

Comparison Of Family Environment Of Higher Secondary Students Based On Family Type, Locality And Socio Economic Status

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ABSTRACT

Families are responsible for providing physical necessities, emotional support, learning opportunities, moral guidance and building self-esteem and resilience. Families are mainly classified into two, the nuclear family and the joint family. Nuclear family consists of parents and their children. Joint family are composed of sets of siblings, their spouse and their dependent children. Socio Economic Status refers to the position that an individual and family occupies with reference to prevailing average standards, and participation in group activity of community. Socio-economic status influences the family interactions and the Family Environment in a significant manner. The focus of the present study is to compare the Family Environment of the higher secondary students based on family type, locality and socio economic status. Necessary data were collected from 600 Higher Secondary School Students from the four districts of Kerala viz; Pathanamthitta, Kollam, Alappuzha, and Kottayam. From the findings it has been concluded there is significance difference in Family Environment due to family type, locality and socio economic status of higher secondary students.

KEY WORDS: Comparison, Family Environment, Family Type, Locality.

INTRODUCTION

The family is a basic institutional unit of society primarily responsible for child-rearing functions. When families fail to fulfil this responsibility to children the society will suffer. Parents are child's first teachers, and the home is the first classroom. No one disputes the importance of parental support and community collaboration in a child's growth and development. Researches show that optimal self-efficacy, a positive attitude, and motivation to use technology for a range of learning experiences foster overall high achievement. Self-efficacy, in particular, is at the core of learning. It develops from success at performing tasks, one's perspective of success in performing tasks in relation to how others performed the same tasks, and supportive interactions about one's abilities with significant adults (Bandura, 1982).

Man is basically a social animal. His existence without social set up can hardly be imagined. He is born in a society, develops in a society and works and progresses in a society. There are various factors behind the social maturity of an individual. Parents, family members, neighbours, peer group, and society expect him/her to behave in the way acceptable to the society. Social maturity increases as age increases for normal human beings. They learn to be in a group, share and care for others, respect the norms and values of the society.

The family as a cell acts only with love and respect and it dominates the understanding, affection, sacrifice and childcare. (Emerllahu, 2001). The relationships that parents establish with their children, children's interpersonal relationships and interactions with others have a profound impact on children's negative or positive self-perception (Berk, 2013; Gungor, 2011). Children who have positive self-

perception are also socially successful. Students perception of this social relationships can predict the expectations of success, attitudes toward school, motivation, and effort (Goodenow, 1993; Goodenow & Grady, 1993).

Parents and others provide models and constant guidance to the child so that the child is clear about what to learn and what not to learn regarding various social and living skills. In addition to unconditional love, an individual needs recognition and acceptance from his/her family members and by others in the society. Satisfaction of this need goes a long way in maintaining a balanced personality and satisfactory relationship with one's environment. The family environment is influenced by many factors like the type of family, the number of children, marital relationships between husband and wife, parental employment, and socio-economic status as well as religious background of the family. Personality development is very much influenced by the parents' child-rearing practices including how parents make and enforce rules, offer support and encouragement, and provide guidance, structure, and predictability in their children's lives.

Over the past decade, technology has become increasingly important in the lives of adolescents. As a group, adolescents are heavy users of newer electronic communication forms. They are using these communication tools primarily to reinforce existing relationships, both with friends and the partners (Greenfield & Subrahmanyam, 2008). Moreover, the technological revolution that has occurred in recent years has impacted on daily life within a family in a variety of different ways. New media technologies have become embedded in today's society and have resulted in major societal changes. One of the main social settings that have been affected is that of the family.

With the emergence of the internet, foundations of a process of change which was also called the information age were laid. This

process was not only for the transformation of the meaning and function of technology, but also the beginning of a new social base in the socio-cultural structure. Technology has also evolved at the level to offer multiple social interactions (Geczy, Eto, Izumi, Hasida, Hirano, Izumi, & Mori, 2014).

Studies report that, isolation, depression, behavioural problems, anxiety, suicidal tendencies, lack of confidence, lack of fellow feelings, selfishness and the like among children and youth are common now-a-days. Parents are the primary source of social and emotional support for children during the first years of life. Increasingly with age, parents become preferred companions, providing important sources of entertainment and support. Darling (1999) explained parental responsiveness as the extent to which parents intentionally foster individuality, self-regulation and self-assertion by being attuned, supportive, and acquiescent to children's special needs and demands. For attaining the social relationship, parents should grant a positive family environment.

The family environment becomes the primary agent of socialization. The family environment involves the circumstances and social climate conditions within families. Since each family is made up of different individuals in a different setting, each family environment is unique. The family environment is important in that children are taught what types of transactions are considered appropriate. They learn to form social relationships, maintain personal boundaries, communicate with others and feel that they are an important subset of the whole society.

Today's adolescents have unprecedented access to modern technology and use them in expected and unexpected ways. Adolescents spend many hours a day using the technology, and the vast majority of them have access to internet, cell phones, smart phone, video games and many other forms of modern technology. With the increased role of modern technology

in the adolescents' lives an increased concern about how adolescents might be affected is of common. This may take them away from important social interactions that develop inter-person relationships. A good parent-teen relationship is important for adolescent health and development. The more time spent on television, computers, cell phone and video games leads to a lower quality of attachment to parents.

However, the advantages of technology come along with drawbacks. With the infinite amount of time teenagers spend on cell-phones, computers and numerous types of video games; their attention is absorbed by these devices and this might be one main reason why new technology may cause a decline in face-to-face relationships such as the adolescent-parent relationship. Social media forms have altered how adolescents socialize and learn, and raise a new set of issues for parents, researchers and educators to consider.

The students have the opportunity to develop their skills and talents by forming partnerships with different stakeholders of the schools, particularly by parental involvement (Epstein & Salinas, 2004). Today's education system emphasizes marks but fails to retain the knowledge once students have completed their examination and enter into real life experiences. Freedom to explore nearby places and to interact in society by building homes for the needy and poor, cleaning water resources in and around, participation in NCC, NSS, Nature Club activities, cultural programmes, participation in activities on days of national importance, provisions in schools such as field trip, visits to social institutions, and participation in fairs and festivals, are to be promoted at home and in schools.

In Kerala context, patriarchal system favours positive family environment for boys and girl child sometimes is deprived of such environment to move around and interact with others. Opportunity to interact with other people, places, and social gathering is very

essential in the technology dominated society in order to maintain a better societal structure.

Good education does not come about by chance. It is a product of real teaching and learning together with the effort of the teacher, the school, the students, parents and their numerous home environments. Academic credits should be combined with voluntary services in the community. It can provide, academic, personal, and professional development. Academic credit is not awarded for doing service or for the betterment of society, but rather for the student's demonstration of academic and civic learning (Salmani, 2010).

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The term family environment usually refers to the different modalities of interaction between family members and more specifically to levels of family communication, expressiveness, and conflict that exist among family members. While family environment refers to the behavioural aspects of the socio relational climate of a family, a family's 'identity' emerges from the spoken and unspoken rules of relationship that guide family members in how they relate to each other (Patterson & Garwick, 1994).

Moos & Moos (1986) refer to Family cohesion as the degree of commitment, help, and support family members provide to one another. A second dimension of family environment, family expressiveness, represents the extent to which family members are encouraged to act openly and to express their positive or negative feelings directly. Family conflict on the other hand represents the amount of overt anger and aggression among family members.

According to Swart & Pettipher (2005) and Lewis (2009) analysed individual proximal and distal environments that form the basis for understanding the complexity in the individual's life, particularly the interaction and interrelationships between

individual and the multiple systems that constitute their environment.

It is stated that child grows up they pass through different developmental stages that are influenced by the environment. This constant interaction significantly influenced their behaviour either positively or negatively, depending on the circumstances they find themselves in. Therefore, trauma or misery does not only limit an individual in a system, but also occur within diverse systems. In lieu of this aforementioned, developmental-ecological perspectives offer a useful framework for better understanding of childhood exposure to risky environment. This theory highlights the significant impact that developmental processes, situational context, and numerous events and interaction has on adaptive as well as maladaptive growth (Rutter & Sroufe, 2000). The theory also linked household intricacy, social, and ethnic factors to developmental adjustments and abnormality in young children and made single-variable reasons held for more examination.

Bandhana & Sharma (2012) stated that an ideal home environment is one where there is proper reward to strengthen the desired behaviour, a keen interest in and love for the child provision of opportunities to express its views freely, where parents put less restrictions to discipline the child, not preventing the child from acting independently and not continuing infantile care optimum use of physical and affective punishment, where children are not compelled to act according to parental desires and expectations. Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman (2013) Family is the basic unit and interactions among family members are termed as transactions and can be positive or negative. Healthy family environment results in positive transactions; while negative environment leads to negative transactions. The family environment involves the circumstances and social climate conditions within families. The family environments can differ in many ways, for example, on the basis of socio-economic level and parenting practices.

Balda, Kumari & Sangwan (2019) conducted a study on “Family Environment as Perceived by Adolescent Boys and Girls” found that urban adolescents perceived more cohesion, expressiveness, acceptance and caring attitude and independence as compared to rural adolescents. While rural adolescents perceived family environment as more organized. Overall, urban adolescents perceived family environment better than their rural counterparts. Regarding sex differences, boys perceived more expressiveness, acceptance and caring attitude and more independence in their families as compared to girls. On the other hand, girls perceived family environment more organized and perceived more control than adolescent boys. Parents and caregivers should be made aware about the importance of positive parenting strategies as a protective factor against the development of psycho-social problems in their adolescent children, particularly for their adolescent girls.

The focus of the present study is to assess the Family Environment of students and how this variable varies based on family type, locality as well as the socio economic status of the students. This is an area that has not been sufficiently explored in Kerala context. The importance of Family Environment in relation to family type, locality as well as the socio economic status inspired the investigator to attempt and take up the present study.

OBJECTIVES

1. To find out the nature of Family Environment of Higher Secondary School students.
2. To find out whether there is significant difference in Family Environment due to
 - i. Family Type
 - ii. Locality, and
 - iii. Socio-Economic Status of Higher Secondary School students.

HYPOTHESES

1. There exist different nature of Family Environment among Higher Secondary School Students.
2. There is significant difference in Family Environment due to Family Type, Locality and Socio-Economic Status of Higher Secondary School Students.

METHODOLOGY

Method adopted for the study: The study was conducted through normative survey method of research. The normative survey method is the most popular and most widely used method in educational research. The normative survey method was found to be suitable for analysing the objectives by collecting the required data from the specified population. Normative survey method studies, describe and interpret what exists at present in the form of conditions or relations, practices, processes, trends, effects, attitudes, beliefs etc. Hence the investigator adopted the normative survey method.

Variables:

The main variable of the study is

- Family Environment

The classificatory variables are:

- a. Family Type classified into two, Viz; Joint Family and Nuclear Family
- c. Locality, classified into two, Viz; Rural and Urban
- d. Socio - Economic Status, classified into Very Low, Low, Average, High and Very High Socio-Economic Status groups.

Sample selected for the study:

Sample consisted of 600 Higher Secondary students selected from four Districts of Kerala viz; Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, and Kottayam by stratified sampling technique, the strata being locality of schools, and government and aided types of management of the schools.

Tools used for the study:

The following tools were used by the investigator for the present study:-

- Family Environment Scale (Bhatia & Chadha, 1993)
- Comprehensive Socio-Economic Status Scale. (Abraham, M., Susan, T.A., & Louis, J.M. (2002)

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

- After fixing the sample and tool, adequate copies of tools were printed before the data collection procedure. Then a schedule for administering the tool was prepared by visiting the Government and Aided schools from Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam districts of Kerala. The data were collected from XII standard of Higher Secondary School Students.
- At the time of administration, all students were informed about the nature of the tool and the purpose for which these were used. The investigator collected data from the sample selected using two tools Viz; Family Environment Scale and Comprehensive Socio-Economic Status Scale. As the tools are of different nature, the method of responding are different and time required to complete the tools is different. Proper time was given for making responses. Doubts were cleared at proper time .The tool was administered and data were collected.
- A uniform procedure was followed in administrating the tool in different schools.
- The investigator sorted the responses, discarding the indefinite responses. The responses were scored according to the scoring key.
- The raw data were tabulated, analysed and interpreted.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

The following statistical techniques were employed for analysis of data and interpretation of results.

- i. Descriptive statistics
- ii. Test of significance of difference between Means for large independent samples.
- iii. One-way ANOVA

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The details of analysis done is described below.

PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

TABLE 1 Important Statistical constants of the variable Family Environment of Higher Secondary School Students.

Variable	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Median	Mode	Skewness	Kurtosis
Family Environment	244.66	30.37	244	245	-0.113	0.097

Discussion of Result

Results in the table reveal that there is not much variation in the Arithmetic Mean, Median and Mode in the case of variable Family Environment. The value of Skewness and Kurtosis in the case of the variable Family Environment of Higher Secondary School Students are -0.113 and 0.097 respectively. This shows the distribution of the variable is slightly negatively skewed and leptokurtic. Since the distribution is negatively skewed, Median is considered cut off. The scores above of median are considered as better Family Environment and the scores below median are considered as poor Family Environment. After analysing data it is found that 304 students have better Family Environment and 296 students have poor Family Environment.

COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES

For finding out whether there exists any significant difference in the mean scores of

The important statistical properties of the scores on the variable under study were analyzed as a preliminary step. The basic statistical constants like Arithmetic Mean, Standard Error of Mean, Standard Deviation, Median, Mode, Skewness, and Kurtosis of the variable Family Environment for the sample (N = 600) was done as a preliminary step to the inferential statistics.

The data and results of the descriptive statistics are presented in the Table 1

Family Environment between students belonging to nuclear family and joint family and between urban and rural students, the critical ratio was calculated.

Comparison of mean scores of Family Environment based on Family Type

The Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation were computed for the variable Family Environment to compare nuclear family and joint family. The test of significance of difference between mean for large independent sample was carried out to find out whether significant difference exists between nuclear family and joint family of Higher Secondary School students.

Table 2 represents the data and results of the test of significance of difference between mean scores of nuclear family and joint family with respect to Family Environment.

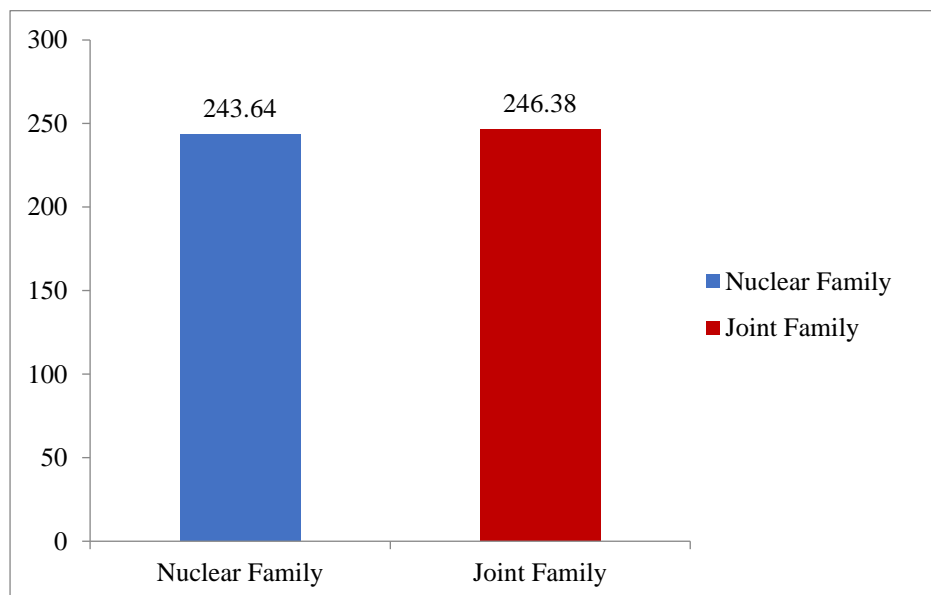
TABLE 2 Data and Result of the test of significance of difference between means of Family Environment for Nuclear Family and Joint Family.

Family Type	Sample Size (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value
Nuclear Family	376	243.64	29.57	1.05
Joint Family	224	246.38	31.67	

Discussion of Result

From table 2, the obtained t value is 1.05, which is less than 1.96, the table value, at 0.05 level.

Hence t value is not significant. This indicates that students belongs to nuclear family and joint family have no significant difference in their Family Environment.

**Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation showing the mean scores of Family Environment based on Family Type.****Comparison of mean scores of Family Environment based on Locality.**

The Arithmetic Mean and Standard Deviation were computed for the variable Family Environment to compare urban and rural areas. The test of significance of difference between

mean for large independent sample was carried out to find out whether significant difference exists between urban and rural areas of Higher Secondary School students.

Table 3 represents the data and results of the test of significance of difference between mean scores of urban and rural areas with respect to Family Environment.

TABLE 3 Data and Result of the test of significance of difference between means of Family Environment for Urban and Rural areas.

Locality	Sample Size (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value
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Urban	300	247.51	31.42	2.31
Rural	300	241.81	29.06	

Discussion of Result

From table 3, the obtained t value is 2.31, which is greater than 1.96, the table value for significance at 0.05 level. The greater mean score in the case of urban area reveals that the

students in urban area are better than the students in rural area in their Family Environment. This indicates that students belongs to urban and rural areas have significant difference in their Family Environment.

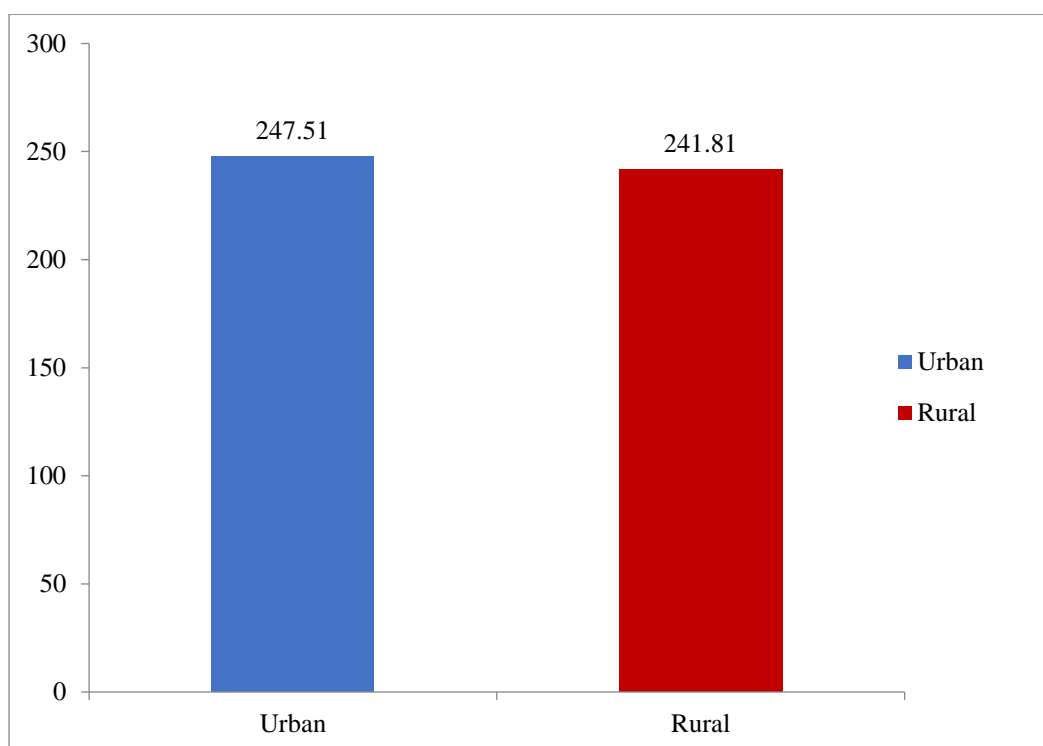


Figure 2 Diagrammatic representation showing the mean scores of Family Environment based on Locality.

Comparison of mean scores of Family Environment for Socio-Economic Status groups. For finding out whether there exists

any significant difference in the mean scores of Family Environment among students belong to different socio economic status ,Analysis of Variance has been done.

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Table 4 Data and Result of One-way Analysis of Variance between students classified into Very Low, Low, Average, High and Very High Socio-Economic Status groups.

Variable	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean sum of Squares	F
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Family Environment	Between Group	14191.8	4	3547.95	3.82
	Within Group	552042.2	595	927.80	

Discussion of Results

The F-value for mean comparison obtained is found to be 3.82. Which is greater than the value required for significance at 0.05 level. This indicates that there is significant difference in the mean scores of Family Environment between the five groups formed on the basis of the classificatory variable Socio Economic Status of Higher Secondary School students. This suggests that the students belonging to different Socio-Economic Status differ significantly in their Family Environment.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings are summarised and are presented for clarification of results obtained.

- When preliminary analysis was conducted to find out the nature of Family Environment of Higher Secondary School students, it was found that 304 students belong to better Family Environment and 296 students belong to poor Family Environment.
- When subsamples based on Family Type was compared to find out mean difference existing if any, in the case of Family Environment of Higher Secondary School Students, it was found that;
 - There exist significant mean difference between Nuclear and Joint family with respect to Family Environment of Higher Secondary School Students.

[CR, $t = 1.05$, $p < 0.05$]

- When subsamples based on Locality was compared to find out mean difference existing if any, in the case of Family Environment of Higher Secondary School Students, it was found that;

- There exist significant mean difference between Rural and Urban areas with respect to Family Environment of Higher Secondary School Students.

[CR, $t = 2.31$, $p >$

0.05]

- When subsamples based on Socio-Economic Status groups was compared to find out mean difference existing if any, in the case of Family Environment of Higher Secondary School Students, it was found that;

- There exist significant mean difference between Very Low, Low, Average, High and Very High Socio-Economic Status groups with respect to Family Environment of Higher Secondary School Students.

[CR, $F = 3.82$, $p > 0.05$]

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the study that there are students from better Family Environment as well as from poor Family Environment, among higher secondary students. The study result also reveals that the Family Environment of the students varies to a large extent based on family type ie, nuclear family and joint family. The Family Environment of the higher secondary students also vary based on the Locality, such as urban and rural, where they live. Moreover, the Socio-Economic Status of Higher Secondary School students also influence the Family Environment.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The major educational implications of the study are given below.

- The study helps to develop a plan for making regular contact between parents and children in order to improve their Family Environment.
- Regular Guidance and counselling programmes can be organised in schools for helping the students to face the problems related to Family Environment.
- Family and school environment should be structured in such a way that the solutions for the problems related to social interaction can be solved.
- Teachers and social welfare board members can arrange various programmes for providing adequate awareness to the parents as well as to the students for improving their family environment.
- The nature of awareness programmes arranged in rural and urban areas should be different.
- The nature of awareness programmes arranged for students as well as parents belongs to different socioeconomic background should be different.

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