



Family Environment And Its Effect On Learning Outcome: A Narrative Review

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Abstract

Aim

The current study aimed at finding out the relationship between family environment and learning outcomes. The family environment was determined based on four components-- parental socio-economic status (SES), parental expectations, parental involvement, and peer group interaction.

Materials and Methods

The study was analytical in nature, in which the data already available were used to examine the relationship between family environment and learning outcomes of students. The relevant data were gathered from the previous studies conducted, using a “narrative review” type.

Altogether 110 research articles on the problem were selected out of 121 articles after screening, of these, 71 (64.55%) were empirical studies and 39 (35.45%) were theoretical studies.

Results

Almost 100 per cent findings on the four components of family environment given above indicated that there was a positive relationship between family environment and learning outcomes, in which the higher the parental socio-economic status (SES), the higher parental expectations, the higher the parental involvement, and the higher peer group interaction, the better was the learning outcome.

Conclusion

All things being equal, it can be concluded that high parental socio-economic status (SES), parental expectations, parental involvement, and peer group interaction were significant predictors of learning outcomes of students.

KeyWords:

Family environment, learning outcome, relationship, literature, narrative review.

INTRODUCTION

In the current paper, an attempt was made to find out the relationship between family environment and learning outcomes or academic achievement amongst students based on the previous research literature, using the “narrative review” type. We examined some variables under family environment, consisting of parental socio-economic status (SES), parental involvement, parental expectations, and peer interaction.

For the purpose of the present study, family environment involved the above four variables, although there are many factors of family environment. Conceptually, family environment involves the circumstances and social climate conditions within families. Every family environment is different since every family consists of various people in various settings. The environments can differ in many ways (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, n.d.).

Parental Socio-Economic Status (SES)

In the present study, parental Socio-Economic Status was included as one of the components of family environment, taking into account the family investment theory, which clarifies how a family's socioeconomic status affects their children's academic success (Duleep, 1998). For example, studies found that parents with high socioeconomic status will invest more in their children's education (parents' attention, support, and investment), and as a result, their children's academic achievement will be better (Zhang et al., 2020; Poon, 2020; Mudrak et al., 2020).

Parental/Teacher Expectations

Parental or teacher expectations has had a very significant effect on better academic achievement, as evident from the work of Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson (1968, 1992). They tested whether the Pygmalion effect has any effect on students' performance or not. Briefly, the Pygmalion effect is a psychological phenomenon, in which high expectations lead to improved performance in a given area and low expectations lead to worse (Brookover et al., 1969).

It is called for the Greek myth of Pygmalion, the sculptor who was so enamored with his creation that he brought it to life. In their book *Pygmalion in the Classroom*, psychologists Robert Rosenthal and Lenore Jacobson borrow some of the mythology to propose that students' performance is influenced by their teachers' expectations of them, a view that has since been questioned in light of additional research findings (Raudenbush, 1984). Rosenthal and Jacobson held that high expectations lead to better performance and low expectation lead to worse (Mitchell et al., 2003); both effects leading to ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’. Considering this effect known as the Rosenthal's Effect, parental expectations were included as one of the components/elements of family environment in the present study.

Parental Expectations also refer to the realistic beliefs or judgements that parents have about their children's future achievement as reflected in course grades, highest level of schooling attained, or college attendance (e.g., Alexander et al., 1994; Goldenberg et al., 2001; Glick & White, 2004). The majority of researches ask parents "how far" they think their child will go in school or to predict what grades the child will receive that year in order to operationalize parental expectations (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010).

Parental Involvement

The parental involvement in the education of their children was found to be a good predictor of better academic performance of children by several studies. For example, realizing the importance of the parent involvement, the NO Child Left Behind Act (NCLB Act, 2001) was promulgated in the USA and enforced in 2002. As one of the provisions of the Act, in order to improve the educational outcomes of students, the Act names several methods that could be utilized by school districts to help their students achieve educational

growth, such as teacher professional development, educational technology, and parental involvement, among others (Willis, 2019). Taking into account the importance of parental involvement, this variable was included as one component of family environment in the present study.

Peer Group Interaction

Peer interaction was the next element of the family environment. According to this study, when paired with the peer group effect theory, peer group interactions transmit social norms, values, knowledge, and skills, and positive or negative peer relationships impact participants' learning attitudes, self-expectations, and cognitive development (Winkler, 1975). Thus, in the current study, this was also one of the elements of the family environment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following were the objectives of the study:

- i. To figure out the relationship between parental socio-economic status (SES) and learning outcomes of their children.
- ii. To work out the relationship between parental expectations and learning outcomes.
- iii. To find out the relationship between parental involvement and learning outcomes.
- iv. To examine the relationship between peer interaction and learning outcomes.

HYPOTHESES:

Based on the four objectives or four components, the following hypothesis was examined:

“The higher the parental socio-economic status (SES), the higher the parental expectations, the higher the parental involvement, and the better the peer group interaction, the better the learning outcomes or academic of their children” would be.

METHODS

The study was analytical in nature, in which the data already available were used to examine the relationship between family environment and learning outcomes of students. The relevant data were gathered from the previous studies conducted, using a “narrative review” type.

SAMPLE SIZE

Altogether initially 121 previous articles were identified; of these, 110 articles were selected after screening of 11 articles. Out of 110 articles, 39 (35.45%) of them were theoretical and 71(64.55%) were empirical studies, which constituted the sample of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

No other statistical methods than percentage was used in the analysis and interpretation of the data. The findings obtained from the review of the studies were examined and discussion took place and conclusion drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Parents' Global Socio-Economic Status (SES) and Academic Achievement.

Objectives 1: To figure out the relationship between parental socio-economic status (SES) and learning outcomes of their children.

We also examined global socio-economic status (SES) of parents and the academic achievement of their children. Conceptually, this global SES was a combination of parental education, occupation and income levels known as the “Big-3” (White, 1982; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2007; Shavers, 2007; (National Center for Education statistics, 2012; Baker, 2014; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014; Crossman, 2020). Previous studies conducted based on this Big-3 were reviewed.

The relationship between family socio-economic status (SES) and academic achievement among school-age children has been well documented across different sociocultural contexts. The Coleman Report, published in 1966, established that the majority of differences in academic achievement could be attributed to family SES (Coleman et al., 1966).

Parents of different educational, occupational, and economic levels often have different styles of child rearing, different ways of parenting styles, and different ways of reacting to their children, and these could have good or poor academic performance among their children. In this context, studies found that the higher the SES, the better was the academic achievement of students, and parental education, occupation, and income were related with the educational achievement of both rural and urban boys of class XI (Ojha, 1979); the academic achievement of the children of educated parents, illiterate parents, and educated mothers was significantly correlated with the SES of the family (Ahmad, 1980); in the United States, children from low socio-economic status families often begin with significantly less linguistic knowledge (Purcell-Gates et al., 1995); children in impoverished setting are much more likely to be absent from school throughout their educational experiences, further increasing the learning gap between them and their wealthier peers (Zhang, 2003); while national high school dropout rates have steadily declined, dropout rates for children living in poverty have steadily increased (National Centre of Education Statistics, 2002); children from less advantaged homes scored at least 10 percent lower than the national achievement scores in mathematics and reading (Hochschild, 2003); children with higher socio-economic status backgrounds were more likely to be proficient on task of addition, abstraction, ordinal sequencing and math word problems than children with lower socio-economic status background (Coley, 2002); the high school dropout rate among persons 16-24 years old was highest in low income families (16.7%) as compared to high income families (3.2%) (National Centre for Education Statistics, 2008); students from low socio-economic status schools entered high school 3.3 grade levels behind students from higher socio-economic status schools: in addition, students from the low socio-economic status groups learned less over 4 years than children from higher socio-economic environments acquire language skills more slowly, display delayed phonological awareness and letter identification, putting them at risk for reading difficulties (Aikens & Barbarin, 2008).

Some studies also found that there was a positive correlation between socio-economic status (SES) and academic achievement (e.g., White, 1982; Guestafson, 1992; Million, 1993; Saifi & Mehmood, 2011). Akhter (2012) found that the socio-economic status of parents had 5 percent contribution in the academic achievement of the students. Dahie (2016) found that parent's education, occupation, and income had significant positive correlation with the academic achievement of the students.

Numerous studies have been conducted on the relationship between family socio-economic status (SES) and academic achievement. For example, there was the association between socioeconomic status and the IQ level and academic achievement of children and adolescents (White et al., 1993; National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2005); in the United States, Sirin (2005) found a medium to strong relationship between socioeconomic status and achievement of the students with an average effect size of

0.27 (95% CI: 0.28-0.29); children from low socioeconomic status households and communities develop academic skills slower than children from higher SES groups (Morgan et al., 2009); children from low SES families enter high school with average literacy skills five years behind those of high-income students (Reardon et al., 2013); the success rate of low-income students in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines is much lower than that of students who do not come from underrepresented backgrounds (Doerschuk et al., 2016); in China, a moderate relation between socioeconomic status and academic achievement with $r=0.243$; from a meta-analysis based on 2,15,649 sample students was found by Liu et al., (2019) when examining the relationship between junior high school academic achievement in China and socioeconomic status, it was found that the relationship between the two was partially mediated by self-concept, and that socioeconomic status partially predicted students' academic achievement through this mediating effect.

Several studies reported the relationship between parental socio-economic status (SES) and academic achievement of their children. Parent's educational level, occupation, and income, known as the "Big Three" (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012) can have possible effects on children's performance. Since education provides information about earning capacity throughout one's life, it is frequently seen as a major indication of socioeconomic status (SES), whereas income and occupation only give a glimpse into a person's social and economic circumstances (Shavers, 2007).

According to Evans (2004), children with lower incomes have fewer healthy homes, more restrained social support networks for extra family homes. There is no doubt that in these settings, parents would display poorer behavioural expectations, less supervision of school work for youngsters, and less general management of social life compared with students from high socioeconomic and stable families. Evans has also consistently found that children with low SES are cognitively motivated as a result of less reading and slower hearing than children with high SES, and possess more limited vocabulary and less nuanced interactions with their parents.

Ali et al., (2013) studied factors contributing to the students' academic performance of graduate students of Islamia University of Bahawalpur Rahim Yar Khan Campus in Pakistan. The results indicated that father/guardian social economic status contributes the academic performance of graduate students, in which students of high-income parents obtained high test score. Onyekwere et al., (2020) found socio-economic status of family to be a significant predictor of academic achievement of pupils.

Li et al., (2020) investigated the mediating role of self-concept in the link between junior high school students' academic achievement and socioeconomic position in China. The results indicated that parents' SES (i.e., parents' level of education, occupation, and income) was significantly correlated with the academic performance in Chinese and mathematics. And self-concept was also significantly correlated with academic performance in Chinese and mathematics.

In contrast, a 'rare' finding was found by Pedrosa et al. (2006), in which they found that students who come mainly from poor socio-economic and educational backgrounds performed comparatively better than those from higher socio-economic and educational regions.

Parental Academic Expectations and Educational outcomes of their children.

Objectives 2: To work out the relationship between parental expectations and learning outcomes.

It was evident from previous studies that there has been a positive correlation between parental academic expectations and the educational outcomes of their children. A few longitudinal studies offered powerful evidence that parental expectations were a casual determinant of student expectations and academic outcome (Rutchick et al., 2009; Trusty et al., 2003). In addition, two meta-analyses found that parental expectations were the strongest family-level predictor of student achievement outcomes (Jeynes, 2005, 2007).

Some other studies found parental expectation to have played a critical role in children's academic success. Students with high parental expectations outperform those with relatively modest expectations in terms of grades, standardized test scores, and length of time spent in school (Davis-Kean, 2005; Pearce, 2006; Vartanian et al., 2007).

Aspirations to attend college, scholastic and social resilience, and student drive to succeed in school have all been related to high parental expectations (Hossler & Stage, 1992; Peng & Wright, 1994; Reynolds, 1998). Furthermore, parents' academic expectations mediate the relation between family background and achievement, and high parental expectations also appeared to buffer the influence of low teacher expectations on student achievement (Bennner & Mistry; 2007; Zhan, 2005).

We found in eight studies a strong and consistent evidence of a positive association between parental expectation and expectations and academic achievement for European American families (Entwisle & Alexander, 1990; Peng & Wright, 1994; Okagaki & Frensch, 1998; Sy & Schulenberg, 2005; Davis-Kean, 2005; Pearce, 2006; Philipson & Phillipson, 2007; Neuenschwander et al., 2007).

A study conducted by Vartanian et al., (2007) among 9,494 participants showed that parental expectations was a significant predictor of college completion for the non-Asian but not for Asian Americans.

Parental Involvement

Objectives 3: To find out the relationship between parental involvement and learning outcomes.

According to several studies (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Trusty, 2002; Sy & Sculenberg, 2005), parental involvement in their children's education typically refers to the quantity and quality of homework assistance, communication with the teacher, involvement in school events, and organization of cognitively stimulating activities. The relation of parental involvement to children's academic is well documented in a study by Pomerantz et al. (2007). Additionally, parental involvement has been found to affect students' achievement-related beliefs including their perceived competence and aspiration regarding academic achievement (Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994). Studies also found that parents who placed higher value on education and have higher expectations about their child's educational attainment tend to be more engaged in achievement-related activities, including spending time with their children reading, enrolling them in extracurricular activities, and keeping an eye on their academic performance (Halle et al., 1997; Sy et al., 2005). Topor et al. (2010) conducted a study on the parental involvement and study academic performance among 158 participants. The results indicated a statistically significant association between parent involvement and a child's academic performance, over and above the impact of the child's intelligence. Parental involvement in a child's early education has been found in several studies to be positively associated with a child's academic success (e.g., Stevenson & Baker, 1987; Hara & Burke, 1998; Marcon, 1999; Hill & Craftm 2003).

Family Environment with references to peer Interaction

Objectives 4: To examine the relationship between peer interaction and learning outcomes.

The family environment is the sum of physical and psychological conditions, which carries the development of individual personality and behaviour, among which family relations and parent-child interaction are its significant factors influencing kids' character traits, intellectual success, and psychological modeling functions (Wilder, 2014; Krauss et al., 2020). On the other hand, peer interaction was found to be a good predictor of academic achievement. For example, in Coleman's book "The Adolescent Society", he pointed out that "teens suffering from rejection from peers is almost equivalent to being rejected by their parents" (Coleman. 1961). There is a greater influence on academic performance when students are compared to their

peers in the living environment in the classroom and when they interact with roommates informally (Jain & Kapoor, 2015; Fang & Wan, 2020).

DISCUSSION

A component-wise results of the studies on parental socio-economic status (SES), parental expectations, parental involvement, and peer group interaction reviewed above have been discussed as under:

Socio Economic Status (SES)

Altogether 38 previous studies on socio economic status were reviewed, of these, the studies of 8 (21.05%) of them were theoretical (White, 1982; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002; American Psychological Association, 2007; Shavers, 2007; (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012; Baker, 2014; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2014; Crossman, 2020), while 30 (79.95%) were the empirical studies. Out of these 30 studies, it was found in 29 studies to have positive relationship between the parental socio-economic status (SES) and learning outcomes of their children, with 96.66 per cent. It indicates that the higher the parental socio-economic status (SES), the better the learning outcomes of the children. It was found in only one study (3.44 %) conducted by Pedrosa et al., (2006) in the Brazilian University students that those who come mainly from poor socio-economic and educational backgrounds significantly outperformed individuals from higher-income and educated areas. These findings prove that the family investment theory is confirmed. It suggests that socio economic-status (SES) is a significant predictor of learning outcomes.

Parental Academic Expectations and Educational outcomes of their children

Under this variable, a total of 21 studies were reviewed and all these 21 studies (100%) indicated a positive relationship between parental academic expectations and the educational outcomes of their children. These findings are consistent with the Rosenthal's effect, in which higher expectations lead to better educational performance, whereas low expectations lead to poor performance.

Parental Involvement

Altogether 11 studies on the parental involvement and its effect on learning outcomes were reviewed, all (100%) indicating the positive relationship between family environment and learning outcomes of the children. Hence, a good predictor of academic performance. In this context, the American No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) 2001, in which the parental involvement has been included as one of the major components under the Provisions of the Act, is very much significant.

Peer Group Interaction

Relating to the peer group interaction, 5 studies were reviewed and all the studies (100%) found positive relationship between peer group interaction and academic achievement of the students. It is, therefore, imperative to make all out efforts to establish better peer group interaction to which attention may be paid by schools and parents.

CONCLUSION

After controlling for other variables, based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that high parental socio-economic status (SES), high parental expectations, high parental involvement, and high peer group interaction are found to be significant predictors of better learning outcomes of students. Hence, the hypothesis given in the present study was supported.

LIMITATIONS

There were certain restrictions on the study. The sample size of 71 (64.55%) empirical study articles was very small. Moreover, the variables—parental socio-economic status (SES), parental expectations, parental involvement, and peer group interaction—were also very limited. The other variables which could likely to influence the academic outcomes of the students were not considered. However, after controlling for other variables, the findings emerging from the studies could be safely considered for generalizability to the larger population because almost 100 per cent studies found the positive relationship of learning outcomes with high parental socio-economic status (SES), parental expectations, parental involvement, and peer group interaction. However, further research on this problem needs to be done to confirm the findings of previous studies.

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