**Type of Survey Instrument**

After much deliberation, I have decided to utilize the principles offered by the *'Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID)*'; while it is an extensive research instrument utilized by the Survey Research Center of the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, the world's longest running since 1968, certain principles from it can be adopted to establish an extremely relevant Panel Study of Families in Poverty with a special focus on their ability to provide support to the education of their children can be undertaken as well. If an annual panel study can be conducted with a good sampling of families in states and across the nation, it will allow us a rated survey of current trends in terms of issues as well as changes and development. It will keep concerned agencies and stakeholders informed with their hand upon the pulse of the true state of education in America as it relates to the life chances of children from poor families. The key in PSID is the continued collection of data throughout the year. As such, I need to identify the information that must be collected and would be relevant to my study. I intend to keep the information simple to make data collection simple and regular as well.

**Participants**

Prior to designing the information that needs to be collected, it is important to identify and get the consent of the participants. I am going to collect, as test period information over one school year. Eventually, I would like to collect information one school year after the other ensuring that a good sampling participates in the information collection effort. My Participants will be a selection of families from the communities I serve as a social worker. I have already gotten permission from my supervisor and the district manager as my study will also be relevant to them in terms of keeping note of important information. All I need to do now is to contact each family and ask if they would wish to participate. Each participating family is rewarded extra-financial aid as their participant and cooperation means they will have to spend sometime with me for a period of time. Additionally, participation is voluntary and those who do are understood to be disclosing information that is their prerogative to share or not to share. As of record, I have heard a pledge from over 14 families who are willing to voluntarily participate in the project. I have spoken to the entire family, and not just the head of households as part of my task as support worker. One of the aims is to provide therapeutic communication and seasons with family in the interviews as well to also make information gathering work not only for the purposes of research but also for the well-being of the participants. The notion here is to uphold the principle of beneficence. Children are generally aged 7-10 (1st to 4th graders), the family is relatively young with parents averaging at 29 for women and 32 for men.

**Sampling Information**

The 14 families will yield a sample of around 70 participants. This is representative of the population of around 550 from the community that is the focus of the study with a confidence level (how sure I am going to be) of 95% and a confidence interval of 10.87 (assumed margin of error). I have calculated these numbers using the available instruments from Survey Systems (2012).

**Subject of Study & Hypothesis**

My research topic of interest will look at children in poverty; in particular, I will investigate parents who are involved in their educational goals and those who are not involved in the educational goals of their children. The study will research comparison and contrast with available academic data of performance growth curves from kindergarten to 4th graders. In major part quantitative, it will look into the correlation between availability of resources of the family, parent involvement and the academic performance of the child. The study is relative to my interest in looking at the relationship between poverty and parent management of their child’s education. I am of the belief that education is vital to the future of our nation and every child should be given every opportunity to succeed in the educational system. I will call the study: "Effects on Children’s Academic Performance (1st graders through 4th grader)s when comparing Family Structure Types".

My Hypothesis is thus: Although the complex pathways through which family poverty affects child educational outcomes have yet to be fully understood, it is clear that childhood poverty compromises the educational prospects of children and adolescents. Many poor children begin life at a disadvantage, due to family income, low maternal education, single parents, young parents, or a combination of these factors. Thus, the level of disadvantage may become exacerbated through the lack of cognitively stimulating or safe home environments, conflicted parent-child interactions, poor school and child care environments, and poor neighbourhood conditions.

**Variables**

The independent variables will be the age, gender and grade level of children, the age and gender of the parents, the income level of parents & their education attainment, and lastly, the scores and academic performance of the kids.

The dependent variables are the academic performance and capacity of children, the purchasing power and homelife of families (dependent on the incomes), the outlook of families and family members on education as it relates to their family situation, the support (explained at a qualitative level) provided by each family/parent sets to their children and their education. The control variables are only two - ethnicity and conditions of poverty while extraneous variable include the level of support provided or invested by parents in the education of their children.

The Questions that drive Hypothesis, sampling and Variables:

1. How has parents’ involvement of educational activities within the home environment and the community differed between high-achieving and low-achieving students and the reasons why the effectiveness of the involvement in their child’s education differ?
2. Is the frequency of parental involvement between high-achieving and low-achieving students different? Why are the indicators reflecting difference?
3. Are limited resources in the family reflective of the child’s performance and places barriers that affect learning?
4. Of the 'supportive parents' , what percentage has achieved college education? If not, what is the highest level achieved thus far?
5. Of the non-supportive parents, what is the generally held belief among them regarding education? How is this affecting the outlook and motivation of the children?

**Survey Questions**

What questions will be asked and what information should be gathered? I have so far decided upon the ones below, all gathered in short 10 minute interviews, regularly every grading period. There will be 2 sets: one for parents and one for their children:

Parents -

* Employment,
* Earnings,
* Income from all sources,
* Expenditures covering 100% of total household spending,
* Transfers,
* Housing,
* Education,
* Geospatial data,
* health status,
* Behaviours and ideas towards education,
* Support provided to child,
* Early childhood and experience of education at school and at home,
* Emotional well-being,
* Life satisfaction,
* Motivation to help/disregard the education and life chances of the child;
* Participation in school and community programs to improve the life chances of the child;
* Financial distress (if any),
* Overall outlook as to the state of family affairs and the future of their children.

For Kids:

* Age & grade level,
* Academic performance capacity so far,
* Difficulties experienced at school,
* Difficulties experienced at home,
* Help provided at the school,
* Help provided by parents,
* Support and motivation of parents,
* Kit and materials procured by parents and the school for the education of the child,
* Connection with parents in terms of ides with regards to education,
* Understanding of the importance of education and qualifications,
* Personal views with regards to education.
* How has ´lack´affected their feelings towards school. Has it deterred them or motivated them?

**Conclusion**

These set of information are the ones that I have so far gathered and created on the basis of utilising PSID´s approach on the subject of my choice. I think that if successful, the results it will yield would be insightful and significant and might help in providing better life chances to children from poor families.

**Resources:**

<http://psidonline.isr.umich.edu/>

<http://simba.isr.umich.edu/VS/s.aspx>

<http://www.src.isr.umich.edu/>

<http://www.surveysystem.com/sscalc.htm>

<http://www.cls.ioe.ac.uk/page.aspx?&sitesectionid=318&sitesectiontitle=Child+Development+Supplement+to+the+Panel+Study+of+Income+Dynamics>

(Print)

Hill, Martha (1991). *The Panel Study of Income Dynamics A User's Guide*. SAGE Publications, Inc. .