

EFFECTS OF HOME ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN HOWRAH IN WEST BENGAL

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Abstract

This study is mainly concerned with the influence of home environment on the academic performance of children at the secondary and higher secondary level. Descriptive survey research design was adopted with the randomly selected secondary and higher secondary schools including the ICSE, CBSE and West Bengal Board Schools in Howrah in west Bengal. It was not possible to cover other regions because of financial, time and other logistical constraints. The study is also limited itself to responses of students' from the questionnaire (reference annual examination results was made) as a measure of academic performance, leaving out other assessments. The information for this study was gathered by use of questionnaires as the main research instrument. The questionnaires were administered to the teachers and students from the selected schools. The questions were in printed form and were to be answered by the individuals. The exercise involved administering questionnaires to students and teachers. Sampled schools were visited to collect primary sources of data. The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to analyze the data. Qualitative analysis was conducted on the open-ended questions. All collected data were in form of options given to the respondents. This was then converted to numerical values (weightage). Implications of the findings for the parents and the students were highlighted.

Introduction

Home is the first and the most significant place for the child's growth and development. It provides not only the hereditary transmission of basic potentials for the development of the child, but also the favorable environment in terms of interpersonal relationship and cultural pattern. It is a place where pupils live with their parents. It is place where they are groomed. It is a place where the pupils begin to learn the norms and values of the society in which they find themselves. Education has a long lasting impact on an individual's life. For example the acquisition of knowledge and skills and all other things that is worthwhile, which are transmitted to a person through formal and informal education determines his or her potential in future.

Basically, we understand that the home is the first school for a child where he or she is taught the basics norms and values by the parents before the child starts the formal education.

The academic performance of any child cannot be separated from the home in environment in which the child grows up. A healthy home environment offers emotional security to a child. School mostly provides a continuation of the home environment, and plays an inestimable role in laying the academic foundation as the child. The home environment means the family background of the student. This includes all the human and material resources present at home that effect the student's education and living; such as the parent's level of education, their occupation, socio-economic status, communicating language, parenting style and socializing facilities available in the house. Thus, the home is the basic institution for providing the child's primary socialization and education.

This is so, because children are born with some psychological, emotional and intellectual needs such as need for love and security, the need for new experience, the need for praise and recognition and need for responsibility. Many of these needs are not offered to the children of broken home which influence their performance in school. The extent to which these needs are met during the formative years of children between birth and the age of six or seven in the extent to which they enter school well equipped or ready to deal with the social and emotional aspects of schooling. Based on the observation above and in line with the assumption that economic and social future of many children in most localities is being undermined by cultural practices that promotes widespread divorce amongst couples and brought unnecessary hardship to the growing children.

Significance of the Study

- Education is of immense importance to individuals and to the large. Educators have greatly assumed that the home environment, to a large extent determines the progress of an individual in learning situation. The study will therefore highlight the significant differences in various home environments.

- The study will enable educationist and curriculum planners to take full cognizance of individual difference among children in any teaching/ learning environment while planning.
- It will enable the teacher to adopt new dimensional approaches while teaching.
- Parents irrespective of their educational qualification should encourage the child at home, and also provide the maximum stimulation all times.
- The students will be able to intervene in the case of poor performance to offset the negative effects of changing dynamics of the family.
- This study will also help the parents to understand the effect of the home environment on academic performance of students. Hence improving their home environment so as to improve student's academic performance.

Operational Definition of the Terms

- **Academic Performance:** This can be defined as the score a child or individual obtain in test or examination based on his or her learning experiences.
- **Home Environment:** home environment in this context means the immediate surroundings and first institution where a child is taught the basic norms and values by the parents before he or she proceeds to acquire formal education.
- **Socio Status:** This is total state of an individual based on inequality in terms of occupation, level of education and other societal issues.
- **Socio-Cultural Background:** This the social and cultural make up of an individual relationship with his or her environment.
- **Parent:** Any person (man or women) with legal claim of a child.
- **Educated Parents:** owner of a female child or male child with formal education in addition to informal education.
- **Home:** This is a place of residence of refuge and comfort. It is usually a place in which an individual or a family can rest and be able to store personal property.
- **Home Environment:** In this study, the term home environment refers to all the objects, forces and conditions in the home which influence the child physically, intellectually and emotionally. These factors may be physical like poverty or psychological conditions due to parenting or social circumstances like emptiness and living alone or wider cultural patterns of life related to the location (suburban environments, urban environments).
- **Poverty:** For the purposes of this study, poverty is defined as a situation in which someone does not have enough money to pay for basic need (food, shelter and clothing).
- **Occupation:** In this study, this well refers to way of spending time.
- **Motivation:** Refers to being neither intrinsically nor extrinsically motivated to perform an activity.
- **Pupil:** a person who is taught by another, especially a schoolchild or student in relation to a teacher.
- **Emotional Security:** Emotional Security is the measure of the stability of an individual's emotional state. The notion of emotional security of an individual is to be distinguished from that of emotional safety or security provided by a non – threatening, supportive environment.
- **Intellectual Ability:** Intellectual ability as the capacity to take in, compare, and recall data. We are all constantly in these three tasks.
- **Learning Facility:** Knowledge gained by study, instruction or scholarship, any relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a direct of result of experience.

Delimitations of the Study

The study is limited itself to only a few selected schools in Howrah. It was not possible to cover other regions because of financial, time and other logistical constraints.

The study is also limited itself to responses of students' from the questionnaire (reference annual examination results was made) as a measure of academic performance, leaving out other assessments.

Population

The target population was composed of secondary and higher secondary schools in Howrah, West Bengal, India. There are a total of 1392 schools in Howrah as per the records of West Bengal public library Network including the primary, secondary and higher schools. This also includes the number of the ICSE, CBSE and West Bengal Board Schools in (Howrah). The survey was based on school in around a particular locality.

Sample

The respondents included were from classes IX, X, XI, and XII students from the selected secondary and higher secondary schools from the nearby area and teachers. Ten schools were selected out of which five schools were private schools and another set of five schools were government schools. The total number of teachers (teaching only classes IX-XII) Surveyed from the ten schools was 50 which were randomly selected. The number of students surveyed was 100

from the ten schools selected (students selected randomly from the group of students as recommended by the teaching staff of that school from classes IX- XII).

Variables

- The independent variables are: Economic status of parents, educational background of parents, socio- cultural background, parenting style and communicating language at home.
- The dependent variable is the students' academic performances. With proper conducive environment, the learner will have a high performance.
- The controlled variables are: level of students i.e. secondary and higher secondary, school chosen, age group of students, questionnaire.

Research Question

The research questions are the following:

1. Does the peaceful home environment influence the academic performance of a child?
2. Does the peaceful economic establishment of parents influence the academic betterment?
3. Does the level of education of parents influence the academic performance?
4. Does the socio cultural background influence the academic excellence?
5. Does the parenting style influence the academic achievement?
6. Does the communicating language effect the academic achievement?

Research Instrument

The information for this study was gathered by use of questionnaires as the main research instrument. The questionnaires were administered to the teachers and students from the selected schools. The questions were in printed form and were to be answered by the individuals. The forms had questions with four options against each question. There were blank spaces in which the answers can be ticked. Sets of such forms were distributed to groups and the answers were collected relating to the research topic. The academic performance was mainly based on the response given by the students. A point survey was conducted.

Two separate set of questionnaires were prepared, one for the teachers and other for the students. The forms had questions which were mostly closed and few open ended questions. The initial set of questions was based on certain demographic details about the teacher and student in their respective from.

The next sets of questionnaires were divided into four sections:

Section A of the questionnaires covered the of home environment on the students' academic performance- this includes areas like- influence of single parent family, frequent disagreements between parents; single child, and parental supervision and monitoring, setting rules for children.

Section B of questionnaires covered the influence of parents' economic status on students' academic performance- this includes areas like- influence of economic status, major economic activities, economic status of parents, influence with parents higher occupation, better financial resource influence of more learning materials.

Section C is about the influence of parent education level on student academic performance- this includes areas like- influence if parents are teachers, parental involvement, parent's higher educational background, influence of parent's professional background, influence of mother's educational back ground.

Section D is on the effect of socio- cultural background of the family on students' academic performance- this includes areas like- influence of working parents, advantage of socially well known parents, influence of parents with fine arts background, influence of urban area, influence of socially reserved families.

Procedures of Data Collection

The exercise involved administering questionnaires to students and teachers. Sampled schools were visited to collect primary sources of data.

The questionnaires was administered to the respondents using the drop and pick technique of visiting the sampled schools to distribute the questionnaires then come to pick them from the head teacher letter after agreed duration of time. The questionnaires were also given to certain teacher of different schools known to the researcher and collected after a stipulated period.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to analyze the data. Qualitative analysis was conducted on the open-ended questions. All collected data were in form of options given to the respondents. This was then converted to numerical values (weightage). Responses were presented in scale (weighted mean) in case of the Teachers' form as, 7= ALWAYS, 5=MOSTLY, 3= SOMETIMES, and 1=NEVER. Responses were presented in scale (weighted mean) in case of the students' form as.5=YES, 1NO, and 3= NOT SURE.

As, a teacher gives positive weightage to specific question only out of her/his experience, therefore that includes a social reflection on that specific issue whereas a student mostly gives his/her individualistic response. This is the basis of setting a higher weightage value for teacher (in case of teachers response- ALWAYS=7 but in case of students response YES=5 and so on).

Findings

The study revealed that the r value equals to 0.928 which shows that there is a strong (positive) relationship between the home environment and students' academic performance. The value (0.0198) been less than the 0.05 is also significant stating that the object I has been proven. There is a significant effect of peaceful home environment on the academic performance of students'.

The study revealed that the r value equals to -0.587 which shows that there is a moderate (negative) relationship between the economic status and students' academic performance. The data account for the negative correlation value is due to the fact teachers are giving an overall view by considering students' from different economic strata. It is an overall picture given by students but each student's response is his individual view. Thus it is most likely that there will be difference from each other in their opinion. The data that the highest and least score achieved questions differ in case of students and teachers. This study determined the economic establishment of parents influence on students' academic performance.

However the p value (0.033) been less than the 0.05 is significant stating that the object ii has been proven. There is a significant effect of economic status of parents on academic performance of students. The data reveals that most of the parents are businessman (52%) and belong to the upper class (38%). Better financial resource among the parents enhances the motivational support to their children; thereby encouraging the children to have aspirations in education and students from well up families have more learning materials.

The study revealed that the r value equals to 0.964 which shows that there is a strong (positive) relationship between the educational level of parents and students' academic performance. The p value (0.038) been less than the 0.05 is also significant stating that the object iii has been proven. There is a significant effect of education level of parents on the performance of students'. Students from well- educated background will be able to guide their children and motivate them to be high achievers.

The study revealed that the r value equals to 0.442 which shows that there is a moderate (positive) relationship between the socio- cultural background of the family and students' academic performance. The p value (0.160) being more than the 0.05. There is no significant effect of socio- cultural background of family on the academic performance of students.

The study revealed that the r value equals to 0.926 which shows that there is a strong (positive) relationship between the parenting style and students' academic performance. The p value (0.021) been less than the 0.05 is also significant stating that the object v has been proven. There is a significant effect of parenting style on the academic performance of students.

The study revealed that the r value equals to 0.561 which shows that there is a moderate (positive) relationship between the communicating language and students' academic performance. The p value (0.031) been less than the 0.05 is also significant stating that the object has been proven. There is moderate significant effect of communicating language on the academic performance of students.

Implications

From the findings of this study it is concluded that the home environment influences academic performance of secondary and higher secondary students. This includes a number of factors like influence of home environment, parents economic status, educational level of parents, socio- cultural background, parenting styles and English as the communicating language.

First, the study of home environment which included factors like parental monitoring, supervision and setting rules for their children have a better academic performance whereas factor like a single child will not have much influence on grades of students.

Second, the study revealed that the economic status of parents is important since they will be able to pay school fees in good time and provide other learning materials. This is likely to help the student to perform well in their academics.

Students whose parents have better jobs and higher levels of educational attainment and who are exposed to more educational and cultural resources at home tend to have higher levels of literacy performance.

Third, we can also conclude that there is significant influence of education level of parents' influences students' academic performance. Parents with lower levels of education are less likely to have high expectations for the children's academic careers.

Fourth, it can also be said that the socio-cultural status had a moderate influence on student's/academic performance specially factors like parents from urban areas have a higher influence.

Fifth, it can be concluded that, parenting style affects students' academic performance in secondary and higher secondary schools to a great extent. The study shows a significant relationship (positive) between parenting styles with academic performance of secondary school students. This can be done by parental involvement in children's learning activity, checking on the student's performance and motivating the student. This shows that parenting styles exerts substantial effect on the changes in students' performance. Authoritative parenting need not be always associated with great academic performance instead parents spending quality time with their children and tutoring them helps in better achievement. Authoritative parenting was found to continue having an adverse effect on students' academic performance. Authoritarian parenting is believed to have adverse effects on children's psychological development. There exists significant relationship between home environment and educational aspiration of secondary and higher secondary school students.

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