

Some Family Factors Contributing to Academic Excellence Among Secondary School Students: A Field Study of a Sample of Students in Umm El Bouaghi, Algeria

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Abstract

This study aimed to identify some of the family factors that help in achieving academic excellence among secondary school students. A sample consisted of secondary school pupils distributed into six secondary schools in the state of Umm El Bouaghi, and this class was chosen in an intended manner consisting of 30 pupils at the level of 16 and above, and to collect information, a questionnaire was prepared, and after processing the data statistically using percentages and frequencies, the study reached the results. next:

- The good economic and social level of the family helps in achieving academic excellence among secondary school students.
- The good psychological level of the family helps in achieving academic excellence among secondary school students.
- The parents 'good educational level helps in achieving academic excellence among secondary school students.

Keywords: Academic Excellence, Economic Level, Social Level, Educational Level

1. Introduction:

The family is the basic unit of society and the first school for the child, where they are raised and learn all the principles of life, relying entirely on it from birth. The family instills social awareness and a sense of responsibility in children, as it is the human community from which children draw both virtue and vice. It forms the foundation that shapes and builds the child's personality, directly influencing it through intentional education, teaching social behaviors such as cooperation and respect, and allowing them opportunities for self-expression and responsibility. The family also indirectly influences children's behavior through their interaction, imitation, and contact with the family environment.

The family is responsible for the child's birth and the acquisition of their first experiences and fundamental life skills, motivating them to succeed. This happens as the family nurtures the child throughout various stages of development, caring for and addressing their evolving needs. All of this highlights the importance of the family in all its aspectseconomic, social, cultural, and psychologicalon the academic success and excellence of children.

2. Research Problem:

Many studies have emphasized the importance of the family and its role in achieving success for its children. Among these is the study by Abdel Latif Medhat (1995), which aimed to examine the correlation between academic excellence and variables such as social and economic status, psychological and social adjustment, and emotional and nervous problems. It also aimed to study the differences between high-achieving students and average students concerning these variables. The study concluded that there are indeed differences, as the social status of high-achieving students' families was better than that of non-high-achieving students. This factor contributed to better psychological and social adjustment among the high achievers, which positively impacted

their academic performance. The elevated psychological and social status of the families of high-achievers helped them develop and demonstrate their excellence, as they had access to resources and support that met all their educational needs, leading to their academic success (Milha, undated, p. 8).

A high-achieving student is someone who excels in academic performance, positioning them above their peers. Although many factors contribute to success or lack thereof, the family plays a very significant and sensitive role. The student's primary goal remains to achieve success and outperform their peers, progressing from one educational stage to the next (Afraa, 2006, p. 483).

In secondary education, the student is the center of the educational process. For a student to excel, they must have a healthy personality, which is shaped by positive family factors. The success or failure of a child in life in general, and in school in particular, depends largely on the family. Therefore, through this study, we aim to identify some family factors that contribute to academic excellence among students by addressing the following question:

Do Family Factors Contribute to Academic Excellence Among Secondary School Students?

3. Study Hypotheses:

3.1 General Hypothesis:

Some family factors contribute to academic excellence among secondary school students.

3.2 Specific Hypotheses:

- ✓ The socioeconomic status of the family contributes to academic excellence among secondary school students.
- ✓ The psychological state of the family contributes to academic excellence among secondary school students.
- ✓ The educational level of the parents contributes to academic excellence among secondary school students.

4. Importance of the Study:

- ✓ The importance of this study stems from the significance of the family and the necessity of providing a psychological and social environment for students, and how this influences academic excellence.
- ✓ The importance also lies in understanding the profound impact of the family's economic, social, psychological, and educational levels on children's lives.

5. Study Objectives:

- ✓ To identify the type of economic, social, and psychological family levels that contribute to achieving academic excellence.
- ✓ To understand the relationship between family factors and academic excellence among secondary school students.

6. Previous Studies:

6.1 Study by Ahmed Mohammed Musa Muhasnah (1999):

Titled *The Role of the Family in Academic Excellence of Its Children: A Comparison Between Families of High-Achieving Students and Families of Low-Achieving Students*. This study aimed to identify the contributions made by families toward their children's academic excellence and to compare these with the contributions of families of low-achieving students. The questionnaire was applied to 214 families that encouraged their children to improve their academic performance, using a democratic interaction style with their children and involving them in setting their academic plans. In contrast, the contributions of the families of low-achieving students involved forcing them to study to improve their academic performance, overusing vague guidance, and neglecting their children's school needs and requests.

6.2 Study by Talaat Mohammed Abu Ouf (2002):

Titled *Family and Gifted Children*, this study found a statistically significant positive correlation between the family's socioeconomic status and academic excellence. The study was conducted in six schools in Sohag Governorate, with a total of 2,440 students, from which 270 students were

selected as the final sample. The descriptive method was used, along with a set of data collection tools, including a socioeconomic scale for families.

6.3 Study by Tawfiq Abdel Monem Tawfiq (2004):

Titled Educational Socialization: A Comparative Study Between Academically High-Achieving and Average Students in the Preparatory Stage. The researcher used an educational socialization scale, applied to a sample of 210 students (both high-achieving and average). One of the key findings of the study was that there were differences between the two groups in the factors measuring educational socialization. High-achieving male students scored higher on factors such as the importance of the future and feelings of shyness. Overall, high-achieving students had higher averages on all factors.

7. Study Concepts:

7.1 Concept of Family Factors:

This concept is used in the research to indicate the key elements of family life, which include the following variables: social and economic status of the family, parental income and education level, type of housing, and social structure.

7.2 Concept of Excellence:

The student's ability to perform well academically compared to peers, as reflected by a high-grade point average (16 and above) and demonstrating outstanding performance capabilities in cognitive and creative fields.

7.3 Concept of Secondary Education:

A crucial period during which the student undergoes significant changes—physical, physiological, and even psychological—as they transition from childhood to adolescence.

8. Theoretical Framework of the Study:

8.1 Definition of Excellence:

Marland defines mental excellence as the high ability of an individual that enables them to perform at a distinguished level, requiring special educational programs beyond what is offered in regular school curricula, allowing them to make contributions toward themselves and their society. Distinguished performance includes the following: general intellectual ability, specific academic aptitudes, creative and innovative thinking, leadership abilities, visual or performance skills, and psychomotor skills.

In 1981, a further specification was added to this definition, stating that gifted and talented children are those who demonstrate evidence of high performance in intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, and specific academic fields. These children require services and activities not typically provided by schools in order to fully develop such abilities (Qahtan, 2015, p. 117).

8.2 Types of Excellence:

Douglas proposed six basic types of excellence:

8.2.1 Memory Excellence:

This includes individuals who can easily absorb the information presented to them and retain what they have learned efficiently and quickly, surpassing their peers in this ability.

8.2.2 Comprehension Excellence:

This includes individuals who can quickly understand the information presented to them and have the ability to grasp relationships to arrive at the correct conclusions.

8.2.3 Problem-Solving Excellence:

This includes individuals who have the ability to apply the knowledge they have acquired to solve problems they encounter, both in school and outside of it.

8.2.4 Innovation Excellence:

This group uses imagination and creativity, enabling them to make additions or modifications to the knowledge content presented to them.

8.2.5 Skills Excellence:

This includes individuals who have the ability to develop and cultivate multiple skills, such as theater arts, dance, and drawing.

8.2.6 Social Leadership Excellence:

This includes individuals who excel in interacting with others and holding leadership positions among their peers.

Taylor emphasized that excellence should include six types of talents that should be nurtured in educational programs to develop these talents in children. These include decision-making talents, predictive talents, and it is expected that 60% of the total number of schoolchildren could benefit from such educational programs. This would result in a significant increase in the number of high achievers in society (Boualif, 2010, p. 91).

8.3 Factors Affecting Academic Excellence:

There are several factors, some related to the individual and others to the environment in which the high-achieving student lives:

- ✓ Individual Factors: These include intelligence, abilities such as comprehension and reasoning, motivation, level of ambition, satisfaction with studying, positive attitudes toward the educational institution, positive habits in studying and learning, and personal experience (Aliwat, undated, p. 91).

8.4 Classification of High Achievers:

8.4.1 High-Performing Student:

This student can express their abilities in various ways, distinguished by their strong will, love for challenges, capacity for understanding and learning, and mental maturity beyond their age. They also have a strong ability to integrate with others.

8.4.2 Average-Performing Student:

This student is characterized by obedience to the teacher and the ability to complete school assignments well and without notable errors. However, they only perform the tasks assigned to them without attempting to do more. They are often quiet and exhibit excessive sensitivity toward others.

8.4.3 Low-Performing Student with Poor Behavioral Habits:

Despite the potential and abilities this student possesses, these qualities are overshadowed by their poor behavioral habits. These habits may manifest as tendencies toward aggression or a desire for social withdrawal and isolation. Some of these students suffer from severe social and economic deprivation, limiting their opportunities to face challenges (Mousa, 2010, p. 45).

8.5 Characteristics of High Achievers:

Research and studies have indicated that high achievers possess several characteristics, including:

8.5.1 Physical Characteristics:

Studies have shown that high-achieving children exhibit above-average physical development. These children tend to be taller, heavier, and better built than others, and their general health is above average (Shuaib, 2014, p. 62).

8.5.2 Mental and Cognitive Characteristics:

High achievers are distinguished by the speed of their intellectual growth, which is about 3.1% faster compared to their peers. Their characteristics include a rich vocabulary, heightened alertness, excellent observation and comprehension skills, the ability to reason, generalize, and abstract, diverse interests, a keen interest in the future, and a desire to understand the origins of things (Al-Tantawi, 2008, p. 31).

8.5.3 Social Characteristics:

High achievers often participate in most cultural and social activities, show a tendency to attend public events, have the ability to make new and diverse friendships, take responsibility, integrate well, and are attractive figures in their family and school. They enjoy love and popularity among their peers and have socially acceptable traits (Abdul Sabour, 2003, p. 61).

8.5.4 Emotional and Personal Characteristics:

They enjoy a higher level of adaptability and psychological well-being compared to their peers, easily adjust to various changes and new situations, are meticulous in their work, have strong willpower, and are not easily discouraged. They exhibit emotional latency and emotional stability (Salama, 2002, p. 17).

8.5.5 Leadership Characteristics:

Gifted or high-achieving individuals possess leadership traits such as self-confidence, the ability to make decisions and solve complex problems, psychological stability, initiative and risk-taking, adaptability to different situations, excellent communication skills, motivation for achievement, outstanding performance, independence, self-reliance, and self-control (Al-Ezza, 2000, p. 69).

8.6 Identifying Mentally Gifted Students:

The process of identifying gifted students is a crucial step in designing effective programs that cater to their abilities. The identification procedures should be multifaceted and require the involvement of individuals who interact with them, such as parents, caregivers, students, teachers, and other professionals who work with them (Qahtan, 2015, p. 44).

9. Applied Aspect

9.1 Methodology:

In this study, we used the descriptive method to investigate the family factors contributing to academic excellence and to analyze the data and results obtained. However, our study remains a descriptive and exploratory inquiry.

9.2 Study Sample:

The sample was selected purposefully, consisting of 30 high-achieving students from the Wilaya of Umm El Bouaghi, with an academic performance level of 16 and above. These students were distributed across six high schools in the Wilaya.

9.3 Data Collection Tools:

The primary tool used in this study was a questionnaire, consisting of 26 items distributed across two dimensions:

- ✓ Family’s Socioeconomic Status: This measures the extent to which the family fulfills the needs of its members and the stability of the family.
- ✓ Family’s Psychological Level: This assesses the family’s efforts to provide a suitable psychological environment.

9.4 Psychometric Properties of the Tool:

- ✓ The validity and reliability of the tool were verified by calculating both using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
- ✓

Table (1): Shows the validity of the family factors scale through terminal comparison.

Variables	Number of Individuals	Mean	Standard Deviation	Calculated t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Tabulated t-value	Significance Level	Significance
Upper Group	3	1,6410	0,05875	4,472	4	2,776	0,05	Statistically Significant
Lower Group	3	1,8077	0					

The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is estimated at 0.62, which is greater than 0.5. Therefore, it can generally be said that the scale is reliable and valid for measuring what it was designed to measure

9.5 Statistical Data Processing Tools:

These are used by the researcher to determine the extent to which the hypothesis is confirmed. To calculate the percentage of occurrences, the frequency is divided by the total number, then multiplied by one hundred. The percentage is calculated as follows:

Percentage = (Number of occurrences * 100) / Total sample size

9.6 Presentation, Analysis, Discussion, and Interpretation of Study Hypotheses Results

9.6.1 Presentation and Analysis of the Results of the First Specific Hypothesis:

The socioeconomic status of the family contributes to academic excellence

Table (2): Shows the level of student excellence based on the family's socioeconomic status.

Family's Socioeconomic Status	High Achievers	
	Frequency	Percentage
Good	25	83
Weak	5	17
Total	30	100

From the table, we observe that 83% of the high-achieving students come from families with a good socioeconomic status, while only 17% come from families with a weak socioeconomic status. Thus, it can be concluded that socioeconomic status plays a role in achieving academic excellence. Most high-achieving students come from families with good socioeconomic status, as they benefit from a stable family environment (both emotionally and financially) and mutual understanding. On the other hand, students from families with weak socioeconomic status are less likely to excel compared to those with better economic and social conditions. This finding is supported by the study of Al-Mansi and Al-Kashef (1982), which confirmed a statistically significant positive correlation between family socioeconomic status and the child's academic performance. The study attributed this relationship to the fact that families with higher socioeconomic status provide material and cultural resources that help their children excel academically. This is in line with Talaat Mohammed Abu Ouf's (2002) study, which also found a statistically significant correlation between gifted students and the family's socioeconomic status.

9.6.2 Presentation and Analysis of the Results of the Second Specific Hypothesis:

The psychological state of the family contributes to academic excellence.

Table (3): Shows the level of student excellence based on the psychological state of the family.

Family's Psychological State	High Achievers	
	Frequency	Percentage
Good	26	87
Weak	4	13
Total	30	100

From the table, we observe that 87% of the high-achieving students come from families with a good psychological environment, whereas only 13% come from families with a poor psychological environment.

After statistical analysis using percentages, the results presented in Table 3 show that students whose families have a good psychological environment tend to excel significantly more than those whose families have a weak psychological environment. The 87% value indicates that a good family psychological state contributes to higher academic achievement, while the 13% of students from families with a poor psychological state are less likely to excel.

These results align with the study by Harrison and Waffon Reed (1972), which confirms that the family's psychological and cultural environment affects children's academic success. Families that provide a good psychological atmosphere (such as freedom of expression and encouragement to study) positively influence academic excellence. This is further supported by Ahmed Mohammed Musa Muhasnah's (1999) study, which found that increased parental encouragement and assistance in solving their children's problems positively impacts their academic performance and helps them excel.

9.6.3 Presentation and Analysis of the Results of the Third Specific Hypothesis:

The educational level of the parents contributes to academic excellence among secondary school students.

Table (4): Shows the level of student excellence based on the educational level of the parents.

Parents' Educational Level	High Achievers	
	Frequency	Percentage
Educated	27	90
Uneducated	3	10
Total	30	100

From the table, we observe that 90% of high-achieving students have educated parents, while only 10% have uneducated parents.

Based on these results, we can conclude that there is a relationship between the educational level of the parents and the academic excellence of their children. As the educational level of the parents increases, so does the academic performance of the student, enabling them to achieve academic excellence. Conversely, when the parents' educational level is lower, the student's academic performance tends to decline. This conclusion is drawn from the sample studied in our research.

10. General Results:

- ✓ A good socioeconomic status of the family contributes to achieving academic excellence among secondary school students.
- ✓ A good psychological state of the family helps in achieving academic excellence among secondary school students.
- ✓ The educational level of the parents plays a role in achieving academic excellence among secondary school students.

The confirmation or rejection of the general hypothesis depends on the confirmation or rejection of its specific hypotheses. Based on the analysis and discussion of the results of the specific hypotheses, which have all been confirmed, we can conclude that the general hypothesis is also confirmed. This means that family factors do indeed contribute to academic excellence among secondary school students. It was found that all academically high-achieving students come from families with good economic, social, psychological, and educational conditions.

11. Conclusion:

The continuous education that a child receives, first at home and then at school, remains a significant factor in the child's success, academic progress, and strong performance. Strengthening the connection between home and school is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of the school and the success of the educational process. The rapid pace of change and development requires schools to step out of their isolation and engage in communication with the home as much as circumstances and resources allow.

In conclusion, we offer the following recommendations:

- ✓ Prepare an appropriate environment for students to study in, aiming to raise their academic levels.
- ✓ Emphasize to parents the importance of responding to school invitations to monitor their children's academic and behavioral progress.
- ✓ Monitor the student's academic condition in terms of developing their physical and mental abilities, ensuring a balance between these abilities and the amount of homework.
- ✓ Raise awareness among parents to follow up on their children's activities outside of school and cooperate with the school to enhance the student's academic performance.
- ✓ Encourage parents and responsible school staff to observe any signs of weakness or health changes in students and address them with a pedagogical approach.

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