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EFFECT OF HOME ENVIRONMENT ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to explore the impact and effect of family background or home environment on academic achievement of higher secondary students. It is a well known fact that the school performance is not an independent phenomenon, rather it is directly molded by a number of factors, of which a few of them are personal to the individual while many others are located in the environment in which learning takes place i.e., school and family. The initiation to knowledge and learning originate within the family, on a simple level, and then further built on in the school. Family sets the stage for interactions and learning at school later. For most children, interior of the home and its surroundings are the first environments they experience throughout their early years. Children spend majority of their time at home. Home environment has been identified as a major factor that influences the overall development of children. Within the home, children also have their early interactions with the members of the family, and availability and quality of resources for learning and playing largely determine the nature of these interactions. Variations exist also in school and in children. It helps us to understand how children's experiences within the family contribute to their educational outcomes. Crow and Crow (1965) describes that home is the primary societal unit. Family relationships play an important role in an individual's life pattern from early childhood through adulthood. Much of an individual's personality patterning originates at home. Not only does the child inherit certain family potentialities, but during the child's developing years, one's attitudes, beliefs, ideals and overt behavior reflects the influences on him of home experiences.

KEY WORDS: *academic achievement , home experiences , educational advancement and employment.*

INTRODUCTION

For many years in Kerala, examinations have been recommended as an important aspect of the educational systems. Examinations have always been used as the main basis for judging a student's ability and also as a means of selection for educational advancement and employment.

Much of the variability in the relation between family income and children's intellectual development comes not from SES but rather from the family's provision of a stimulating home environment (Young, Linver, & Brooks-Gunn, 2002). As Meece (2002) noted, few child development researchers today question the influence of the environment on children's intellectual development. Children's intellectual development is most strongly influenced by the home environment during infancy and early childhood when they are under the direct influence of parents. As children mature, schools and peers also begin to play a role in their intellectual socialization (p. 208). We want to have great schools to send our kids to, but the truth is their home environment has a profound impact on their learning. The old saying, "The most important work you do takes place within the walls of your home," applies here.

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Every year thousands of students sit for the Kerala Higher Secondary Examination (DHSE). This examination is done at the end of the two year course. Over the years, discrepancies have been observed in the performance of the students in the DHSE examination. Although students may be of comparable abilities, learn in the same environment and follow the same syllabus, their academic performance still vary. Bright students who fail to excel due to other factors miss the opportunity to advance in education and to get employment.

At the same time, there are students who may be bright but perform poorly despite the good learning facilities in their schools. Among the factors that are blamed for the students' poor academic performance and low motivation, the home environment is hardly mentioned. A student who performs poorly will not be able to get admission into a higher level of learning. The poor performance has raised concern and efforts have been made to find out the reasons behind it. Many factors such as lack of facilities in school, lack of teachers, indiscipline, unfavorable home environment, low intelligence, anxiety, students' need to achieve and son have been found to cause poor academic performance (Cantu, 1975; Maundu, 1980). While these factors have been identified as possible factors that contribute to the variations in academic performance not much has been done in Kerala to show the role played by the students' home environment on his/her academic achievement motivation (the need or desire to excel in academic work).

Students who are motivated are likely to perform well in their examinations. There are many factors that may contribute towards students' motivation to achieve high grades in school. This study focuses on one possible factor, that is, the student's home environment. This study attempted to find out whether the differences in academic achievement motivation among students can be attributed to differences in their home environments. In this study it was assumed that students' home environment could be a possible determinant of their variations in academic achievement motivation. The value that different families attach to education could affect the student's attitude to school and eventually affect his/her motivation for success in school work. Many homes differ on factors such as family size, availability of learning materials, the parents' level of education, parents' occupation, income, parental encouragement and involvement.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
- To find out the effect of home environment on student's academic achievement.
- To find out the effect of family relations on students' academic achievement.
- To find out the effect of gender on students' academic achievement.
- To find out the effect of family size on students' academic achievement.
- To find out the effect of family type on students' academic achievement.

HYPOTHESES
1. There is no significant effect of home environment on students' academic achievement.
2. There is no significant effect of family relations on students' academic achievement.
3. There is no significant effect of gender on students' academic achievement.
4. There is no significant effect of family size on students' academic achievement.
5. There is no significant effect of family type on students' academic achievement.

RESEARCH DESIGN
Ex-post facto method is used to assess the relationship between home environment and academic achievement of higher secondary students selected from Kottayam district, Kerala. In the ex-post facto design the researcher does not have direct control over independent variable because they cannot be inherently manipulated. The researcher therefore, examined the impact of home environment (independent variable) on academic achievement motivation (dependant variable) after the effects have been experienced.

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Analysis of Data

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Effect of Home Environment on Student's Academic Achievement

Home Environment Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
High	121	330.5826	55.14405	3.54479
	124	300.4130	60.03820	3.82014
Low	117	280.3362	61.56660	4.01616
Total	362	303.9807	62.36820	2.31790

Table 1a: Univariate Analysis of Variance for Effect of Home Environment on Students' Academic Achievement

Source of Variance	Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	305778.56	2	152889.28	43.978	.000
Within Groups	2506541.2	721	3476.479		
Total	2812319.7	723			

From Table-1a, the obtained F-value 43.978 is significant at 0.01 level. Thus there is significant effect of home environment was found on students' academic achievement.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Effect of Family Relations on Students' Academic Achievement

Family Relations	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Poor	8	282.8235	62.46122	15.14907
Moderate	51	189.1765	68.845991	6.81677
Good	303	307.0711	60.83631	2.47335
Total	362	303.9807	62.36820	2.31790

Table 2a: Univariate Analysis of Variance for Effect of Family Relations on Students' Academic Achievement

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	35742.491	2	17871.246	4.641	.101
Within Groups	2776577.238	721	3851.009		
Total	2812319.729	723			

Table-2a shows that the obtained F-value 4.641 is significant at 0.05 level. It can be concluded that there is significant effect of family relations on students' academic achievement.

Table 3: t-test for Effect of Gender on Students' Academic Achievement

Gender	N	Mean	df	t-value	p-value
Female	205	322.15	722	9.49	0.001
Male	157	280.24			

From Table-3, the calculated t-value 9.49 is greater than the table vale (2.58) at 0.01 level of significance. Hence, there is significant effect of gender on student's academic achievement. Comparing the mean values, female students (322.15) is higher than that of male students (280.24).

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Effect of Family Size on Students' Academic Achievement

Family Size	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Small	80	317.6522	61.25890	4.82788
Average	223	300.0809	64.28234	3.04727

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Large	59	300.0339		53.78748	4.95154
Total	362	303.9807		62.36820	2.31790

Table 4a: Univariate Analysis of Variance for Effect of Family Size on Students' Academic Achievement

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	38698.255	2	19349.128	5.030	.007
Within Groups	277361.474	721	3846.009		
Total	2812319.729	723			

Table-4a depicts that the obtained F-value 5.030 is significant at 0.01 level. Thus there is significant effect of family size on students' academic achievement.

Table 5: t-test for Effect of Family Type on Students' Academic Achievement

Variable	N	Mean	df	t-value	P value
Nuclear	219	316.00	722	6.00	0.126
Joint	143	285.56			

Table-5 shows that the calculated t-value 6.00 is greater than the table vale (2.58) at 0.01 level of significance. Thus there is significant effect of family type on student's academic achievement.

FINDINGS
- There is significant relationship between home environment and academic achievement of higher secondary students.
- Family relations, Gender, Family size and Family type had significant effect on academic achievement of higher secondary students.

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