

Explore How Family Factors Affect Students' Academic Performance -Based on Literature Analysis

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Abstract. With the rapid socio-economic changes in recent years and the intensification of competition in education in various countries, students' academic performance has become a criterion for judging whether they receive a good education in most countries, and academic performance is also closely related to students' future job salary and living standard and even the development of the country. This paper wants to study how family factors affect students' academic performance. By reading a large amount of literature, the author provides an in-depth analysis and discussion of the research related to the family environment and academic performance. The main focus is on exploring the impact of various family factors on student academic performance, such as family structure, parental relationships, and family economic status conditions. The study found some family factors will have a direct impact on students' academic performance, for example, family income and education investment. Some behavior like receiving higher education from a better school, hiring a tutor, and buying more learning materials, etc. could affect students' academic performance directly. Nevertheless, many factors will affect academic performance indirectly such as family structure, family relationships, and so on. They are more likely to affect children's physical and psychological conditions, therefore influencing their academic performance. Moreover, positive or negative results are not determined by a single factor, but by a combination of genes, social environment, and many other factors.

Keywords: Family factors; academic performance; family structure; family relationship; family socioeconomic status.

1. Introduction

A family is a unit of social life built on emotional ties such as marriage, blood ties, and adoption. It's characterized by a common dwelling, economic cooperation, and reproduction of offspring. Nowadays, there is a growing diversity of family types. In addition to the traditional family characterized by a heterosexual blood kinship system, diverse family forms such as adoptive families, foster families, single-parent families, and same-sex families have emerged. Compared with other social relationships, family ties are the most intimate and deep.

Functionalism views society as a series of social institutions that play specific roles to ensure continuity and consistency of values. Talcott Parsons, a leading sociologist at Harvard University, sees the two main functions of the family as primary socialization and personality stabilization, and Parsons sees one adult working outside the home and another caring for the family and children as the smallest unit formed to meet the needs of industrial society [1]. Early socialization in its socialization occurs in the early years of an individual's life, which is the socialization from infancy to adolescence. This stage is the most basic and crucial socialization stage for individuals. This stage is mainly about learning and mastering the communicative language, cognitive skills, and behavioral norms that one should have as a member of society, internalizing social culture and value standards, establishing behavior and evaluation systems, learning to assume and play various roles, and initially forming one's personality traits. The family is the most important vehicle for this stage, and its parent-child relationship and parenting methods are highly relevant to children's learning and mastery of communicative language and cognitive skills, etc.

Although school is the place where students grow up and learn systematically, the family environment largely influences the child's physical and psychological development, which in turn affects academic performance. Therefore, the family is an important factor in measuring student

achievement. Material factors in the family, such as different family incomes and the socioeconomic status of the parents, can cause differences in the child's upbringing, and physical and psychological development. The purchase of learning materials, enrollment in expensive remedial classes, and better education in expensive schools also affect the child's academic performance to some extent. Not only material factors, but also the attitude and emotions of family members, the family atmosphere, and the parenting style also influence the child's character building and personality development, thus indirectly affecting academic performance.

The paper aims to provide insights and suggestions for families, schools, and society by reading and analyzing a large amount of literature which draws on the research results of scholars from various countries as the theoretical basis of this study, deeply considering and exploring various family factors that affect students' performance. This study hopes to bring some guidance and help in changing the poor education style, exploring students' mental health problems, creating a better learning environment, and improving students' performance.

2. Family Structure

Family structure is how the members of a family are constituted. It contains both demographic factors and emotional pattern factors. The effects of family members' demographic size and emotional ties on physiological, psychological, and behavioral aspects have been widely concerned by society. In this paper, the author classifies family structure into four parts, which are one-child and non-one-child families, single-parent and non-single-parent families, trunk families, and orphaned. This paper analyzes the effects of these family structures on children's academic performance.

2.1. One-child and Non-one-child Families

For families, the number of children affects the material and non-material investments parents make in each child. Material investments include investments in life such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, and investments in educational resources. The non-material investment includes emotional output such as care, attention and emotional support.

Many studies have found that the increase in the number of siblings has a negative impact on educational attainment. Based on resource dilution theory, the number of children has a crowding-out effect on family educational resources. As the number of children increases, the relative educational resources available to each individual will decrease, thus negatively affecting individual educational attainment, while there is an age preference and gender preference for family resource allocation [2]. Some underdeveloped countries and regions still hold a patriarchal ideology that males have a relative advantage in the employment process and higher returns to education than females, so household resource investment is more biased toward males. A survey in rural China found that, among others, the average academic performance of only children is higher than that of non-only children, and the average performance of males is higher than that of females [3].

However, non-one-child families also have a positive impact on children's academic performance, as reflected in the facilitative effect of siblings learning from and helping each other, as well as the emotional support between siblings. However, this also depends on other family factors, such as parents' economic status and educational attainment. The higher the parents' educational attainment, the lower the joint family influence [4].

2.2. Single-parent and non-single-parent Families

Children from single-parent families are more likely to be influenced by their origin families, and because of the lack of their father's or mother's love, they are prone to cognitive problems and a state of psychological imbalance. This state may cause negative emotions such as anxiety, low self-esteem, and rebelliousness in their daily life, and also cause a decline in academic performance, boredom, addiction to games, and temper tantrums, etc. [5, 6]. Students from divorced families tend to have more serious learning weariness and behaviors and need to provide social work services for them [7].

Moreover, the absence of a parental role is detrimental to the intellectual perfection and behavioral development of children. Family divorce has significant negative effects on children's development of certain intellectual factors, such as verbal comprehension and reasoning, and observation planning [8]. Most parents in single-parent families are also under relatively greater financial, educational, and psychological pressure, which can affect their material and non-material investment in their children. Therefore, considering these aspects, children from two-parent families are more likely to achieve higher grades than children from single-parent families.

Nevertheless, some studies showed that children from divorced families were not found to have significant educational disadvantages compared to children from intact families, because the relatively high socioeconomic status of divorced families is one of the characteristics of the divorce phenomenon in recent years, and the higher socioeconomic status reduces to some extent the impact of parental divorce on children's later achievement [9]. Children who suffer from changes in family structure would become independent and sensible earlier than children from intact families, and for these reasons, children from single-parent families have the potential to achieve better academic results.

2.3. Trunk Families

Trunk families are two or more adults as well as children living together, and they usually include three generations: grandparents, parents, and children. In this type of family structure, the effects of intergenerational parenting styles, over-caring issues, etc. on children's attitudes toward learning have been studied. Grandparents usually spoil infants more than parents, and this spoiled parenting style is not conducive to the development of the mental health of grandchildren. For example, left-behind children under intergenerational parenting have mental health problems such as interpersonal tension and anxiety [10]. These problems will indirectly affect the children's academic performance.

However, as they grow older, grandparents' demands on their grandchildren increase and are no longer simply coddling. The results of the study on grandparents with different levels of education showed that the higher the education level, the more the grandparents used the negative parenting style of harsh punishment, excessive interference, and rejection and denial. This is because being that grandparents with a certain level of education would place more importance on their grandchildren's achievements in various aspects such as studies and place their hopes on their grandchildren. Therefore, they would strictly discipline and supervise their grandchildren's studies in their ordinary lives, hoping that they would be more excellent [11]. Some studies have found that grandmothers and grandfathers are important figures in the lives of their adolescent grandchildren and important factors in their grandchildren's developing social lives, and the potential benefits that adolescents can gain from their grandfathers and grandmothers [12].

2.4. Orphans

Some studies show that orphans are relatively unhealthy psychologically. Lack of parental care or abandonment by their parents has caused serious damage to them psychologically and physically, resulting in low self-esteem, lack of security, and cognitive bias in learning, and their low self-esteem can depress their self-confidence and motivation, resulting in a lack of motivation in learning, which in turn affects their academic performance. The survey found that many orphans worry about their academic performance and wish to be able to receive higher education themselves like normal children, but numerous factors lead to the fact that orphans, who are themselves in a poor educational environment, appear to have no independent learning ability [13]. From this, it seems that many orphans' academic performance is much different from normal students. The government and society need to provide more help and support for such students to bring them closer to normal students.

3. Family Member Relationships

The relationship between family members is a factor worth considering. The relationship of family members affects the family atmosphere, and the family atmosphere directly affects the personality development and psychological health of children, which in turn affects their learning effectiveness and achievement motivation.

Parental relationships are the first interpersonal relationships that minors experience and are an important indicator of family factors that are closely linked to the development of minors. The family is the main place of life for minors, and a good parental relationship will make children live in a positive and optimistic environment, while a bad parental relationship will make children live in a negative and depressing environment. There is no denying that every family has some parental conflict, but too frequent parental conflict causes many negative emotions in children, which can affect their cognitive level and increase aggressive behavior, forming a vicious circle [14]. Many existing studies have also shown that adolescents who perceive or experience parental conflict achieve lower academic achievement and other academic outcomes [15,16]. Parental conflict can cause children to have bad emotions such as self-blame, which will have a negative impact on cognitive development, which in turn affects the impact of self-efficacy on learning engagement [17]. Therefore, it can be seen that the influence of parental conflicts on children's learning is mostly negative.

Also, studies have found that higher marital satisfaction is associated with a higher quality of positive parent-child relationships, and that good spousal relationship also promotes parent-child relationships [18]. The parent-child relationship is the first relationship between individuals and the outside world after birth. A good parent-child relationship can promote the physical and mental development of individuals, but a negative parent-child relationship will hinder the physical and mental health development of individuals [19-21]. The parent-child relationship is also an important factor that affects students' level of engagement in learning. Parents should focus on building a harmonious parent-child relationship with their children, and through a harmonious parent-child relationship guide their children to shape cheerful, optimistic, and positive psychological qualities to enhance students' learning adaptability and frustration resistance so that they are willing to devote more time and energy to their studies [22]. Furthermore, mutual understanding among family members is one of the important factors to promote a harmonious family atmosphere. Parents' understanding and affirmation will make students more willing to confide in their parents or talk about their worries, thus guiding children in the right direction, reducing the risk of rebellion, boredom, lack of security, etc., promoting students' psychological health development and developing good habits conducive to academic performance.

4. Family Socioeconomic Status

The level of family socioeconomic status is mainly assessed by measuring the family income, education, and occupation of parents of junior high school students [23]. Most empirical studies have found that family socioeconomic status is positively associated with academic achievement, i.e., students with high socioeconomic status have higher academic achievement [24, 25]. A family's investment in education is a reflection of a family's economic and social status, and an important factor affecting children's academic performance as well. The school a student attends is closely related to the socioeconomic status of the family. The higher the family status, the more likely a student is to attend a high-quality school and receive a better education.

4.1. Family Income

Family income status is closely related to children's academic performance, and studies have found a significant positive effect of family extracurricular education expenditures on students' standardized performance [26]. There are obvious differences in the economic expenditure of each family in the process of children's education. Low-income families have significantly lower

economic expenditure on children's education, while high-income families are willing to pay more money for their children's education [27]. Families with higher incomes relative to those with lower incomes increase behaviors such as purchasing study materials, enrolling in remedial classes, and hiring tutors to enhance their children's performance, as well as holding trips and other behaviors that contribute to their children's physical and mental health development, which in turn indirectly contribute to academic performance. Many parents from low-income families hope that their children can change their social status by obtaining more and better educational resources. Even though these parents don't get paid very much, they still hope that their children can get excellent grades, go to prestigious schools, and get well-paying and decent jobs, therefore, changing their family's destiny, and this high educational expectation is converted into parental anxiety [28]. This parental anxiety is likely to cause adolescents' academic anxiety, and being in a long-term academic anxiety state will affect students' memory and thinking, lead to a decline in academic performance, and in serious cases, produce anxiety disorders or depression [29].

4.2. Parents' Education Level

The level of parental education is closely related to parenting styles. Some studies consider parental warmth, support, and understanding of children as positive parenting styles, and parenting characterized by rejection, authoritarianism, and harshness shown by parents to their children as negative parenting styles [30]. Parenting styles have a direct effect on motivation, positive psychological qualities, and engagement in learning, respectively [31]. It was found that a positive parenting style was positively correlated with learning engagement and positive psychological quality and negatively correlated with learning motivation. Negative parenting styles were positively correlated with learning motivation and negatively correlated with positive psychological qualities and learning engagement [32]. Some excessive parenting styles, such as spoiled parenting, can have a great negative impact on a child's personality development, and it is a common problem in many families for parents to answer all needs and do everything for their children. Over-indulgence makes the child's ability to resist setbacks unexercised, and makes the child prideful, capricious, selfish, and other character flaws, and hinders mental development. These features make it less likely that a child will achieve a great deal academically.

Research has demonstrated that adolescent attention and executive functioning are closely related to academic performance and play a significant predictive role. Parental education affects the development of children's cognitive functions, with adolescents with lower parental education performing worse in attention and executive functions than adolescents with moderate and higher parental education [33]. Some studies have found that a sense of hope partially mediates the relationship between family socioeconomic status and academic achievement, and the higher the literacy level and education of parents, the higher the educational expectations of parents and the more effective the family's investment in their children's extracurricular education [23]. The level of parental expectations and the values passed on to their children have an impact on their children's corresponding values and learning activities through the medium of the family, which is called intergenerational transmission of preferences. To parents' high expectations, children establish correspondingly high levels of self-requirement for academic levels, form self-motivated mental models, and increase the importance of academics [26]. In addition, more educated parents can provide more direct help to their children's learning, such as checking homework, tutoring and other behaviors.

This shows that parents' economic and social status is a crucial factor in student academic performance, and a good economic status can help children's academic performance to some extent. However, many factors such as parenting style, expectations, and parental anxiety should be taken into account.

5. Conclusion

This paper discusses and analyzes the effects of family factors on student achievement using a literature analysis approach, focusing on the effects of family composition, family relationships between husband and wife and parent and child, family economic and social status, and other relevant factors.

In terms of family structure, non-one-child families have negative effects such as crowding of educational resources, age-sex preference, and material and non-material parental input. On the contrary, non-one-child families also have positive aspects, such as mutual promotion and emotional support. Single-parent families also have effects such as parental divorce, family changes, and lack of parental care. But whether the results are positive or negative needs to be analyzed together with various factors. However, children who have experienced family changes or parental divorce need special attention from the school or society to provide timely psychological counseling and tutoring. Intergenerational parenting, grandchildren's relationship, and grandparents' education level in the main family can affect students' performance; orphans are special students who lack parental care, have low self-esteem, lack security, and are usually in a poor learning environment. The government or society needs to provide more educational support and help so that these children can receive better education and grow up healthier.

Family relationships demonstrate the family atmosphere, which is an important factor influencing children. Positive family relationships will promote children's personality development and psychological health, which in turn will effectively enhance learning effectiveness and achievement motivation. Family economic and social status is closely related to student achievement. Good economic and social status may provide greater help to student learning, but some other factors such as parenting style, parental expectations, and parental anxiety may indirectly affect student achievement.

However, a single factor does not determine a student's performance. It is influenced by many factors, but generally speaking, the family factor largely and in many ways affects a student's academic performance and achievement. For those who are concerned about grades, such as schools, parents and students themselves, family factors are a great place to start considering and reflecting when trying to improve grades or change study habits.

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