

A study on Mother's Education Level and the Study Practices among School Children: Role of Continued Education

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to determine how mothers' education levels influenced their study habits of their children and to find out how continuing education programmes could help mothers become better students themselves and thus improve their study skills of their children. The study investigated the relationship between socio-demographic traits and study habits among children living in slums using a descriptive research methodology. A questionnaire was used to gather sociodemographic information about the participants, and the validated Study Habit Inventory created by BV. Patel (1983) was used to assess study habits. The data's statistical analysis revealed details about the typical study practises among slum school students. The study also demonstrated the value of initiatives and programmes to raise mothers' educational levels by emphasising their potential to improve the study habits of their children.

110 students from two slums in the Madurai District who were in school between the ages of 11 and 14 made up the study's sample. Findings of the study revealed several key observations regarding the respondents' characteristics and study habits. Notably, a significant association was found between the educational qualification of the respondents' mothers and the level of study habits in various dimensions, such as home environment and planning, reading and note taking, general habits and attitudes, and school environment. However, no significant association was observed in the dimensions of habit of concentration and preparation for examinations. Additionally, a majority of the respondents received assistance from their parents for studying, with a vast majority studying in government schools and having both parents alive.

The study emphasises the importance of continuing education programmes in raising mothers' levels of self-education and the significant impact that mothers' education levels have on their school children's study habits. By demonstrating this relationship, the research advances our knowledge of the variables influencing educational outcomes and highlights the potential advantages of targeted interventions to meet the unique needs of schoolchildren in slum communities. Programmes for continuing education have the potential to give mothers more power, enabling them to take an active role in their school children's education and have a positive influence on their study habits, ultimately leading to overall academic success.

Key-words: *School Children, Slums, Mother's Education Level, Continued Education, Study Habits.*

Introduction:

The future of their children is significantly shaped by their mothers. In his poem "What Rules the World," William Ross Wallace succinctly stated that the hand that rocks the cradle is in fact the hand that rules the world. This illustrates how mothers have a significant impact on their children, which extends to society as a whole. (Coleman & Karraker, 2000) The study investigated the connections between parenting self-efficacy, general self-efficacy, child and maternal characteristics, and parenting satisfaction in a group of 145 mothers with school-aged children. The results showed

that mothers with higher parenting self-efficacy had a tendency to have children who were less emotional and more sociable. Parenting self-efficacy was also higher among mothers with higher levels of education, higher family incomes, and earlier parenting experience. The study also discovered that greater parenting satisfaction was predicted by higher levels of parenting self-efficacy as well as a number of elements pertaining to both the mother and the child. Levels of parenting self-efficacy had an impact on the relationship between mothers' experience raising children other than their own and maternal education. The study offers recommendations at the end to enhance how parenting self-efficacy is conceptualised and measured. Mothers work to improve the world by attempting to nurture and educate their offspring. God has given women the privilege of motherhood, entrusting them with the divine task of giving birth to new life.

The essence of the close understanding between a mother and her child is encapsulated in the Jewish proverb "A mother understands what a child does not say." Mothers and their children share a dynamic relationship in which mothers are able to decipher their children's silences as unspoken sentences. Mothers have a unique intuition that gives them a strong sense of what is best for their children. They are able to identify their children's strengths and help them reach their full potential and grow the talents and skills that God has given them. (From an inspiring speech shared by Nora Avarientos, Former Executive Director of World Vision Development Foundation during PCEC Women's Commission Grand Rally on April 28, 2017.)

Mothers are the best teachers in the classroom of life, hands down. Mothers in particular are powerful educators who impart time-tested knowledge that develops into a priceless and priceless legacy. Mothers mould the world from birth by rocking, nurturing, and teaching their children to accomplish life-altering and historical feats. Every person has a parent who nurtured their sensibilities and enabled them to realise their full potential. (Roberts et al., 2005) This study looked into the connections between various aspects of literacy practises at home and young children's language and emerging literacy abilities between the ages of 3 and 5. 72 African American children and their mothers or primary carers, mostly from low-income backgrounds, participated in the study. They had been followed since infancy for their literacy environment and development. The frequency of shared book reading, the tactics mothers used during book reading sessions, the child's enjoyment of reading, maternal sensitivity, and the general calibre and responsiveness of the home environment were all evaluated throughout the course of the study. Between the ages of 18 months and 5 years old, interviews with the mothers about their reading preferences and the children's enjoyment of being read to were conducted yearly while the general standard of the home environment was noted. At 2, 3, and 4 years old, the mothers' interactions with their children while reading were also observed, and elements like maternal sensitivity and book reading techniques were examined. From 3 years old until kindergarten entry, the children's receptive and expressive language, vocabulary, and emergent literacy skills were evaluated on an annual basis, with a focus on the children's abilities at 4 years old and when they started kindergarten. After controlling for variables like maternal education, maternal reading proficiency, and the child's gender, only a small number of significant associations were found between the individual measures of home literacy practises and language and literacy outcomes. Overtaking the specific literacy practise measures in terms of predicting the children's development in these areas, the comprehensive measure of overall responsiveness and support in the home environment emerged as the most significant predictor of children's language and early literacy skills.

In the practical classroom of everyday life, mothers continue to be some of our most effective teachers. The thing that matters most about mothers, despite all of their other qualities, is their heart. A mother's heart is composed of tenderness, tenacity, compassion, and diligence. When we are sad, lonely, or afraid, there is nothing more reassuring than having a mother's arms wrapped around and a family that spends time to teach and nurture us (Dearing et al., 2006) The relationship between family involvement in education and children's literacy performance was the main focus of this study's analysis of longitudinal data from kindergarten to fifth grade, which included 281 participants from a diverse group of low-income families. The results showed that better literacy outcomes for children were linked to higher levels of family involvement in school. Additionally, while there was initially a difference in literacy performance between children whose mothers had higher education levels and children whose mothers had lower education levels, this difference vanished when family involvement levels were high. These findings add to the body of research emphasising the value of

parental involvement in education by showing that involvement increases throughout elementary school are associated with improved literacy outcomes. The results also imply that low-income children, particularly those whose parents have less education, can benefit more from high levels of school involvement. The conclusion drawn from these findings is that, in order to close the achievement gap between children from lower and higher income backgrounds, practise and policy initiatives should place a strong emphasis on encouraging family involvement in education.

Mothers also instruct their offspring to carry on their legacy. The Bible frequently serves as a reminder that we reap what we sow, and for many of us, our mothers planted lovely seeds of wisdom, truth, joy, and peace. These seeds are now bearing fruit in the lives of our children and ourselves. (El Nokali et al., 2010) The progression of children's academic and social development from first to fifth grades was examined using data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) Study of Early Childcare and Youth Development, which included 1,364 participants. To examine the relationships between parental involvement, as reported by mothers and teachers, and children's test scores, social skills, and problem behaviours, the researchers used hierarchical linear modelling. The findings show that when looking at specific children, greater parental involvement is linked to a drop in problem behaviours and an increase in social skills, but it is not linked to changes in academic performance. Comparing different children, those whose parents were very involved showed better social functioning and fewer behavioural issues. When examining parent involvement reports from teachers and parents, similar patterns of outcomes were found. The study's conclusions discuss how these findings might affect practise and policy. Mothers and teachers have always had a big impact and will continue to have a big impact.

Mothers mould their children's lives through nurturing, directing, and instructing them from infancy to adulthood. They lay the groundwork for their children's future successes, whether they be as preachers, presidents, volunteers, workers, fashionistas, technicians, community workers, physicians, carers, and more. Behind every person is a mother who nurtured their potential and helped them succeed.

Based on the parents' educational backgrounds, the mother's profession, the number of private tutors, and academic performance, the level of parental pressure varied significantly. More specifically, non-graduate students were more likely to feel pressure to perform well in school than students whose fathers had higher education levels. In addition, 32.6% of the students showed signs of mental health problems, and 81.6% of them reported exam-related anxiety. Parental pressure and psychiatric issues were positively correlated with academic stress, and anxiety related to exams was also positively correlated with these issues. The study emphasises the need for potential strategies to address the difficulties brought on by academic pressure by highlighting the prevalence of academic stress among senior high school students in Kolkata. (Deb, et.al., 2015) This study explores the relationships between various psychosocial factors and academic stress, focusing on the academic stress and mental health of high school students in India. An average age of 16.72 years and 190 students in grades 11 and 12 from both government-aided and private schools in Kolkata, India, participated in the study. The General Health Questionnaire and a structured questionnaire that was specifically created were used to collect the data. With no statistically significant differences found across gender, age, grade, and other personal factors, the results showed that nearly two-thirds (63.5%) of the students reported experiencing stress due to academic pressure. Sixty-six percent (66%) of the students reported feeling pressure from their parents to perform better academically.

How influential an Educated Mother could be?

- **Motivation and role model:** Educated mothers act as inspiration for their offspring. Children are inspired and motivated to value education and work towards academic success when they observe their mothers actively engaged in learning and education.
- **Enhancing learning environment:** Creating a conducive learning environment at home is made easier by the knowledge and skills that educated mothers have. They can help their children with their educational needs, offer guidance, and foster a love of learning, all of which have a positive impact on how well they do in school.
- **Support for education:** Mothers who have received formal education are better able to recognise the value of education and the steps that must be taken to help their children learn.

They can offer homework help, educational materials, and meaningful conversation, all of which contribute to a positive and stimulating learning environment.

- **Language & cognitive development:** Mothers with higher levels of education frequently have children with better language and cognitive skills. They can have intelligent conversations with their children, effectively communicate with them, expose them to a wide variety of words, and help them develop the language and thinking skills that are essential for academic success.
- **Access and advocacy:** Well-informed mothers are more likely to be aware of the educational opportunities, supports, and resources available to their children. They can navigate the educational system, speak up for their children needs, and make sure they get access to a good education, which is crucial for academic growth.
- **Breaking the cycle of illiteracy:** Mothers leave a positive educational legacy for their children by making their own education a priority. Mothers who are educated are better able to guide and support their children, resulting in better educational outcomes and opportunities for the children.

Challenges for Female Education:

Despite the overwhelming evidence demonstrating the value of girls' education for overall development, the issue of girls dropping out of school continues. Approximately 129 million girls worldwide do not attend school as of this writing. This figure includes 67 million girls in upper secondary school, 30 million girls in lower secondary school, and 32 million girls in primary school. Girls are more than twice as likely to be out of school in conflict zones than they are in non-affected zones.

Even though some nations have made progress, it is still difficult to achieve gender parity in education. Gender parity in primary education has been achieved in only 49% of the world's nations. At the secondary level, the gender gap widens even more, with only 42% of nations achieving gender parity in lower secondary education and only 24% in upper secondary education. These disparities have a variety of complex causes. Girls face numerous obstacles to getting an education, and these obstacles differ between nations and communities. Poverty is a significant barrier that frequently influences families to invest more money in boys' education than in girls' education. This preference for boys worsens gender inequality and restricts the educational opportunities for girls.

Child marriage is yet another important reason why girls don't attend school. Many young girls are forced into marriage, which limits their opportunities for education and exposes them to various forms of abuse and discrimination. In addition, gender-based violence prevents girls from going to school and poses a serious threat to their safety. Girls' access to education is hampered by the hostile environment created by the fear of violence and harassment on the way to and inside of schools.

The state of the schools' infrastructure is also a serious problem. Many schools fall short of providing for the unique needs of girls, especially in terms of sanitation, hygiene, and safety. Girls are frequently discouraged from attending school regularly due to discomfort and embarrassment caused by inadequate restrooms or the lack of separate restrooms for girls.

Furthermore, the gender differences in learning and skill development are a result of gender-blind teaching practises. Girls' academic development is hampered and their educational opportunities are constrained by biased teaching materials, stereotypes, and discriminatory classroom procedures. Promoting inclusive and gender-responsive teaching strategies that take into account the unique needs and learning preferences of girls is crucial.

Continued Education Initiatives in India

Both in India and around the world, the idea of adult education has undergone significant changes. Since the turn of the 20th century, learning that assists people in gaining new skills and knowledge has been referred to as adult education. Reading, writing, maths, career training, online courses, technical subjects, and more are all included in this. The father of adult education is frequently referred to as American scholar Malcolm Knowles. He put forth a number of theories that are relevant to contemporary education:

- **Basic Education:** People who pursue this type of education are taught the fundamental abilities required for day-to-day living. It covers fundamental skills and knowledge that have a direct bearing on one's standard of living.
- **Out-of-School Education:** This strategy has spread throughout the growth of adult education. In the beginning, the idea of out-of-school learning assumed that adult education was only meant for adults and disregarded the involvement of students in educational processes. However, adult education has advanced past the constraints of conventional extracurricular learning.
- **Studies pursued throughout life:** The goal of lifelong education is to promote effective learning. It includes people of all ages, educational backgrounds, and educational specialisations. It acknowledges the complexity of human life, includes many academic disciplines, and emphasises the development of useful skills. In addition to taking into account economic, cultural, and social development, lifelong education places an emphasis on active participation, social progress, and responsiveness to societal needs.

Methods:

Aim:

The aim of this study is to assess the level of mother's education and its influence on school children's study practices. Additionally, to investigate the role and importance of existing programmes for continued education in helping the mothers to improve their school children's study practices by improving their self-education level.

Objectives:

- To identify the socio-demographic characteristics of children living in slums.
- To assess the educational level of mothers of slum children.
- To examine the study practices prevalent among slum school children.
- To investigate the association and impact of mothers' education level on school children's study practices.
- To gain insights into continuing education programs.
- To understand the role of continuing education programs in enhancing mothers' education level.

Research Design:

This study employs a descriptive research approach to examine the relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and study practices among children living in slums. A questionnaire will be utilized to collect data on the socio-demographic profile of the participants, while the validated Study Habit Inventory developed by BV. Patel (1983) will be employed to assess the prevailing study practices. Through appropriate statistical analysis of the gathered data, insights into the study habits prevalent among slum school children will be obtained. Furthermore, this study will justify the significance of continued education programs and initiatives aimed at enhancing mothers' education levels as means to improve the study habits of school children. By establishing this link, the research contributes to our understanding of the factors influencing educational outcomes and highlights the potential benefits of targeted interventions in addressing the specific needs of children in slum communities.

Selection of the Respondents:

The present study focused on a sample of 110 school children, aged 11 to 14 years, residing in two slums within Madurai District. The researcher employed the census method to select participants. Two government schools operating in the respective slums were chosen, and students from the 6th and 7th grades were selected as respondents. Given that the combined total enrollment in the four classes amounted to 110 students, the sample size for the study was determined to be 110, in accordance with the adopted census method.

Tools of Data Collection:

The Study Habit Inventory, developed by BV. Patel (1983), was utilized in this study. The inventory comprises 45 statements categorized into seven dimensions: home environment and planning of work, reading and note taking, planning of subjects, habits of concentration, preparation for examinations, general habits and attitudes, and school environment. The reliability and validity of the tool were established by the author, with a reliability coefficient of 0.9104. The inventory is scored using a two-point response system, with options for "Yes" and "No."

Findings of the Study:

1. 18.8% of the respondents fall into the 12-year-old age group.
2. 19.4% of the respondents are enrolled in the 6th Standard.
3. The majority (74.6%) of the respondents live in nuclear family households.
4. 28.4% of the respondents have a family size of 5 members.
5. An overwhelming majority (90.7%) of the respondents have both parents alive.
6. Nearly half (45.9%) of the respondents' mothers have completed primary school education.
7. Around one-third (32.7%) of the respondents' mothers work as coolies.
8. More than one-third of the respondents' mothers have a monthly income between Rs.1501-2000.
9. Over half (53.3%) of the respondents study at their own homes.
10. The majority (71.5%) of the respondents attend Government Schools.
11. A vast majority (92.4%) of the respondents receive assistance from their parents for studying.

Inferences drawn out of the study:

- There is a significant association between the educational qualification of the respondents' mothers and the level of study habits in the dimension of home environment and planning ($X^2 = 21.238$, $df = 5$, $P < 0.01$).
- A significant association is found between the educational qualification of the respondents' mothers and the level of study habits in the dimension of reading and note taking ($X^2 = 16.020$, $df = 5$, $P < 0.01$).
- In the dimension of planning of subjects, there is a significant association between the educational qualification of the respondents' mothers and the level of study habits ($X^2 = 5.726$, $df = 5$, $P > 0.05$).
- No significant association is observed between the educational qualification of the respondents' mothers and the level of study habits in the dimension of habit of concentration ($X^2 = 1.509$, $df = 5$, $P > 0.05$).
- Similarly, no significant association is found between the educational qualification of the respondents' mothers and the level of study habits in the dimension of preparation for examinations ($X^2 = 9.050$, $df = 5$, $P > 0.05$).
- A significant association is evident between the educational qualification of the respondents' mothers and the level of study habits in the dimension of general habits and attitudes ($X^2 = 12.361$, $df = 5$, $P < 0.05$).
- The dimension of school environment shows a significant association between the educational qualification of the respondents' mothers and the level of study habits ($X^2 = 21.588$, $df = 5$, $P < 0.01$).
- Overall study habits demonstrate a significant association with the educational qualification of the respondents' mothers ($X^2 = 17.948$, $df = 5$, $P < 0.01$).

How Continued Education Programmes Help?

(Source: Maternal Education Programmes Could Improve Mothers' Test Scores, Child Learning: Study - By Shreya Shah|29 May, 2017)

Programmes that promote literacy in the long term have the potential to greatly benefit mothers and enhance their children's study skills. A maternal literacy programme, a home learning and participation programme, and a combined intervention group were among the groups that villages were randomly assigned to in the study. A control group received no intervention.

- **Maternal Literacy Programme:** Local volunteers who had received training from Pratham taught daily language and math classes to the mothers in this group. Three to five days per week, or 25 to 27 classes per month, were typically attended by mothers. This programme aimed to improve the mothers' literacy abilities, which would then favourably affect the education of their offspring.
- **Programme for Home Learning and Participation:** This programme was facilitated by trainers who were paid by Pratham. Mothers were present at 81% of the visits to the homes, which were made an average of 16 times. The study acknowledged the potential for fundamental cultural changes within households through maternal education, which could favourably affect the child's enrollment and learning outcomes, even though it did not measure the long-term effects.
- **Combination Intervention:** This group benefited from the home learning and participation programme as well as the maternal literacy programme. This intervention aimed to have a more thorough impact on enhancing educational outcomes by simultaneously focusing on maternal and child learning levels.

In spite of the fact that mother-targeted interventions may not initially be as cost-effective as those aimed directly at children, they do have the advantage of addressing both maternal and child learning levels. Additionally, such interventions may have long-term effects that alter the dynamics of the household and the mothers' role in their children's education, which could result in sustained gains in educational outcomes.

The mothers' sense of obligation to provide for their children's education was significantly impacted by the interventions. In comparison to the control group, parents in the maternal learning, home participation, and combined intervention groups were more likely to claim responsibility for their child's education. The interventions also had positive effects on other areas, such as mothers looking over notebooks, talking to their children about school, and having conversations about their children's studies. Mothers helped their children with their homework at higher rates in the home participation and combined intervention groups.

Saakshar Bharat was established to advance and strengthen adult education, particularly for women and rural areas, in the broader context of literacy programmes in India. With a primary focus on women, the programme aimed to provide functional literacy to 70 million adults. Even though there are no current estimates or independent assessments of literacy rates at the national level, the programme between August 2014 and March 2016 certified 22.7 million adults as literate.

Mothers' education levels can be significantly raised by continuing to invest in literacy programmes, such as maternal education and adult education initiatives like Saakshar Bharat. By creating a learning-friendly environment, having conversations with their children about school, helping with homework, and displaying a greater sense of responsibility for their children's education, more literate mothers can better support their children's education. These initiatives are crucial in ending the cycle of illiteracy and laying the groundwork for successful academic and lifelong learning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study illuminates the important connection between mothers' educational attainment and schoolchildren's study habits. The results emphasise the significance of mothers' education in influencing children's study habits and academic growth. Higher maternal education levels are linked to better study habits, which include planning the home environment and schedule, reading and taking notes, subject planning, general habits and attitudes, and school climate. These findings highlight the critical part that mothers play as the main educators of their offspring. Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders can improve the study habits and general academic performance of schoolchildren by making investments in the education of mothers. It is clear that initiatives and programmes aimed at raising maternal literacy levels can have a significant and lasting impact on the educational system, ultimately promoting the holistic development of children and a more educated society. The relationship between maternal education and study practises merits further investigation. Additionally, it is necessary to develop targeted interventions that support and empower mothers in their crucial role as advocates for their children's education.

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