
Research Papers



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract

The main objective of the present study was to test the relationship between family environment and academic achievements. The participants of the study were included two hundred students i.e. 100 boys and 100 girls -- randomly selected from the 9th standard of Marathi medium schools of Nashik City. Family Environment Scale by Dr. Harpreet Bhatia and Dr. N.K. Chadha (1993) was used for the purpose of data collection. Second semester (yearly) marks of 9th standard were taken. Data analysis was done by using Pearson correlation coefficient. Findings of the study revealed that family environment score was positively correlated with the academic achievement of the students.

Introduction

The family is the oldest and the most important of all the institutions that man has devised to regulate and integrate his behavior as he strives to satisfy his basic needs. The family is basically a unit in which parents and children live together. Its key position rests on its multiple functions in relation to overall development of its members, their protection and overall well-being. Therefore, it would emerge not only the social and physical well-being of the individual is taken care of by the family, but the psychological well-being as well.

Family environment and academic achievement

Reviewed researches claimed that there is a lot of importance of the home environment or family on pupil's/student's academic performance. The home has a great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic state. In the view of Ajila and Olutola (2007), the

state of the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in an individual's life. This is because the family background and context of a child affect his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during school periods, yet parents and the individual's experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is.

Previous studies have been only concentrated on the area of socio-economic status of parents. Other aspects of parental environment such as the structure of the family have been grossly neglected. Yet, Ichado (1998) stated that parent's constant disagreement affects children emotionally and this could lead to poor academic performance in school.

Family environment appeared to influence home adjustment as well as academic performance

of the students. Home adjustment appeared to influence children, especially on adolescence. The image of adolescence is a time of storm and stress, intense moodiness and preoccupation with the self has permeated both professional and lay perspectives on this developmental period. The families in general and parents in particular, have often been deemed to be the most important support system available to the child. The strongest factor in molding a child's personality is his relationship with his parents. If his parents love him with a generous, even flowing, non-possessive affection and if they treat him as a person who likes themselves, has both rights and responsibilities, then his chances of developing normally as well and good. But if they diverge from this, the child's development may be distorted (Cox & Cox, 1979). Adolescents have a poor reputation of getting along poorly with their families. The teenage boy or girl may be faced with serious problems of adjustment when there is a difference of opinions, ideals and attitudes with their parents. Conflicts may arise between the adolescent and the parents that are difficult to resolve if neither is willing nor able to compromise. It takes all the tact and understanding of parents to handle their teenage son or daughter (Coleman, 1974). Families of delinquent or uncontrollable adolescents are characterized by poorer family relationships and less social connectedness. In general, these families are lower on cohesion and independence and higher on conflict and control (Fox et al., 1983). The family environment also affects the academic achievement, which is the product of maturational forces within the adolescent and the experiences provided by the environment (Bernard, 1971). Paul (1996) revealed that there is significant degree of conflict with less cohesion and organization in the emotionally disturbed families.

High rate of failures and retention problem:

There are number of causes for high rate of failure in examination and retention problem (dropout) in school and college. But one most important cause of failure of the student would be that students are having poor family environment.

A consistent rate of percentage in failures at S.S.C. and H.S.C. boards is observed in Maharashtra, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Madhya Pradesh during the years 1997 to 2007. During the year 2007, the percentage of failures of Maharashtra (S.S.C), Mizoram (H.S.L.C.), Meghalaya (S.S.L.C.) and Madhya Pradesh

(S.S.C) was 29.01, 42.97, 57.98 and 52.18 respectively.

Even in U.S. has retaining students' problem. Current U.S. retention figures have not improved over time, in spite of large amounts of money expended by colleges and universities on programs and services to retain students. According to recent data, the dropout rate for first-year college students hit a new high. The national freshman-to-sophomore dropout rate had risen to 26.9%; it was 24.5% in 1983. In addition, only 50% of those who enrolled in college earned bachelors degrees and one-third did not complete the first two years (U.S. Department of Education, 1999). The problem is particularly acute among African-American students among whom only about 15% earn bachelor degrees.

Following table shows rate of percentage of failures at S.S.C. and H.S.C. boards in Maharashtra, Mizoram, Meghalaya and Madhya Pradesh.

Percentage of Failures								
Year	Maharashtra		Mizoram		Meghalaya		Madhya Pradesh	
	S.S.C.	H.S.C.	H.S.L.C.	H.S.S.L.C.	S.S.L.C.	H.S.S.L.C.	S.S.C.	H.S.C.
2003	32.48	35.89	66.99	50.39	64.00	41.84	74.12	44.55
2004	32.94	32.6	60.56	54.80	53.30	44.61	70.81	33.39
2005	36.92	36.88	45.47	39.99	54.82	36.50	66.50	27.12
2006	35.33	34.53	52.52	37.09	56.43	37.77	58.18	29.01
2007	29.01	34.48	42.97	40.65	57.98	39.91	52.18	29.34

The present research work was conducted by keeping in mind following two broad views, which are --

- 1) **How can researcher reduce failure rate in Exam?**
- 2) **How to improve grade point average (percentage) in exam?**

Therefore, a systematic study was undertaken in six schools of Nashik city.

Objective: The objective of the study was to assess the relationship between family environment and academic achievement.

Hypothesis: 1) Family environment relates positively with Academic achievement.

2) Factors of Family environment relates positively with Academic achievement.

Method

Sample: The sample consisted of 200 high school students of 9th class, including both boys and girls. 100 boys and 100 girls were selected randomly. The subjects were all alike in all respect that is with reference to their socio-economic status and other background factors, etc

Tools: 1) Family Environment Scale by Dr. Harpreet Bhatia and Dr. N.K. Chadha (1993) was used. 2) Aggregate marks of second semester of 9th class were collected.

Procedure: These students were selected randomly from six Marathi Medium High Schools in the city of Nasik. For testing the hypotheses for correlational study, first and foremost, investigator collected aggregate marks of second semester of 9th class from school authorities. Then, the inventory on family environment was administered on both groups i.e. 100 boys and 100 girls and requested to complete the test. Before administering tests, they were made clear about the purpose of collecting the data and were told that the result of test would be kept strictly confidential so that they can respond the test items without any hesitation. Thus the data was collected and scored as per the procedure given in the manual. The instructions for data collection as well as scoring given in the manual were strictly adhered to. Then correlation was done by using Pearson correlation coefficient technique that is shown under result and discussion.

Results: The objective of the present study was to test the relationship between family environment and academic achievements. In this respect, the Pearson correlation technique was employed.

Table 1: Showing Relationship of Academic achievement with family environment.

Family Environment	Academic Achievement	p
	0.28	P < 0.01

Table 2: Showing Relationship of Academic achievement with factors of family environment.

F A M I L Y E N V I R O N M E N T	Factors of Family Environment	Academic achievement	p
	1. Cohesion	0.31	P < 0.01
	2. Expressiveness	0.28	P < 0.01
	3. Conflict	0.13	Insignificant
	4. Acceptance & Caring	0.17	P < 0.05
	5. Independence	0.21	P < 0.01
	6. Active – Recreational Orientation	0.24	P < 0.01
	7. Organization	0.14	P < 0.05

Table-1 shows, correlation of family environment with Academic achievement. There is significantly strongly high correlation between Academic achievement and family environment. The Correlational (r) value was 0.28, significant at 0.01 level. This result proves the first hypothesis that 'Family environment relates positively with Academic achievement', was thus accepted and confirmed.

Table-2 indicates correlation between Academic achievement and factors of family environment. There is strongly high association between academic achievement and cohesion component of family environment i.e. 0.31, significant at 0.01 level. The obtained correlational (r) values show strongly high association between academic achievement and Expressiveness, Independence, Active – Recreational Orientation and Control components of family environment i.e. 0.28, 0.21, 0.24 and 0.29 respectively. All these values are significant at 0.01 level. High association was seen between academic achievement and Acceptance & Caring and Organization components of family environment i.e. 0.17, and 0.14 respectively. All these values are significant at 0.05 level. There is no association found between academic achievement and conflict component of family environment i.e. 0.13, insignificant at both level. All obtained correlations were supporting and corresponding to the hypothesis with one exception. Thus, the hypothesis number two stating, that 'Factors of Family environment relates positively with Academic achievement' was supported but with one exception.

This is in accordance with the study of Bernard (1971), which states that the family environment is significantly related to the academic achievement. Uwaifo, V. O. (2008) also revealed that there is a significant difference between the academic performance of students from single parent family and students from two-parent family. The study also showed differences in the performance of male students from the two family structures and also female students from the two family structures.

Likewise, the present study is also supported by Wiseman (1973), Sogbetan (1981), Hassan (1983), Ichado (1998), Nzewuawah (1995), Ajila and Olutola (2007), Paul, (1988), Rani Mohanraj and Latha (2005), Whitehead and Deborah (1991), White, (1982), Graetz (1995).

Recommendation

1. By seeing the implications of these findings, awareness of importance of family

environment in students and parents can be put forth to reduce high rate of failure in examination and retention problem in school and colleges.

2. There is also the need to keep enlightening the parents of the importance of the home structure on the life of children. This is necessary so that parents can understand the implications and consequences of parental separation and thus mobilize all resources to curtail the problems arising from the situation.

3. Parents, teachers and other professionals, who care enough to make a difference, can, through the medium of a meaningful relationship, be significant and positive forces in helping adolescents grow in healthy and self-actualizing ways. Parents should respect the child's efforts and let them know that you have confidence in their ability to do well.

4. It becomes the duty of the teachers to assist children who come from disadvantaged home environments by applying various intervention strategies to foster positive self-concepts, high self-esteem, etc among such adolescents. Upgrading of educators is also recommended so that they are fully equipped to assist a learner who is from a deprived home environment.

5. Importance of having good relationship with relatives. With the help of influence of relatives, academic achievement of child, mental health and emotional intelligence can be improved. After taking very detailed study, it is clinically found that few women of families try to avoid coming relatives at home. Also, some of women do not want to stay in joint family. In front of relatives, they may pretend to be sick, unnecessarily beat their children, unnecessarily abuse their children, stops speaking for longer period, stay in one room for hours together, come late at home from office or unnecessarily fight with husband on slightest matter, etc. After showing misbehavior, internally they feel insecure / fear (e.g. fear of divorce or complaints will go to parents and relatives, etc). To hide their misbehavior and get sympathy from husband, they may pretend to be sick, may not take medicines (if already they are on medication for their illness), or purposely may take psychological treatment, etc. Slowly such types of misbehavior occur frequently and turn into habit formation. Due to such bad habits, mental health becomes poor and may develop psychological problem. Slowly it affects to whole family, especially children; and performance of children goes down. Due to

conflicts in the family, female children are more affected than male. Female children may have extra-marital affairs. Boys may have social misbehavior.

6. High level of marital adjustment is important. All marriages are aimed at happiness in one or the other way. Most couples become married filled up with expectations. Some of the expectations will be realistic while other unrealistic. This is due to the complex nature of marriage and each individual is as complex as universe. Therefore in marriage two universes come together. In spite of the differences amongst couples, how they attempt to adjust to the differences is very important. Low the level of marital adjustment, more conflict between couples occurs. This again affect to children and may lead to poor academic performance as the first years of life are crucial for human development; if a child is deprived of normal love and affection or is raised in an atmosphere of tension and hostility he or she may bear the lifetime impression of that experience.

7. Knowing detailed family history of partner before marriage. It is clinically found that disturbed families' children cannot adjust with partner after marriage; and conflicts go on. This again affects their children. Females are more vulnerable as females perceive more conflict than boys.

8. Misbehavior of partner (husband / wife) should not be overlooked as it may lead to disaster in family. First, husband/wife should show regret of spouse's misbehavior. If necessary, help of family doctors, psychologists, or parents and relatives of both sides should be taken. It is clinically found that females are more vulnerable than boys.

9. Physicians, psychologists, and other professionals should give proper guidance to the couple without having prejudiced mind. It will develop good family environment. Good family environment will help in academic performance of child.

10. Also, an extensive study should be carried out which would include a large number of variables that may have effect on academic achievement, thereby making it possible to suggest some concrete steps towards increment of grade point average (percentage) in examination and reduction of high rate of failure in examination along with reduction of retention problem.

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