.4 (31)	65.6 (59)	60.0 (30)	40.0 (20)	.006
Bahasa Melaysia Composition	24.4 (22)	75.6 (68)	36.0 (18)	64.0 (32)	.210
English Language	42.4 (39)	57.6 (53)	64.0 (32)	36.0 (18)	.022
Mathematics	44.4 (40)	55.6 (50)	66.0 (33)	34.0 (17)	.023

did not receive any tuition . This pattern was repeated for Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension and Composition), English Language and Mathematics. Generally, it can be said that pupils who took tuition performed better than those who did not receive any tuiton at all. It can be concluded that taking tuition seems to have enhanced the achievement level of PTSSR pupils in UPSR subjects.

4.10 Pupils' Academic Aspirations and Academic Achievement

The strong link between academic aspirations and achievement has been documented in many studies. Studies reviewed by Lefcourt (1982) are in general agreement with this link between academic aspirations and achievement. A meta-analysis done by Cooper, Burger and Good (1986) supports the existence of this link among elementary school children. They find that children who take more responsibility for academic performance tend to do better in school. In a review of studies related to pupils' academic aspirations, Stipek and Weisz (1981) concluded that most of these studies showed a significant relationship with academic achievement.

Table 4.18

Pupils' Academic Aspirations by Academic Achievement
in UPSR , 1991

Pupil's Academic Aspirations	Level of Achievement			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Form 3	73.7 (28)	26.3 (10)	0 (0)	27.2 (38)
Form 5	36.4 (8)	63.6 (14)	(0) (0)	15.7 (22)
Form 6	0 (0)	88.9 (8)	11.1 (1)	6.4 (9)
College/poly-technic	4.3 (1)	91.4 (21)	4.3 (1)	16.4 (23)
University	0 0	50.0 (24)	50.0 (24)	34.3 (48)

In this study, pupils' academic aspirations were related of academic achievement. As shown in Table 4.18, PTSSR pupils with high academic aspirations performed well in the UPSR, 1991. For example 50.0% of the pupils who wanted to obtain a university degree were in the high achievers' category. It is interesting to note that 65.4% of the pupils from the high achievement category have indicated their aspiration for post-secondary education (Form 6 to university). None of them had any aspirations for Form 5 level or below. About 73.7% of the pupils who had educational aspirations (Form 3) were in the low achievers' category. In fact, among the low achievers, only 4.3% of them had aspirations for college level education. None of them had aspirations for university education. The chi-square analysis indicated that there is a significant relationship between the PTSSR pupils' academic aspirations and their overall performance in UPSR, 1991 at the 0.01 level.

Within subjects, pupils' academic aspirations had a strong influence on academic achievement; PTSSR

pupils' academic aspirations and academic achievement were significant at the 0.01 level for all the six UPSR papers. As shown in Table 4.19, 100.0% of the pupils with intentions of attaining an university level education passed Tamil (Comprehension). At the same time, their pass rate was more than 85.0% for the remaining four subjects, the exception being Bahasa Malaysia (Composition) for which they recorded 62.5% passes. In contrast, pupils with low educational aspirations (Form 3) recorded poor performances in UPSR subjects. This group attained 33.3% passes in Tamil (Comprehension), 15.4% passes in Tamil (Composition), 5.3% passes in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension) and (Composition), 15.4% passes in English Language and 23.7% passes in Mathematics. This is a clear indication of the close link between educational aspirations of pupils and their academic achievement. These findings are in accordance with the findings of recent researchers (Vrugt,1994 and Skaalvik and Rankin, 1994).

Table 4.19

Pupils' Academic Aspirations by Academic Achievement
in UPSR Subjects, 1991

	Pupils' Academic Aspirations										
UPSR Subjects	Form 3		Form 5		Form 6		College/ polytechnic		University		Signi- ficance Level
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	
Tamil Comprehension	33.3 (13)	66.7 (26)	73.9 (17)	26.1 (6)	88.9 (8)	11.1 (1)	91.3 (21)	8.7 (2)	100.0 (48)	0 (0)	.000
Tamil Composition	15.4 (6)	84.6 (33)	39.1 (9)	60.9 (14)	55.6 (5)	44.4 (4)	60.9 (14)	39.1 (9)	85.4 (41)	14.6 (7)	.000
Bahasa Melaysia Comprehension	5.3 (2)	94.7 (36)	21.7 (5)	78.3 (18)	25.0 (2)	73.0 (6)	39.1 (9)	60.9 (14)	89.6 (43)	10.4 (5)	.000
Bahasa Melaysia Composition	5.3 (2)	94.7 (36)	4.3 (1)	95.7 (22)	12.5 (1)	87.5 (7)	26.1 (6)	73.9 (17)	62.5 (30)	37.5 (18)	.000
English Language	15.4 (6)	84.6 (33)	34.8 (8)	65.2 (15)	44.4 (4)	55.6 (5)	47.8 (11)	52.2 (12)	87.5 (42)	12.5 (6)	.000
Mathematics	23.7 (9)	76.3 (29)	30.4 (7)	69.6 (16)	50.0 (4)	50.0 (4)	43.5 (10)	56.3 (13)	89.6 (43)	10.4 (5)	.000

4.11 Pupils' Occupational Aspirations and Academic Achievement

Of the 140 pupils who responded to the item relating to occupational aspirations, 32.9% of them desired professional jobs (Table 4.20). While 33.6% of the pupils aspired for jobs of a semi-professional nature, 33.5% opted for blue-collar jobs.

As shown in Table 4.20, 51.2% of pupils who aspired for a professional job were the high achievers. In fact, only 10.6% of the high achievers opted for semi-professional jobs. None of them indicated a preference for blue-collar jobs. In comparision, none of the low achievers aspired for professional jobs whereas 51.9% of them indicated an inclination for blue-collar jobs. When the UPSR aggregate score was used in the analysis, the chi-square indicated that there is a strong relationship between the overall UPSR results and the pupils' job aspirations at the 0.05 level.

Similarly, the variable, pupils' occupational aspirations, was significantly related to the six

Table 4.20

Pupils' Occupational Aspirations by Academic
Achievement in UPSR, 1991

Occupational Aspirations of Pupils	Level of Achievement			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Professional jobs	0.0 (0)	48.1 (25)	51.2 (21)	32.8 (46)
Semi-professional jobs	21.3 (10)	68.1 (32)	10.6 (5)	33.6 (47)
Blue-collar jobs	51.9 (27)	48.8 (20)	0.0 (0)	33.6 (47)

UPSR papers at the 0.05 level. As shown in Table 4.21, pupils with high occupational aspirations scored a higher percentage of passes. For example, pupils who desired professional jobs scored 100% passes in Tamil (Comprehension), 82.9% in Tamil (Composition), 90.2% in Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 63.4 in Bahasa Malaysia (Compositon), and 87.8% in English Language and Mathematics. Conversely, pupils who indicated a

Table 4.21

Pupils' Occupational Aspirations by Academic
Achievement in UPSR Subjects, 1991

UPSR Subjects	Pupils' Occupational Aspirations						
	Blue Collar Jobs		Semi-Profes-sional Jobs		Profes-sional Jobs		Signi-ficance Level
	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	
Tamil Comprehension	50.9 (27)	49.1 (26)	81.3 (39)	18.8 (9)	100.0 (41)	0 (0)	.000
Tamil Composition	34.0 (18)	66.0 (35)	47.9 (23)	52.1 (25)	82.9 (34)	17.1 (7)	.000
Bahasa Melaysia Comprehension	13.5 (7)	86.5 (45)	36.2 (17)	63.8 (30)	90.2 (37)	9.8 (4)	.000
Bahasa Melaysia Composition	5.8 (3)	94.2 (49)	23.4 (11)	76.6 (36)	63.4 (26)	36.6 (15)	.000
English Language	24.5 (13)	75.5 (40)	45.8 (22)	54.2 (26)	87.8 (36)	12.2 (5)	.000
Mathematics	25.0 (13)	75.0 (39)	51.1 (24)	48.9 (23)	87.8 (36)	12.2 (5)	.000

preference for blue-collar jobs obtained 50.9% passes
in Tamil (Comprehension), 34.0% Tamil (Composition),
13.5% Bahasa Malaysia (Comprehension), 5.8% Bahasa
Malaysia (Composition), 24.5% English Language and
25.0% in Mathematics.

The study of Sudarsono (1984) indicated a simi-
lar finding among primary school pupils in Indonesia.
The Malaysian study by Leong et al. (1990) indicated
that occupational aspirations had a strong effect on
the academic achievement of primary school pupils.

The discussion on the relationship between pupil
factors and educational achievement in UPSR subjects
included the following factors: sex, SES, IQ, kinder-
garten, frequency of absenteeism from school, self-
perception of ability in class, tuition, and, pupils'
academic and occupational aspirations. Each of these
variables was related to academic performance of pupils
in the UPSR subjects and their aggregate scores. Of
the variables mentioned, however, mainly SES, IQ,
frequency of being absent from school, self-perception

of ability in class, tuition and, pupils' academic and
occupational aspirations were found to be significantly
related with the UPSR subjects and their aggregate
scores .