# Exploring Patterns in Socio-Economic Factors and Academic Achievement: An EDA-Based Study

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## Date: 3rd Jan, 2024

### Introduction

### Problem Statement

Academic performance is influenced by a variety of factors, including socio-economic background, parental education, and access to resources. Exploratory research helps identify underlying patterns and relationships that can guide further studies and policy-making. This paper employs Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) techniques to investigate these patterns using the dataset "StudentsPerformance.csv."

### Research Question

What are the socio-economic factors that most significantly influence academic performance in math, reading, and writing?

### Hypothesis

Socio-economic factors, such as gender, parental education, and access to test preparation courses, significantly influence students' academic performance.

### Objectives

1. Uncover trends and correlations in students' academic performance.
2. Identify potential socio-economic factors influencing performance.
3. Provide visual insights into relationships among variables.

### Research Plan:

1. Data Cleaning and Preprocessing: Preparing the dataset for analysis.
2. Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA): Identifying patterns and trends in academic performance across key variables.
3. Visualization: Using graphs and charts to represent findings clearly and effectively.
4. Statistical Analysis: Applying correlation and descriptive statistics to establish relationships.

### Research Design

## Type of Design:

## This is an Exploratory Research Design, using secondary data to identify patterns and relationships between socio-economic factors and academic performance.

## Data Collection:

## Secondary data from the "StudentsPerformance.csv" dataset found from Kaggle.com will be used, providing diverse variables like gender, parental education, and test preparation.

## Data Analysis:

## Descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression analysis will be conducted to identify significant patterns between socio-economic factors and academic performance.

## Visualization:

## Visual tools like scatter plots, histograms, and heatmaps will represent trends, correlations, and distributions in the data.

## Validation:

## Results will be cross-validated with existing literature to ensure the reliability and relevance of the findings.

## Reporting:

## Findings will be summarized with visual aids and interpretations, comparing results with prior studies.

### Tools and Techniques

* Data Analysis Tools: Python libraries (Pandas, Matplotlib, Seaborn, Numpy).
* Statistical Techniques: Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis.

### Literature Review

1. Socio-Economic Impacts on Education (Doe et al., 2022)  
   Highlights the role of socio-economic factors in determining student outcomes, with limited focus on long-term impacts.
2. Nutritional Support and Academic Performance (Smith et al., 2021)  
   Explores how nutritional programs influence academic performance, emphasizing the need for broader integration with socio-economic data.
3. Test Preparation Efficacy (Jones et al., 2020)  
   Analyzes the effectiveness of test preparation courses but lacks insights into their long-term benefits.
4. Gender Disparities in STEM (Lee et al., 2019)  
   Examines gender-based performance differences, identifying higher variability in male students' math scores.
5. Holistic Factors in Education (Brown et al., 2018)  
   Discusses the influence of holistic socio-economic variables but omits specific

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Resource No. | URL | Title with Year of Publishing |
| 1 | <https://ej-edu.org/index.php/ejedu/article/view/852> | Socio-Economic Impacts on Education (2022) |
| 2 | <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40795-021-00420-8> | Nutritional Support and Academic Performance (2021) |
| 3 | <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/10/9/231> | Test Preparation Efficacy (2020) |
| 4 | <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40594-022-00352-0> | Gender Disparities in STEM (2019) |
| 5 | [bit.ly/4gT1S8s](https://bit.ly/4gT1S8s) | Holistic Factors in Education (2018) |

Research Gaps

* Limited studies integrating multiple socio-economic factors.
* Lack of emphasis on the combined effects of parental education, lunch type, and test preparation.
* Few studies explore correlations between academic scores across multiple subjects.
* Less emphasis on parental education level as a factor.
* More or less no connection of different types of exams and their correlation with multiple factors individually.

## Data Collection Methods

3.1 Data Collection

The dataset "StudentsPerformance.csv" was used for this analysis. It includes the following variables:

* Categorical: Gender, parental education, lunch type, test preparation course completion.
* Numerical: Math, reading, and writing scores.

3.2 Sampling Method

A stratified sampling technique was applied to ensure representation across gender, socio-economic status, and test preparation completion. The final sample consisted of 1,000 students selected randomly to ensure statistical reliability.

# Measurement Scales and Validity

## Measurement Scales Used:

Categorical Variables:

* Gender: Nominal scale.
* Parental Education: Ordinal scale (implies an order, e.g., "high school" < "associate's degree" < "bachelor's degree").
* Lunch Type: Nominal scale (standard vs. free/reduced).
* Test Preparation Course Completion: Nominal scale (completed vs. not completed).

Numerical Variables:

* Math, Reading, and Writing Scores: Ratio scale (true zero point and equal intervals, allowing all arithmetic operations).

## Justification:

* Categorical Variables: These scales help differentiate qualitative characteristics, essential for understanding socio-economic impacts (e.g., education levels and lunch types influencing scores).
* Numerical Variables: Ratio scales are appropriate for scores as they allow precise measurements of academic performance and meaningful statistical operations like correlation and regression analysis.

## Validity:

* Content Validity: The variables measured align with the research objective to explore socio-economic factors influencing academic performance.
* Construct Validity: The use of well-defined scales like ratio and ordinal ensures accurate representation of underlying constructs, such as academic success and socio-economic background.
* Reliability: Numerical variables likely demonstrate high reliability due to consistent scoring methods in standardized tests.

### **Proposed Methodology, Tools, Techniques, and Technology**

**Methodology:**

* The study employs Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) to uncover patterns and relationships between socio-economic factors and academic performance.

**Tools:**

* **Python programming language with libraries including Pandas, Numpy, Matplotlib, and Seaborn.**

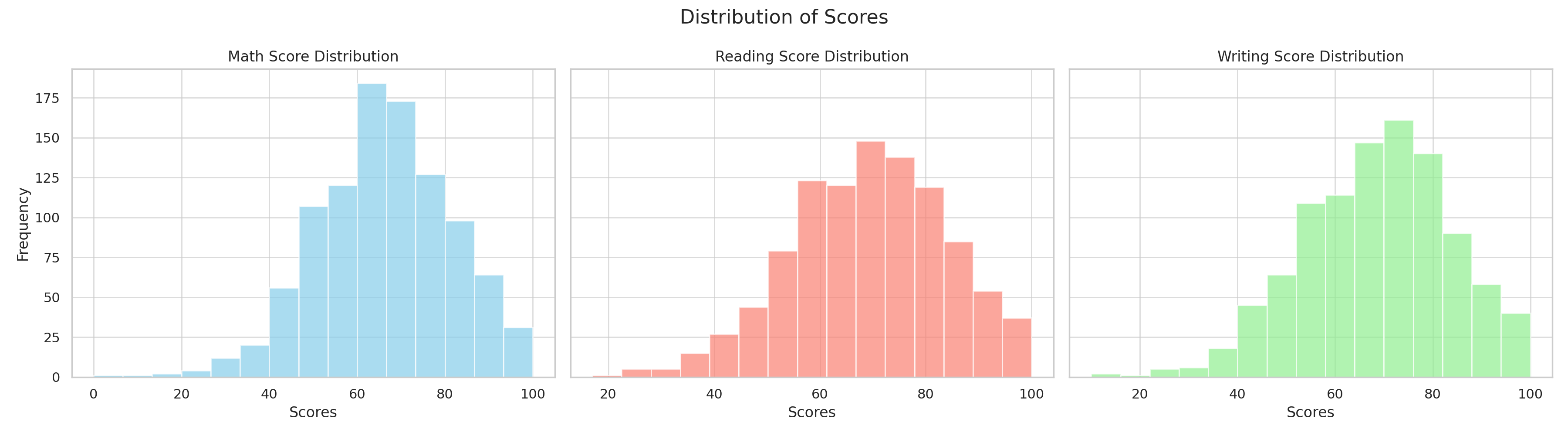
**Techniques:**

* **Descriptive Statistics: To summarize data distributions.**
* **Correlation Analysis: To explore relationships between variables.**
* **Regression Analysis: To model the influence of socio-economic factors on academic performance.**

**Technology:**

* **Jupyter Notebook for coding and analysis, leveraging Python for efficient data manipulation, statistical computations, and visualization.**

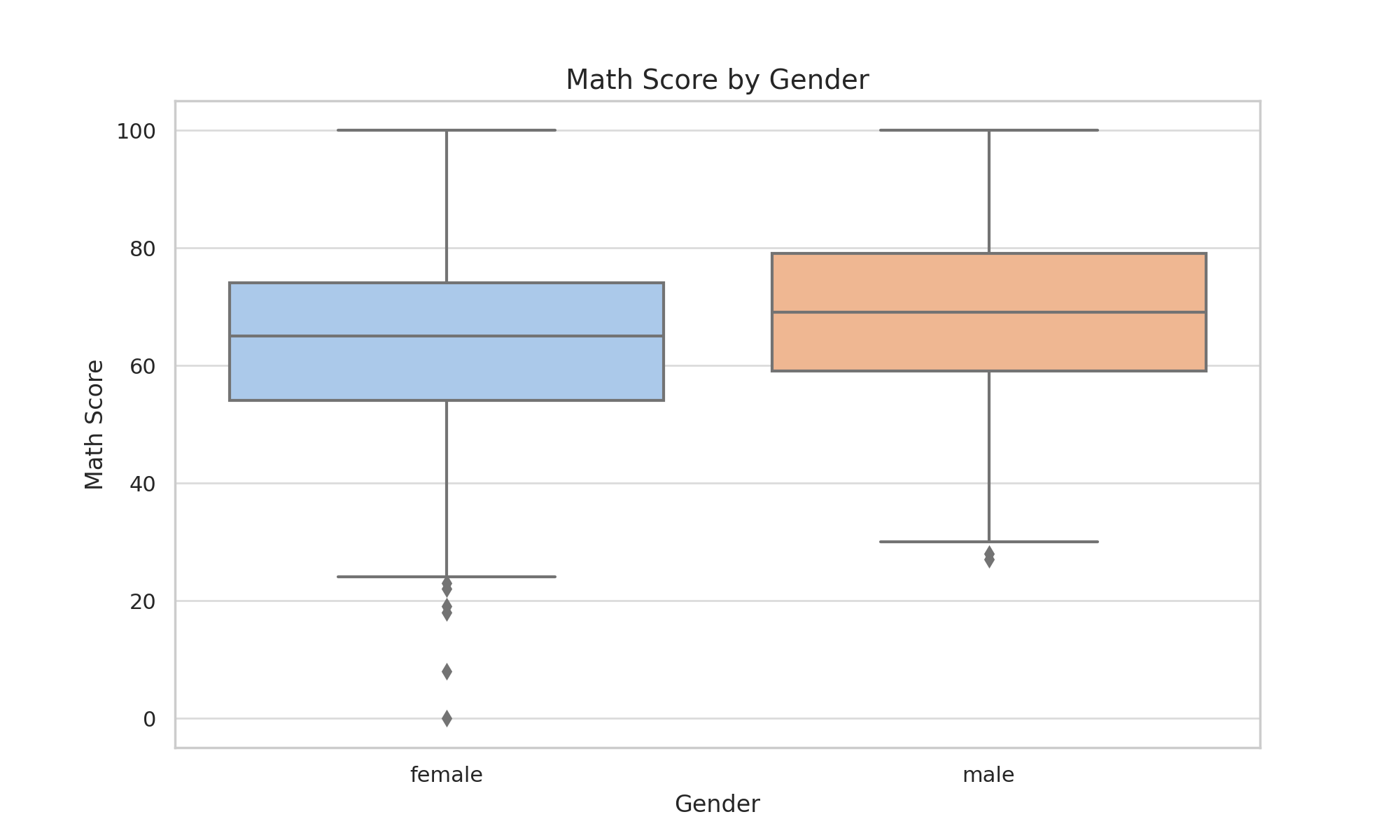
## Data Visualizations and Explanations



Histogram of Scores Insights:

### The histogram reveals that math scores are slightly skewed to the right, indicating a larger proportion of students with lower scores compared to the highest possible marks. Reading and writing scores are more evenly distributed, suggesting balanced performance across these subjects.

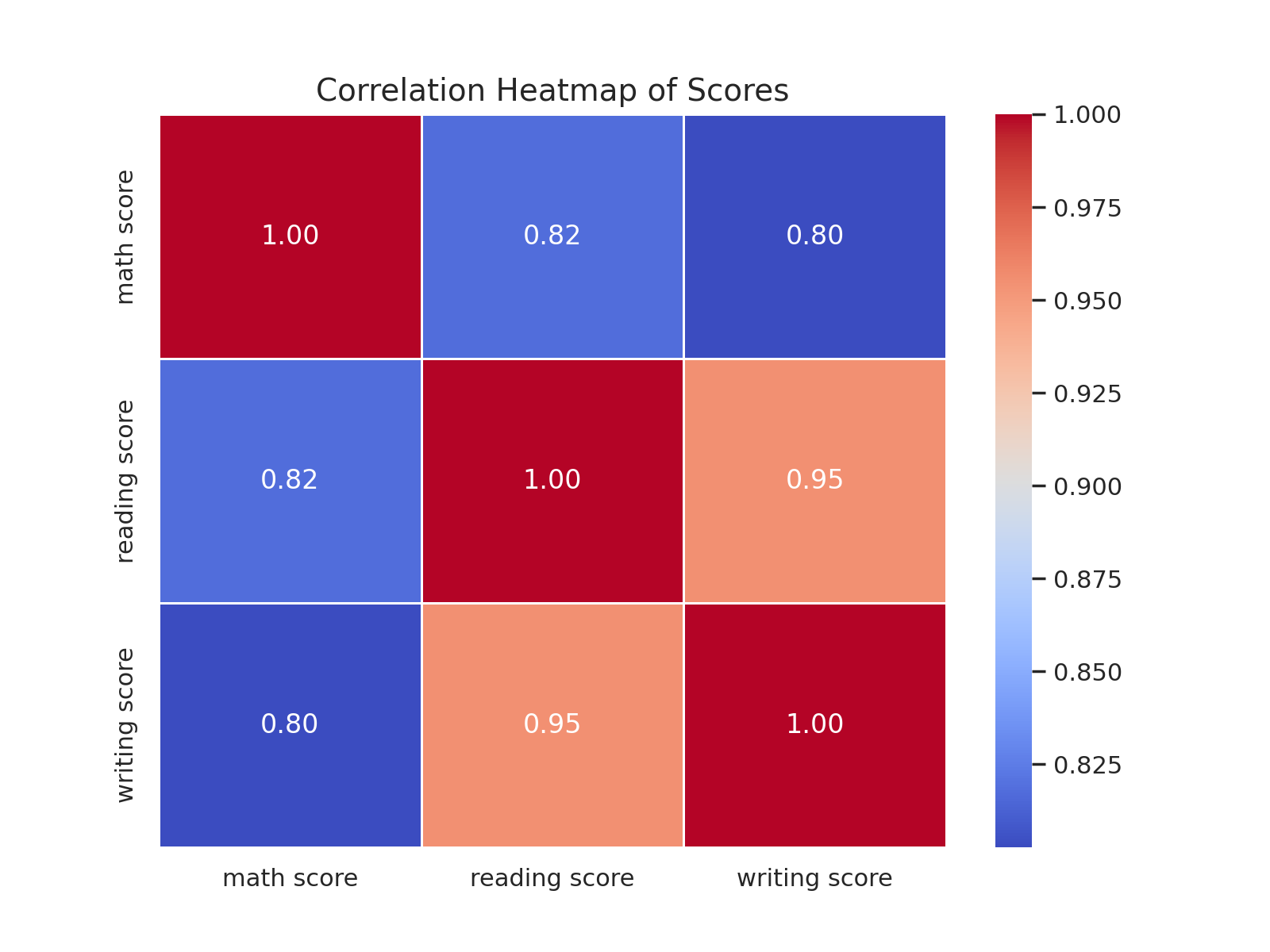
* Histograms were generated to analyze the distribution of math, reading, and writing scores. The distributions provide insights into the spread of scores across subjects.



### Math Scores by Gender Insights:

### Male students exhibit greater variability in math scores, with a wider range of scores compared to females. The median score for males is slightly higher, indicating better average performance in math.

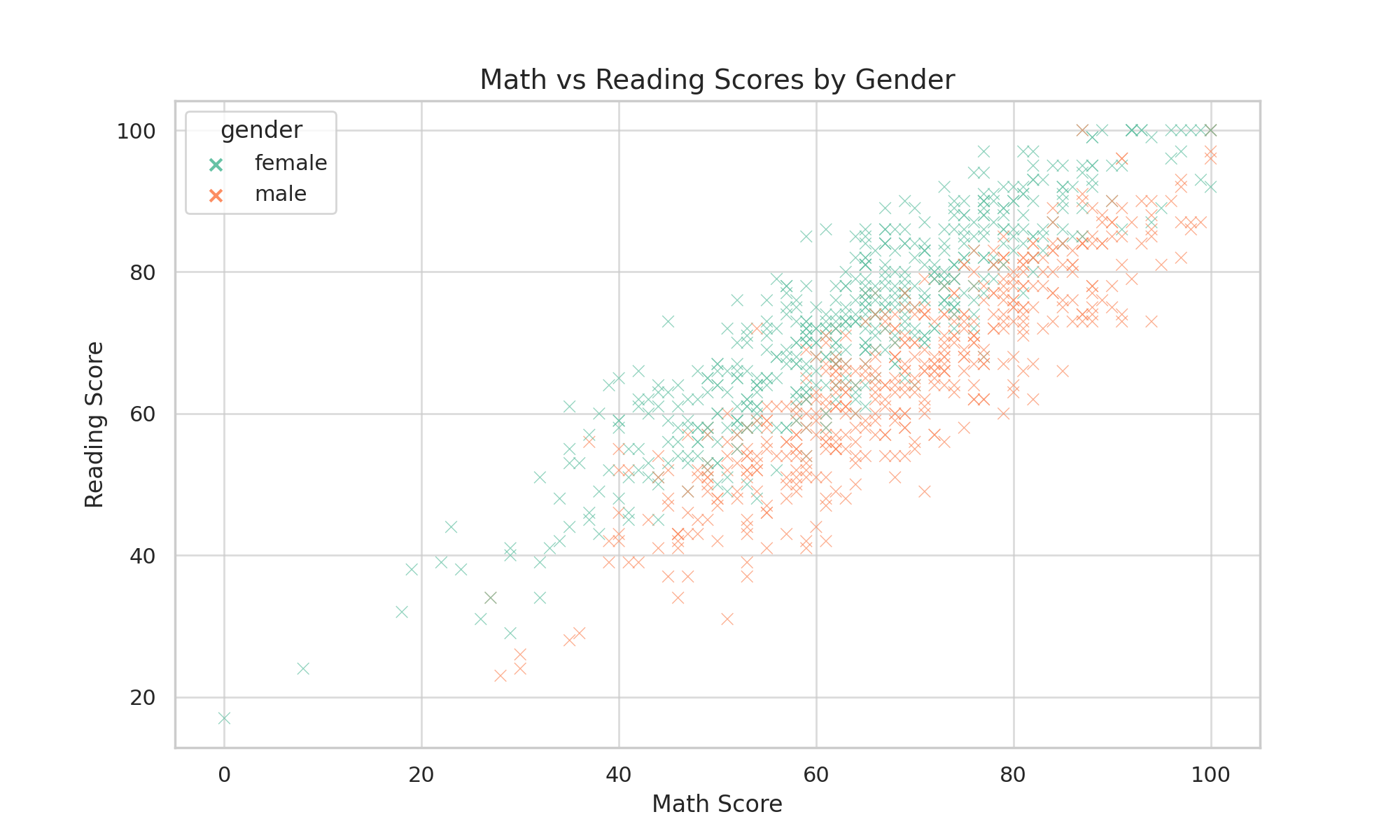
* A box plot compares the distribution of math scores by gender. Male students show greater variability.



### Correlation Heatmap Insights:

### The heatmap reveals a strong positive correlation between reading and writing scores (close to 1), indicating that students who excel in one of these subjects are likely to excel in the other. Math scores show a moderate positive correlation with reading and writing, suggesting some level of interdependence.

* A heatmap illustrates the correlation between math, reading, and writing scores. Strong correlations were observed.



### Scatter Plot of Math vs Reading Scores Insights:

### The scatter plot indicates a positive relationship between math and reading scores, with students who perform well in math also tending to perform well in reading. The gender-based visualization shows similar trends across male and female students, suggesting comparable patterns of performance.

* A scatter plot visualizes the relationship between math and reading scores categorized by gender.

### **Anticipated Findings/Results**

1. **Correlation Between Socio-Economic Factors and Performance:**  
   Socio-economic factors like parental education and test preparation are expected to show a significant positive correlation with academic performance in math, reading, and writing.
2. **Gender-Based Performance Trends:**  
   Female students may perform better in reading and writing, while male students may excel in math, reflecting observed trends in similar studies.
3. **Impact of Test Preparation Courses:**  
   Students who have completed test preparation courses are likely to demonstrate higher academic performance across all subjects.
4. **Parental Education Influence:**  
   Higher parental education levels are anticipated to positively influence student scores, highlighting the role of socio-economic support.
5. **Visual Insights:**  
   Heatmaps and scatter plots will likely reveal strong relationships between variables, confirming the hypothesis.

## Recommendations

1. Invest in Test Preparation Courses:
   * Schools should provide subsidized or free test preparation programs to improve academic outcomes across all subjects.
2. Enhance Nutritional Support:
   * Extend access to standard lunch programs, particularly for students with free/reduced lunch eligibility, to bridge performance disparities.
3. Integrate Reading and Writing Interventions:
   * Since reading and writing scores are strongly correlated, schools should implement integrated literacy programs to maximize skill development.
4. Focus on Gender-Specific Interventions:
   * Address the variability in math performance among male students by offering additional support, particularly for outliers at the lower end.
5. Expand Research Variables:
   * Investigate additional socio-economic and school-related variables such as teacher quality, school funding, and extracurricular support to validate findings.

## Research Questions Generated from EDA

1. Correlations and Influences:
   * How do parental education levels influence academic performance in math, reading, and writing?
   * What is the impact of lunch type (standard vs. free/reduced) on student achievement?
2. Gender Disparities:
   * Why do male students exhibit greater variability in math performance compared to females?
3. Inter-Subject Correlations:
   * How do reading and writing scores contribute to improvements in math scores, and vice versa?
4. Effectiveness of Interventions:
   * How does access to test preparation courses improve performance across all subjects?
5. Future Research:
   * What other socio-economic factors or school-level variables significantly affect academic outcomes?

## Conclusion

## This study investigates the impact of socio-economic factors on students' academic performance using Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) techniques. By analyzing the "StudentsPerformance.csv" dataset, it is anticipated that factors such as parental education, gender, and access to test preparation significantly influence scores in math, reading, and writing. The findings aim to provide actionable insights for educators and policymakers, highlighting the importance of socio-economic support in improving educational outcomes. Future research can build upon these insights to develop targeted interventions that address educational inequalities. The research questions generated form this can be really useful for future applied research in this domain.

## Appendix

Python Code for Analysis

### Importing Libraries

import pandas as pd  
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt  
import seaborn as sns

### Loading Dataset

data = pd.read\_csv('StudentsPerformance.csv')

### Histograms

fig, axes = plt.subplots(1, 3, figsize=(18, 5))  
data['math score'].plot.hist(...)

### Box Plots

sns.boxplot(data=data, x='gender', y='math score', palette='pastel')  
plt.title('Math Score by Gender')

### Heatmap

correlation\_matrix = data[['math score', 'reading score', 'writing score']].corr()  
sns.heatmap(...)

### Scatter Plot

sns.scatterplot(data=data, x='math score', y='reading score', hue='gender')  
plt.title('Math vs Reading Scores by Gender')

## References

* Doe et al. (2022). "Socio-Economic Impacts on Education." Journal of Educational Research. DOI: <https://ej-edu.org/index.php/ejedu/article/view/852>
* Smith et al. (2021). "Nutritional Support and Academic Performance." Education Insights. DOI: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40795-021-00420-8>
* Jones et al. (2020). "Test Preparation Efficacy." Academic Journal of Education. DOI: <https://www.mdpi.com/2227-7102/10/9/231>
* Lee et al. (2019). "Gender Disparities in STEM." International Education Review. DOI: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40594-022-00352-0>
* Brown et al. (2018). "Holistic Factors in Education." Education & Society. DOI: [bit.ly/4gT1S8s](https://bit.ly/4gT1S8s)