



Academic Performance of Primary School Students in Urban: Perspective of Urban Residents in Seremban

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Abstract

Rapid urbanization leads to challenges that impact the academic performance of primary schools' students. The primary problem is that urban residents perceive gaps and challenges in student academic performance due to the unique socioeconomic and environmental pressures of urban living. The research aims to examine the urban residents' perspectives on the academic performance of primary school students in Seremban. A quantitative approach was utilized, collecting data from 154 respondents through a structured, self-administered questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The findings revealed that urban residents in Seremban perceive primary school academic performance very positively, with a high mean score of 4.17, while Cronbach's Alpha of 0.954 demonstrated excellent internal reliability for the measurement scale. In conclusion, these findings proved that despite urban pressures, the current academic performance among primary school students in Seremban is strong and highly regarded by the community.

INTRODUCTION

National educational landscapes are drastically altered by rapid urbanization, which introduces numerous socio-environmental variables that have a direct impact on student development. Academic performance is fundamentally the measurement of student achievement across various academic subjects, serving as a critical benchmark for early intellectual growth (Akrofi, 2020). According to the Education Act 1996, primary school education in Malaysia comprises Standard 1 to Standard 6, is the main compulsory first stage of formal education for all children (MyGovernment, 2026). This phase seeks to develop a solid base of academic, personality, and social skills before they carry on to the secondary level.

Geographically, this study focuses on Seremban, the largest city in Negeri Sembilan, which has experienced rapid development, and it is the top-level urban area with very dense human-made physical structures including, house, commercial building, road, bridge, and railways (National Geographic Society, 2026). This urban landscape was further expanded on 2020, when the Majlis Perbandaran Nilai (MPN) officially merged to form a single, unified administrative entity known as the Majlis Bandaraya Seremban (MBS) (Seremban City Council, 2026). By merging

these areas into a single metropolis, this milestone consolidation significantly boosted industrial and infrastructural development across the expanded municipality. While raw institutional data provides statistical grades, it frequently ignores the regional, community-observed circumstances that influence these students. Therefore, to bridge the gap between educational policy and reality, this study focuses on comprehending the genuine observations and viewpoints of urban residents regarding the academic performance of primary school students.

Despite the infrastructural advantages of city living, rapid urbanization introduces compounding socioeconomic and environmental pressures that threaten early student growth. The primary problem is that urban residents perceive critical gaps and challenges affecting the academic performance of primary school students in Seremban, yet institutional assessments rely strictly on standardized grading and largely overlook these community-observed realities. Consequently, the objective of this study is to examine urban residents' perspectives regarding the academic performance of primary school students within the rapidly developing landscape in Seremban. This study is highly significant as it provides foundational insights for national education policies in Malaysia at the primary level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Urbanisation will be something important in the education system with academic achievement among primary school students in urban areas being a major focus of concern. The environment of urban schools producing a group of students with very different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. Academic success is the most important indicator measuring the quality of the institution and the development of students (Tharu, 2024). This indicator has become even more critical in Malaysia where teaching methods are changing to provide young people with practical and future skills; as a result, top academic achievements in metropolitan areas are gaining more ground (Liew & Teoh, 2022). Though, these results are not isolated as the unequal distribution of resources and different campus environments at various levels directly contribute to the widening of the achievement gap among different groups of students (Wu, 2025).

Although schools in urban areas offer primary school children with more learning facilities and opportunities than those in rural areas, urban children still record differing academic outcomes. According to Liew & Teoh (2022), urban education is a response to changing educational demands, student diversity and the necessity of preparing students with knowledge and skills needed in the 21st century. Evidence from comparative educational research suggests that a large proportion of the variation in students' achievement is attributable to the country context and school context of the achievement measure. This indicates that improved academic performance will have to be a continuous pursuit of educational quality and equity (Wu, 2025). Consequently, studying academic performance of urban primary school students can provide a useful basis for understanding the determinants of students' educational achievement (Govindarajoo et al., 2022).

Previous research shows several elements might play a role in the academic performance of the primary school students. Being one of the most important factors, study by Wu (2025), mentions about self-efficacy, teacher support, and classroom environment in students' mathematics achievement improvement. Moreover, Zakaria et al. (2025), reveal that mixing mobile learning with problem-based learning helps in increasing students' interest and academic performance. However, according to Govindarajoo et al. (2022) it is said that students who are unmotivated, those who have financial difficulties, and those who are not supported by family are the ones who get low academic results. The results of these studies imply that not only the abilities of students but also the support from family, teachers, and the learning environment have a substantial impact on academic performance.

Also, lots of research has supported the truth that parental involvement in children's education is one of the factors that can influence a student's academic performance. Some of the things that parents do at home like doing the learning activities with the child, the parent attending school with the child, and parent-teacher communication are some of the ways through which parents can help their children academically (Ahamed Latfi & Jamil, 2025). Besides that, Damodaran and Sundram (2026) who are in favor of this perspective have also shown through their empirical results that students acquire learning attitudes and study habits that are good through parental influence and support at home in turn, parents help at home plays a big role in developing students learning attitudes and study habits. Lack of parental support may sometimes be the biggest reason for a student's poor academic achievement (Govindarajoo et al. 2022). Because of this, it is very necessary for parents to be doing their role to support their children's academic successes.

Apart from parental involvement, the school environment and factors related to teachers are of prime importance in determining the academic progress of students. A study done by Al-Zu'bi et al (2024) illustrate that a safe and healthy environment in school, collaboration among teachers, school leaders support and parental involvement are the main factors that create teachers' commitment that ultimately results in high levels of students' academic performance. On top of that, Kusmawan et al. (2025) back up the statement by uncovering that teachers' participation in curriculum

development makes it possible for them to design the instruction that leads to better learning outcomes of students. The improper implementation of assessment practices and the excessive focus on testing are the reasons for the difficulties of students in their learning (Marzaini et al., 2024). Next, Wu (2025) recognizes the teacher assistance and a favourable classroom atmosphere as two very crucial aspects of students' academic enhancement. In short, a caring school climate and committed teachers are probably the main factors that will help students to achieve higher levels of performance.

Since the switch to e-learning during the pandemic, digital technology has been a very powerful tool for enhancing students' learning. The digital incorporation has generated students' enthusiasm, collaboration, and self-directed learning (Azman et al., 2025). It not only helps the development of higher thinking skills but also enhances the students' academic results (Mat et al., 2024). However, through a hybrid use of mobile learning and problem-based learning, the author summarizes that students' motivation and academic level are very strongly connected (Zakaria et al., 2025). Other than that, the lack of technology and internet access might leave some students very much at the disadvantage side of the digital divide (Norman et al., 2022). As a result, while digital learning opens a world of benefits, it is imperative that technology be made accessible to all for their learning to be effective.

Research has revealed several reasons that lead to the poor academic achievement of primary school students. Among other things, such parental support, financial difficulties, lack of motivation, and inadequacy of learning facilities are some of the main causes for students' underachievement (Govindarajoo et al., 2022). In the same way, Marzaini et al. (2024) state that an exam-orientated learning environment and the poorly designed assessment procedures can impair learners' learning and hinder students' achievement. Apart from these, Norman et al. (2022) raised the issue that the digital divide affects not only the availability of information but also limits students, mainly those from less advantaged backgrounds. Further, research by Wu (2025) believes that partly performance is also dependent on the availability of resources and disparities in education systems. It emerges from these studies that poor academic performance is attributable to multiple causative factors, and external assistance is required to address these problems.

This is important if we want to see that students achieve academically. A collaborative teamwork among the educators, school officials, and parents can create a positive learning environment and at the same time, increase the commitment of the teachers (Al-Zu'bi et al., 2024). Besides that, Damodaran and Sundram (2026) realized that a proper communication between parents and teachers is an essential factor in meeting students' educational needs. Working together with parents, teachers, school management, and policymakers is a way to find a solution for the problem of poor academic performance because all these parties are important in the role of providing educational support to students, as stated by Govindarajoo et al. (2022). Also, education can be taken to a higher level and so can be the students' learning if practices of both an inclusive and collaborative nature are carried out (Kusmawan et al., 2025). Because of this, it is key that the stakeholders keep cooperating with each other in student support and education provision.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized a quantitative and cross-sectional research design to understand the perceptions of urban residents' regarding primary school academic performance in Seremban, Negeri Sembilan. To gather a comprehensive dataset that accurately reflects the localized urban population, a dual-channel digital distribution strategy was deployed. First, the link to a structured, self-administered Google Forms questionnaire was actively distributed online via WhatsApp platform. Second, a physical field approach was executed on the ground across public spaces and residential areas throughout the Seremban district by scanning a printed QR code that immediately directed them to the digital questionnaire on their mobile devices. Through this integrated approach, a convenience sample of 154 demographically diverse respondents from the Seremban district was completed. The research instrument itself was strictly structured into two primary components covering demographic and urban residents' perspectives on the focus variable. Items were scored using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). While data analysis relied on descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, instrument reliability was confirmed via Cronbach's alpha coefficient against an acceptable benchmark of 0.60. Rigorous ethical protocols were followed to guarantee respondent anonymity, informed consent, voluntary participation, and data privacy.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Respondent

Table 1.0 shows the demographic details of the 154 respondents in this study. For gender, female respondents were the majority with 70.1% (n=108), whereas only 29.9% (n=46) males were there. Meaning females were relatively more present throughout the survey. For race and ethnicity, almost all respondents were Malay at 96.8% (n=149). However, Chinese and Indian respondents were only 1.3% (n=2) each, whereas one respondent identified as Iban 0.6% (n=1). From this, the sample was predominantly of one ethnic group. When it came to occupation, the highest percentage was for those who were not working at 46.8% (n=72). Those who have jobs in the private sector were the second largest group at 21.4% (n=33), while the government sector came next at 14.9% (n=23). The remaining groups were students at 10.4% (n=16) and self-employed, the smallest group here at 6.5% (n=10). On educational qualifications, the larger part of the respondents were Degree holders at 57.8% (n=89). Next in line were respondents with Diploma qualifications at 18.8% (n=29) and Secondary School education at 15.6% (n=24). A slightly smaller number of respondents indicated Master/PhD qualifications (5.8%, n=9), whereas only 1.9% (n=3) had Primary School education as their highest educational level. Mostly, the respondents were mostly of the tertiary-educated group.

Table 1.0
PROFILE OF RESPONDENT (N=154)

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Female	108	70.1
	Male	46	29.9
Race / Ethnicity	Malay	149	96.8
	Chinese	2	1.3
	Indian	2	1.3
	Iban	1	0.6
Occupation	Government Sector	23	14.9
	Private Sector	33	21.4
	Self-Employed	10	6.5
	Unemployed	72	46.8
	Student	16	10.4
Academic background	Primary School	3	1.9
	Secondary School	24	15.6

	Diploma	29	18.8
	Degree	89	57.8
	Master / PhD	9	5.8

To evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement scale, this study utilized Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which measures the interrelatedness of items within a construct (Ahmad et al., 2024). According to the classification framework by Ahmad et al. (2024), and alpha value of 0.90 or above signifies excellent reliability, while values between 0.80 and 0.90 are good, 0.70 to 0.80 are acceptable, 0.60 to 0.70 are questionable, 0.50 to 0.60 are poor, and scores below 0.50 are unacceptable. As illustrated in Table 1.1, the construct evaluating the *Perspectives of Urban Residents Regarding Academic Performance of Primary School Students* comprised 15 items and recorded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.954. Hence, this value is classified as excellent, demonstrating that the items used to measure the urban perspectives are internally consistent and reliable for further analysis.

Table 1.1
RELIABILITY TEST

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Assumed
Perspectives of Urban Residents Regarding Academic Performance of Primary School Students	15	0.954	Excellent

Mean scores in this study were evaluated using the interpretation scale presented in Table 1.2, which categorizes scores as (1.00 to 2.33), medium (2.34 and 3.67), or high (3.68 to 5.00). According to the descriptive data in Table 1.3, the variable *Perspectives of Urban Residents Regarding Academic Performance of Primary School Student* yielded a mean score of 4.166 and a standard deviation of 0.637 across 154 respondents. Because this mean value falls within the 3.68 to 5.00 range, it signifies a high level of community agreement, confirming that residents hold an overwhelmingly positive view of student academic outcomes.

Table 1.2
LEVEL OF MEAN SCORE RANGE

Mean Score Range	Level
1.00 – 2.33	Low
2.34 – 3.67	Medium
3.68 – 5.00	High

Table 1.3

MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Perspectives of Urban Residents Regarding Academic Performance of Primary School Students	4.166	0.637	154

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study examined the academic performance of primary school students in urban areas based on the perspectives of urban residents in Seremban. The findings conclusively demonstrate that educational policies in Malaysia are highly effective within the urban settings, as evidenced by the community's overwhelmingly positive perception and a high mean score of 4.17. Malaysia's urban education framework has successfully leveraged modern infrastructure, extensive technological resources, and advanced facilities to create a favorable learning ecosystem that fosters robust student development. However, the study also reveals that high-tech exposure alone does not guarantee success, rather, the ultimate impact of these policies relies on a holistic, collaborative network involving students, parents, schools, and the wider community. Moving forward, these insights serve as a foundational guide for teachers, parents, and policymakers to continuously refine urban education strategies, ensuring that the digital and structural advantages provided by national policies translate into sustained, inclusive academic excellence for all primary school pupils.

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