

The Impact of Home Environment on Academic Achievement of Grade Eight Students in Gedeo Zone

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Abstract: As a function of cognitive and non-cognitive features of personality, academic achievement is influenced by various factors including personal, social, economic and other environmental variables. This study was intended to assess the impact of home environment on academic achievement of grade eight students in Gedeo Zone of SNNPRS. To carry out the study cross sectional survey research was employed. Survey questionnaire was used to gather data from 122 grade eight students who had taken Primary Education Completion Regional Examination in Dilla and Yirga- Chefe towns. The schools and students were selected using purposive and systematic sampling techniques respectively. To analyze the data both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. The findings indicate that even though the likelihood to be higher academic achievers is more from intact family than non-intact family there was no statistically significant association between family type and academic achievement of respondents. Similarly, no significant difference was found between male and female respondents in their academic achievements. However, there was statistically significant mean difference between total academic achievement scores of low and high home environment. On the other hand, significant relationship was found between the pupils' scores in academic achievement and two aspects of home environment: parental control attempts and parent child connectedness as well as parental educational status. Generally, significant relationship was found between the pupils' scores in academic achievement and total home environment. Therefore, to enhance students' academic achievement, efforts should be made to improve the students' home environment through awareness created among parents.

Keywords: ACADEMIC- ACHIEVEMENT, FAMILY, HOME ENVIRONMENT, NON-INTACT FAMILY, INTACT FAMILY

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I. INTRODUCTION

People all over the world took interest in education to pave the way for a better social order on the grounds that education instills in the young generation vital humanitarian values like equity, tolerance and peace. It is also currently becoming the crucial contributor to national economic growth. As empirical evidence suggests, educational investment has been one of the most crucial factors contributing to economic growth in both developing and developed countries. Access to better-quality education is thus very important to the development of a nation (Derebsa, 2006:123).

In view of this, the current society is keen on the academic achievement of students. This is because the major criterion of measuring one's capabilities and true potentials is indeed academic achievement. It has turned out to be a predictor of the child's future success. Consequently, it is becoming the major source of pressure on the minds of parents and their children. As a function of cognitive and non-cognitive features of personality, academic achievement is influenced by various factors including personal, social, economic and other environmental variables. Studies have revealed that a conducive, supportive environment in home, school and in the community could enhance a child's academic achievement (Daulta, 2008).

Researchers and studies tell us that keeping the quality of education is a challenge in many countries. Even though they are committed to provide quality education to their citizens, the monitoring result of EFA (UNESCO, 2005) reveals that children in many countries fail to master basic skills, and low achievement is widespread. As the report indicates, national assessments in four Latin American countries reveal low achievement levels for large proportions of students at the end of primary school. According to the same report, a similar situation is prevailing in Africa as well. "In four out of seven countries, fewer than half of sixth-graders achieved minimum competence (UNESCO, 2005).

In Ethiopia too, though the government is concerned for quality education, low academic achievement has become a common phenomenon among students in different parts of the country. For example a research by Derebsa (2006) reported that achievement of grade 4 and grade 8 indicated that a large number of students (48% in grade 4 and 41 % in grade 8) were not achieving the curriculum objectives.

Several factors are pointed out as contributors to the low academic achievement of children. These factors can be related with the students, their teachers, the curriculum, or the school and home environment. According to (Diaz, 2009), several studies that attempt to explain low academic achievement concentrate on three elements that intervene in education. These are: family factor, teacher factor, and student factor. This study focuses on the home and family environment as the major factor for academic achievement of students.

Daulta (2008) stresses that family is the primary and most important source of socialization. It has thus a paramount influence and bearing on the development of the child. Various studies have shown that most of the children who are great achievers and well adjusted belong to families that have sustaining wholesome relationships (Daulta, 2008; Rani, 1998). "So, it is the home which sets the pattern for the child's attitude towards people and society, aids intellectual growth in the child and supports his aspirations and achievements" (Daulta, 2008). In this regard a study by (Shaha and Sharma, 1984) revealed a highly significant positive relationship between the variables of academic achievement and family scores. Another study showed that children from high home environment groups achieved better than children from middle and low home environment groups (Jagannathan, 1986). Establishing appropriate reward and punishment system will also enhance a child's performance in school (Pandey, 1985).

Home environment has significant influence on the overall development of the children and on their academic achievement in particular. This has been supported by research evidences in other countries. However, little investigation has been made locally to assess the home environment of children in Ethiopia and its impact on their achievement. One of the few studies conducted locally on the issue of academic achievement in relation to home environment is by Ojo and Yilma (n. d.). This study was conducted in one of the regions of the country-Benishangul Gumuz. The study particularly attempted to find out the various home factors affecting students' academic success. The results revealed that the home and its environment could influence academic achievement. Specifically, the study came up with significant difference in students' attitude towards learning mathematics as a result of the various home environments indicating that the type of home environment places an influence on students' academic performance.

The major objective of this study is to assess the effect of home environment on academic achievements of grade 8 students in Gedeo zone, Southern Nations and Nationalities and people regional state. Accordingly, this study intends to find answers to the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between living arrangement (family type) and academic achievement?
- What is the relationship between the various home environment aspects and academic achievement of grade eight students in the study area?
- Is there a significant difference between academic achievement of boys and girls of the same home environment?

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Home Environment and quality of its Dimensions

Home environment is the key and valuable caring and support system for every human kind in the world. The family system provides such a multiple bonding that no other nurturing system can substitute it (Daulta, 2008).

It is also noteworthy that the family provides children with essential support that enable them to achieve overall development. As (Daulta, 2008) puts it, as a major agency of socialization, family has a paramount impact on the development of the individual. Kaur and Kalaramana (2004) also assert that among the various social groups, the family plays the primary and most essential role for the development of the child.

Different researchers contend that home environment incorporates various aspects of the home and family relationship. There are ten dimensions of home environment that had been identified primarily by Misra (1989) and has been used by many other researchers including Kaur and Kalaramana (2004); Daulta (2008) and Bansal, Thind and Jaswal (2006). These scholars defined each of the ten parameters of home environment as follows.

Protectiveness and Permissiveness: Protectiveness is one of the dimensions of quality of home environment which refers to the prevention of independent behaviour and an action of prolonged infantile care. Permissiveness on the other hand implies providing opportunities to a child to freely express his/her feelings and act according to his/her desires without any parental interference.

Control and Punishment: control as the dimension of quality of home environment refers to an autocratic environment in which parents impose restrictions on children in order to discipline them. Punishment is physical as well as psychological penalty to avoid the occurrence of undesirable behaviour.

Conformity and Reward: Conformity refers to the parent's directions, orders or commands with which the child is required to conform by demands or actions to act according to expectations and desires of parents. Reward includes materialistic as well as symbolic gifts to reinforce or enhance the probability of desired behaviour.

Deprivation of Privileges: It refers to a mechanism of controlling children's behaviours by preventing them from having what they deserve including their rights to get child care, love, and respect from parents.

Social Isolation: It means controlling disruptive behaviour of children by isolating him/her from friends and beloved ones except family members as punishment.

Nurturance: Nurturance here is defined as the presence of too much unconditional emotional and physical attachment of parents with the child.

Rejection: It is a conditional love that deprives the child of his/her rights as a person. It is denying the right of the child to express his feelings, to be unique and to be independent (Bansal, Thind and Jaswal, 2006).

2.2 Home environment and academic achievement

According to Hammer (2003) the home environment is as crucial as what occurs in the school. Important factors include involvement of parents in their children's education, the extent to which parents read to young children, how much TV they allow children to watch and frequency of students' changing schools. Achievement gap occurs not only due to what goes on in the classroom but also due to what happens to them before and after school.

Various researchers and research findings have endeavored to explain the relationship between home environment and a child's development, including academic achievement. According to Sumari, Hussin & Siraj (2010) studies have been conducted to examine and understand the impact of family factors on the development of a child. This is not unexpected because family is the primary source of information for children on how to behave and how to make decisions in life. Academic achievement of children is one of the aspects that have received attention by many researchers (Bradley & Corwyn, 2002).

Many studies confirm the importance of parent's role in fostering their children's development. In other words, positive parenting style, which is associated with authoritative or democratic style, is considered the most effective style for supporting children's academic achievement (Sumari, Hussin, & Siraj, 2010). In relation to this, a study by Christenson, Rounds, and Gorney (1992) revealed that family and environmental factors affect students' achievement. The environmental factors include parents' expectation and attribution, structure and learning, home effective environment, discipline, and parent involvement.

The findings of a study by Sumari, Hussin, & Siraj (2010) show the crucial roles that parents must play to help their children achieve academically and have high moral ground. Studies over several decades have shown that family environment characterized by high levels of parental warmth, involvement and monitoring and supervision, is associated with positive psychological and academic competence of children whereas parenting style involving high levels of monitoring and supervision but low levels of warmth and involvement, as well as neglectful parenting, low in all dimensions of parenting, are associated with negative outcomes in these domains (Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Steinberg, Mounts, Lamborn, & Dornbusch, 1991).

2.3 Dimension of home environment and academic achievement

Studies conducted on the relationship between home environment and academic achievement has shown the impacts of each of the ten dimensions of home environment (Misra, 1989) on academic achievement.

The results of a study by Bansal, Thind and Jaswal (2006) revealed that

... quality of home environment plays a significant role in determining level of achievement motivation and internal locus of control for high level of academic achievement. Some of the dimensions of quality of home environment such as control, protectiveness, conformity, punishment, reward, social isolation, deprivation of privileges and rejection emerged as the most significant for inculcating high level of achievement motivation and internal locus of control for ensuring high level of academic achievement.

The results of this study showed that good quality of home environment had significant positive correlation with 'high' level ($P < 0.001$) of achievement motivation among high achievers (Bansal et al., 2006).

Another study also revealed that good quality of home environment had more significant positive correlation with 'high' level of academic achievement among boys than the girls. The quality of home environment parents create to their children has an understandable effect on his future achievements. Results of this study revealed that good quality of home environment had more significant positive effect on 'high' level of academic achievement in children (Daulta, 2008). Thus, it can be concluded that home environment plays a crucial role in a child's academic achievement (Jong, 1993).

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study aimed at examining the impact of home environment on the academic achievement of primary school children in the selected schools of Gedeo Zone. To carry out the study cross sectional survey research was employed. The data were obtained from grade eight students who had taken Primary Education Completion Regional Examination in Gedeo zone. Using purposive sampling technique Dilla, and Yirgachefe towns were selected because according to the information obtained from Gedeo Zone Education Department, they were areas where low achievement was being registered in the regional examination. From each town one school was randomly selected. Finally, 59 students from Dilla town and 63 students from Yirga Chefe town were selected using systematic sampling technique

A structured self report Amharic language questionnaire comprising of 39 items was used for this study. The questionnaire contains two parts. The first section is about the demographic characteristics (School, age, sex, religious background, family type, family residence and education status, and Primary Education Completion Regional Examination scores) of the respondents'. The second part of the questionnaire contains modified Mishra's (1989) Home Environment Inventory Scale, which was used to assess the quality of home environment. This scale originally contains 100 items related to the following ten parameters of home-environment: a) control attempts b) protectiveness c) punishment d) conformity e) social isolation f) reward g) deprivation of privileges h) nurturance i) rejection j) permissiveness. However, in this study the researchers tried to modify the scale by merging some dimensions of home environment and the scale contains 29 items related to the following four dimensions of home environment. These are 1) Perceived parental protectiveness and permissiveness measured by 9 items; 2) perceived parental control attempts measured by 10 items; 3) perceived conformity and reward measured by 5 items 4) perceived parent child connectedness measured by 5 items. Total score for all dimensions indicates the total home-environment. Each item was scored on a four point Likert scale 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree). Items which are negatively stated were reversely scored so that a higher total score indicates high home environment. Higher scores on this 29 item measures indicated high (better) home environment. Cronbach alpha was calculated to determine how well a set of items or variables measure a single construct, home environment, accordingly the reliability of the modified home environment inventory was found to be 0 .81. To analyze the data both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section the data obtained through questionnaire about the relationship between demographic, variables and academic achievement are presented and analyzed. To analyze the quantitative data chi-square, t-test and correlation was used on the basis of suitability for analysis.

Table 4.1 - Gender wise distribution of respondent's demographic characteristics

			Gender		
			Male	Female	Total
<i>School</i>	<i>Dilla</i>	N	28	31	59
		%	42.4%	55.4%	48.4%
	<i>Chefe</i>	N	38	25	63
		%	57.6%	44.6%	51.6%
	<i>Total</i>	N	66	56	122
		%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Age of respondents</i>	<i>13-14</i>	N	13	3	16
		%	20.3%	5.4%	13.3%
	<i>15-16</i>	N	34	42	76
		%	53.1%	75%	63.3%
	<i>>or= 17</i>	N	17	11	28
		%	26.6%	19.6%	23.3%
	<i>Total</i>	N	64	56	120
		%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Religious affiliation</i>	<i>orthodox</i>	N	21	21	42
		%	33.9%	38.9%	36.2%
	<i>Islam</i>	N	6	9	15
		%	9.7%	16.7%	12.9%
	<i>Protestant</i>	N	27	20	47
		%	43.5%	37%	40.5%
	<i>Catholic</i>	N	4	2	6

		%	6.5%	3.7%	5.2%
	<i>Other</i>	N	4	2	6
		%	6.5%	3.7%	5.2%
	<i>Total</i>	N	62	54	116
		%	100%	100%	100%
Parental educational status	<i>Illiterate</i>	N	11	16	27
		%	16.9%	29.1%	22.5%
	<i>elementary</i>	N	15	15	30
		%	23.1%	27.3%	25.5%
	<i>Secondary</i>	N	17	16	33
		%	26.2%	29.1%	27.5%
	<i>Diploma and above</i>	N	22	8	29
		%	33.9%	14.5%	25%
<i>Total</i>	N	65	55	120	
	%	100%	100%	100%	

In **Table 4.1** above distribution of demographic characteristics (school, Age category of respondent’s religious affiliation, and parental educational status) are presented on the basis of gender. As can be seen from the table from the two schools 66(54.1%) male and 56(45.9%) female respondents were considered for this study. School wise 59(48.4%) and 63(51.6%) were from Dilla and chefe respectively. The table also shows that 76(63.3%) of the respondents were under the age category 15-16 and the remaining 16(13.3%) and 28(23.3%) of the respondents were 13-14 and above 17 years of age respectively.

In terms of their religious affiliation protestant 47 (40.8%) and orthodox 42(36.2%) were dominant followed by Islam 15(12.9%) and catholic 6(5.2%). Regarding living arrangement, respondents living with both of their biological parents and those from non intact family were nearly the same (52.5% Vs 47.5%)

4.1 Family Type and Academic Achievement

Table 4.2 Academic achievement of respondents by family type

			Academic achievement			x ² value	Significance
			Low	High	Total		
Family Type	Non intact	Count	34	30	64	.83	.36
		%	56.75	48.4%	52.5%		
	Intact	Count	26	32	58		
		%	43.3%	51.6%	47.5%		
	Total	Count	60	62	122		
		%	100%	100%	100%		

Almost equal proportion of respondents from intact and non-intact families was under the category of high academic achievement (48.4% VS 51.6%). However, from the number of respondents under the low academic achievement category 56.7% of the respondents were from non- intact family and 43.3% were from the intact family. It seems that, being from non-intact family is associated with low academic achievement of students. But the chi-square result showed that this difference was not statistically significant (x²= .83 ; P>0.05).

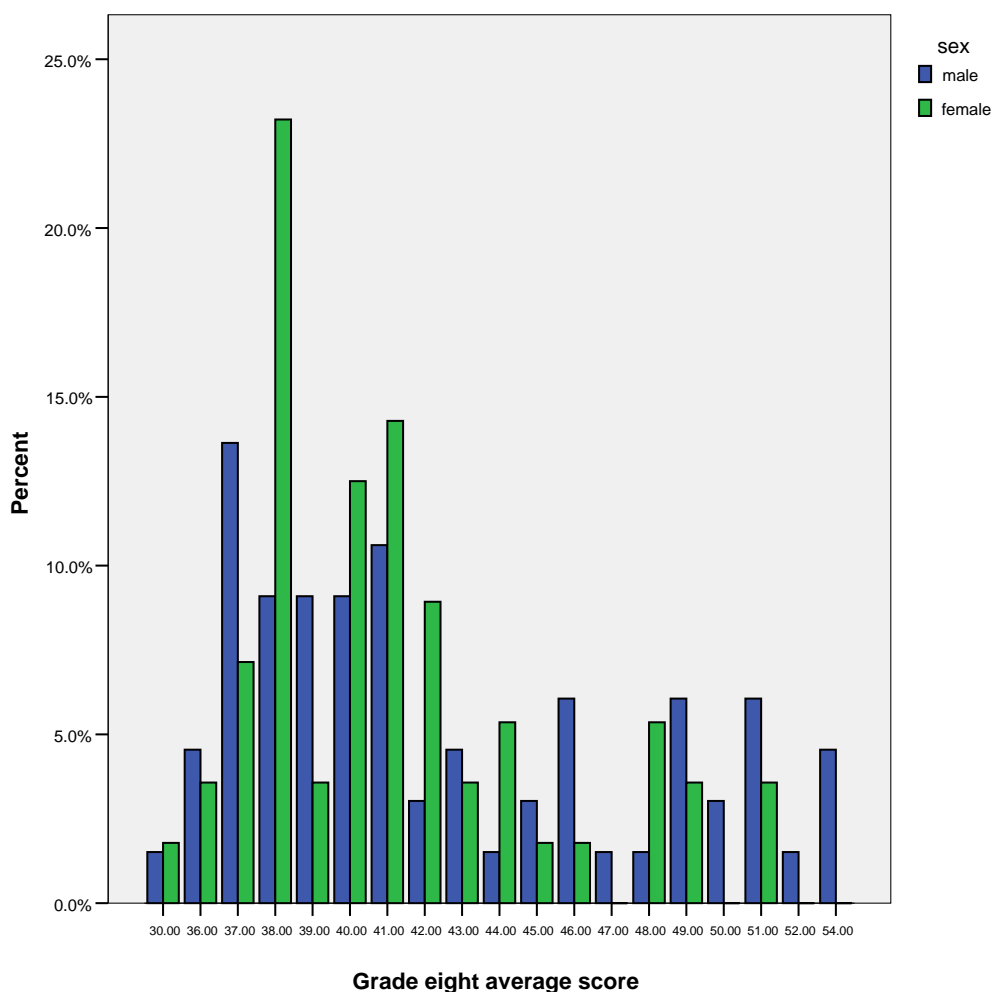
4.2 Gender and academic achievement

Table 4.3- Mean academic achievement scores in relation to gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Significance (2- tailed)
Male	66	42.3	5.5	1.5	.121
Female	56	40.9	4.0		

As can be seen from table the mean academic achievement score of boys (M= 42.3) was higher than the mean academic achievement score of female respondents (M=40.9). However, the difference in academic achievement between male and female respondents was not statistically significant (t=1.5, P>0.05)

Figure 4.1 Grade eight average score



4.3 Aspects of Home environment and academic achievement

Table 4.4 – Mean and SD scores for academic achievement in relation to home environment for male and female respondents

	Home Environment	N	Mean	SD	t	Sig(2 ailed)
Male	Low	30	40.1	3.7	-3.25	.002
	High	36	44.3	6.0		
Female	Low	27	39.3	3.2	-3.0	.004
	High	29	42.4	4.2		

Mean academic achievement scores of females in high home environment (44.3) were higher compared to mean academic achievement score of male respondents from low home environment (40.1). It has been found that the mean difference in the score of academic achievement of male respondents from low and high home environment is statistically significant ($t=-3.25, P<0.01$)

Similarly mean academic score of females from high home environment were significantly higher than the mean scores from low home environment (42.4 VS 39.3). The difference was statistically significant ($t=-3.0, P<.01$). So in both cases (male and female) respondents favourable home environment is crucial for the better academic achievement.

Figure 4.2 Achievement score Vs. home environment

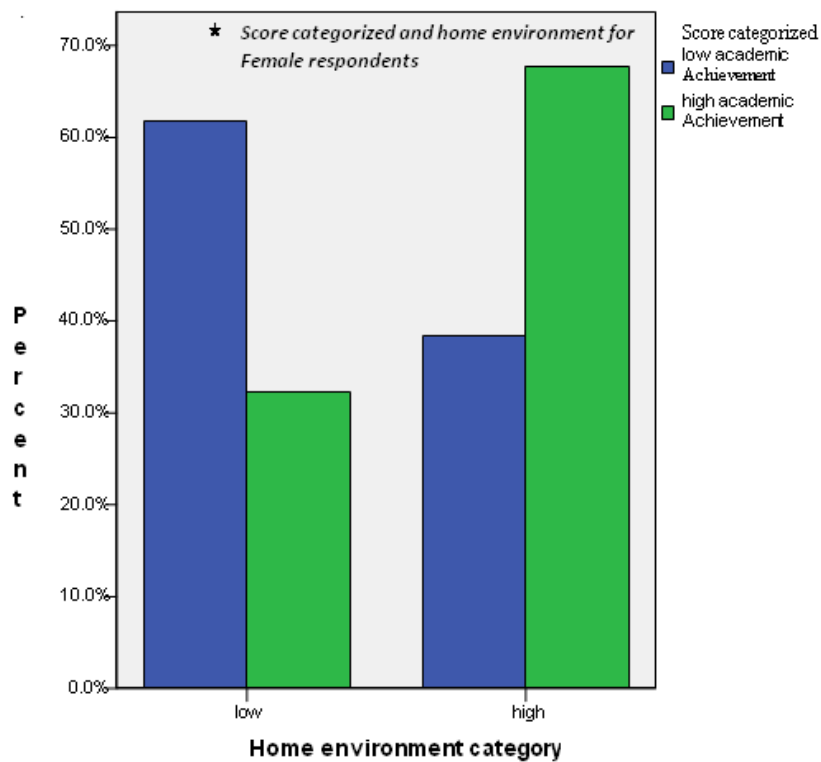
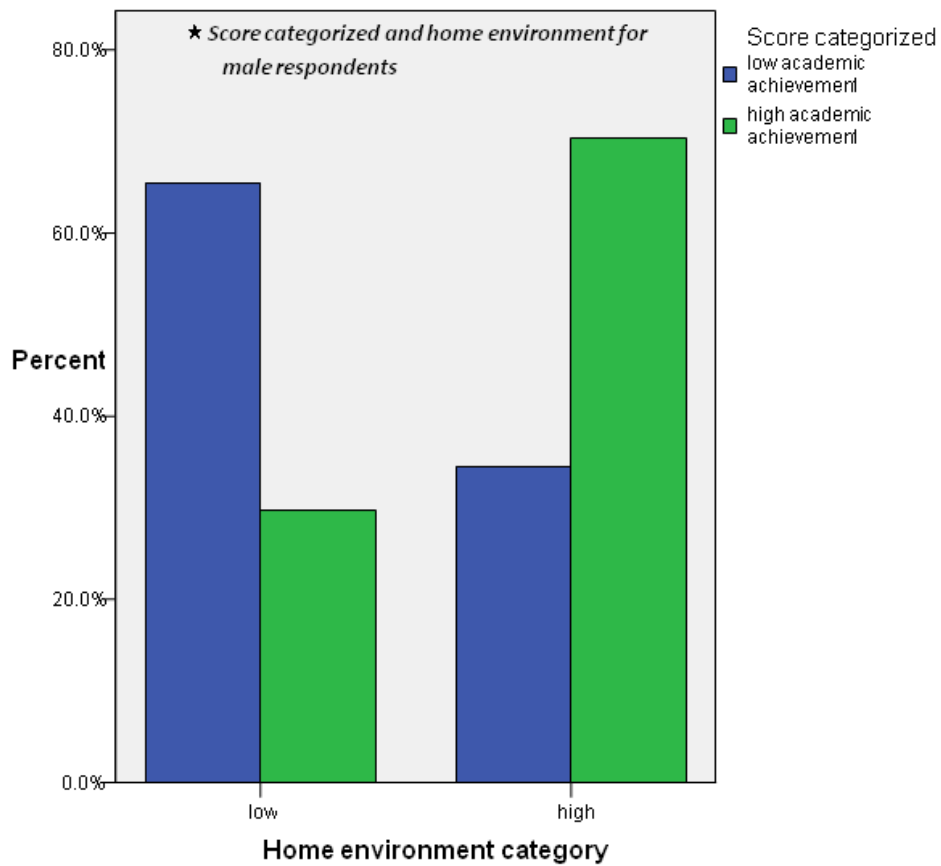
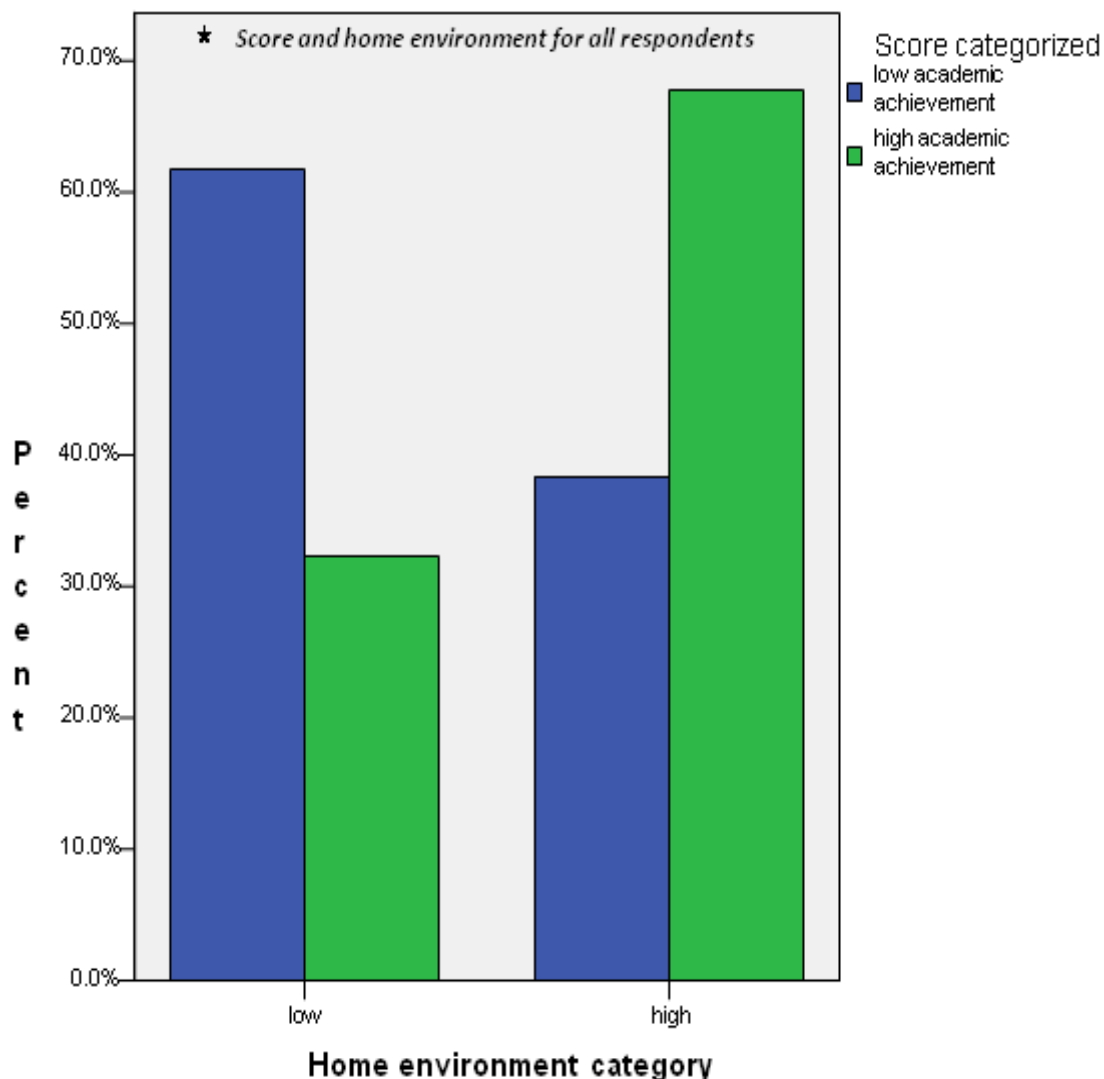


Table 4.5- Mean academic achievement of *all respondents* in relation to home environment

Home Environment	N	Mean	SD	T	Sig(2 tailed)
Low	57	39.77	3.5	-4.43	.000
High	65	43.47			

As can be seen from table the mean academic achievement score of respondents from high home environment (M= 43.47) was higher than the mean academic achievement score of respondents from low home environment (M=39.77). The mean difference in academic achievement between respondents from high and low home environment was statistically significant (t=-4.43, P<0.01)

Figure 4.3 Score for all students and home environment



4.6 Inter Correlation Matrix

In this section to see the degree of relationship among some demographic variables and the different dimension of home environment correlation were computed as follows.

Table 4.7 Relationship among variables

(N=122, Person correlation significance 2 tailed)

★ Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). ★★ Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

	Variables	Inter correlation matrix							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Sex	r	1						
2	Parental educat. status	r	-.21**	1					
3	Protectiveness	r	.02	.07	1				
4	Control attempts	r	-.072	.09	.005	1			
5	Conformity and reward	r	.12	.167	.049	.019	1		
6	Parent child connectedness	r	-.19*	-.13	-.13	.03	.16	1	
7	Home environment total	r	-.03	-.07	.38*	.51*	.67*	.46*	1
8	Grade eight average score	r	-.141	.215**	.125	.392*	.08	.30*	.42*

As shown in **Table 4.7** above in the correlation matrix the variables that had statistically significant positive correlation with academic achievement are parental control attempts($r=.39$; $p<.01$), and parent child connectedness($r= .30$; $P<.01$). Similar to the chi-square results in the previous table (Table 4.6) total home environment has statistically significant correlation with academic achievement($r=.42$; $P<.01$). Similarly the highest educational status of parents is positively correlated with academic achievement of the respondents($r=.215$; $P<0.05$)

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

In this study an attempt was made to see the effect of home environment on academic achievement of grade eight students. Thus the following conclusions are drawn from the findings of this study:

- Even though the likelihood to be higher academic achievers is more from intact family than non-intact family the result of the study shows that there was no statistically significant association between family type and academic achievement of respondents (table 4.2).
- There was no significant difference between male and female respondents in their academic achievements. Mean academic achievement score of boys and girls is 42.3 and 40.9 respectively ($t=1.5$, $P>.05$) (table 4.3).
- For both male and female respondents there was statistically significant mean difference between total academic achievement score of low and high home environment. The level of statistical significance for male and female respondents is ($t=-3.2$; $p<0.01$ and $t=-3.0$; $P<.01$) respectively (table 4.4)
- For all respondents, there was statistically significant mean difference in academic achievement between high and low home environment.($t=4.4$; $P<.01$) (table 4.5)
- Significant relationship was found between the pupils' scores in academic achievement and parental educational status($r = 0.21$; $P<0.05$).
- Significant relationship was found between the pupils' scores in academic achievement and two aspects of home environment: parental control attempts ($r = 0.22$; $P <0.05$), parent child connectedness ($r = 0.26$; $P<0.01$),
- Significant relationship was found between the pupils' scores in academic achievement and total home environment($r = 0.42$; $P <0.01$)

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

- It is recommended that, teachers, education experts and leaders need to work on creating awareness among parents on the importance of the home environment for a better academic achievement and improved performance of students.
- Parents need to be informed that they can contribute to betterment of the education of their children through controlling (knowing where about of their children in school and out of school, knowing who is their friends) and open discussions with their children when they commit something that the parents assume bad.
- Parents need to be informed that they can contribute to betterment of the education of their children through better connectedness and nurturance(expressing their loves, being close physically and psychologically and allowing them to express their feelings freely)

- Parents need to know their role in the education of their children so that they do not put the whole responsibility on teachers when their children do not perform well in school.

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