

Influence of Parental Attention on the Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students of Expatriate Parents

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Abstract

The study was conducted to find out the influence of parental attention on academic achievement of students of expatriate parents. The sample for the study was collected from various schools of Malabar region in the state of Kerala. Sample consists of 600 secondary school students whose fathers are working abroad of which 312 are boys and 288 are girls. A self made tool was used to measure the parental attention and the score of annual examination was taken as the indicator of academic achievement. Students were classified into three groups based on the parental attention they get; namely high attention group, average attention group and low attention group. A comparison of percentage of achievement was done further. The study revealed that there is no significant relation between the academic achievement and parental attention among the secondary school students who are under the care and control of their mothers than that of their fathers.

Keywords: Parental attention, Academic Achievement, Secondary school students, Expatriate parents

Home environment and parents' care are important determinants of academic achievement. An academically favorable home environment is likely to enhance the child's motivation to achieve academic success which in turn will contribute to good performance in school. Considerable research evidence suggests that parents behavior with their children – stimulation, consistency, moderation and responsiveness- influence the children's cognitive and social development. (Clark 1983). Educators and public policy makers continue to pay close attention to the ways in which parents can foster or inhibit cognitive development and by extension, academic achievement.

James Coleman's large scale study of the factors that influence academic achievement showed a stronger correlation between achievement and family background and environment than between achievement and quality of school (Coleman et. al., 1966). Cotton and Wikelund (1989) asked the question: "Does parent involvement have positive effects on students' achievement?" In answer to that question they found that all the research documents they selected to reflect on the effects of parental involvement on students' academic achievement and other student outcomes overwhelmingly demonstrate that parents' involvement in children's learning is positively related to achievement in all subjects and for all types and ages of students.

Parenting performing and its effect on children's developmental outcomes have traditionally been studied as two orthogonal constructs, demandingness and responsiveness (Maccoby and Martin 1983; Baumrind 1989, 1991). Demandingness refers to the extent to which parents show control, supervision and maturity demands in their parenting; Responsiveness refers to the extent to which parents show their children affective warmth and acceptance, give them support and communicate with them. Based on these two dimensions, four parenting styles have been identified (Maccoby and Martin 1983, Baumrind 1991). Authoritative parents are high both on demandingness and responsiveness. Indulgent parents are low on demandingness and high on responsiveness. Authoritarian parents are high on demandingness and low on responsiveness. Neglectful parents are low on both demandingness and responsiveness.

By parenting properly, parents are not only rendering their duties, but also transacting a message to the offspring that they are secure under their parents. It is a nice feeling that passes from heart to heart. Both father and mother have the duties to be performed from their part. The absence and presence of fathers with the children especially in the early years of development will affect the personality of the children. It was observed by the investigator that most of the students in northern districts of Kerala are deprived of the sufficient care from their fathers. Because of their fathers are abroad, their mothers are the all in all for them. They get rare opportunities to spend time with their fathers. Hence, these fathers' attention towards their children is limited. As far as children are concerned, their parents are the primary source for all matters related to their life. There is a strong bond between the parents and the children. It is so clear that no example is needed to elaborate this relation. This blood relation has its own influence on all aspects of the child in each and every sphere of the life. The influence may be either positive or negative. From the very early stage of development till the last breath, parents strive for the good of their children.

In our cultural atmosphere, every parent is very well aware of providing proper opportunities for better education for their children. They spend a lot of effort for this purpose. The ultimate aim of each parent is to bring up his child to a well-educated position and thus to a better job. It is crystal clear that parents stand along with their children by catering to their needs. Parents' attention has much importance in the process of development and in personality formation. The presence or absence of parents in the realm of children's growth has distinct effect on the development of their personality and on forming their attitudes towards their environment. The children brought up under the control of mothers rather than fathers will have a tendency to show more attachment to their mothers. They tend to give their fathers

only a secondary position. This type of attachment will be stronger if they lack the presence of their fathers in the later stages of development. During the period of adolescence, children try to break the barriers of their family control and tend to imitate their peer groups in all the fields. This is a period when a strict supervision is needed from the side of parents. The lack of such a strong control will result in creating an absolute freedom for them. So, each child will become his own master. This will affect even the achievement of the child in the curricular and co-curricular activities.

Hoffman (1971) revealed that father- absent boys consistently scored lower than father present boys on a variety of indices of morality. They scored lower on measures of internal moral judgment, guilt following transgressions, acceptance of blame, moral values and rule conformity. In addition, they were rated as higher in aggression by their teachers, a ranking that may also reflect difficulties in self-control. Although there were generally not clear-cut differences on the measures that Hoffman had used, Santrock (1975) found that among elementary school boys, those who were father-absent were consistently rated by their teachers as having a lower level of moral maturity than those who were father-present.

Meerlo (1965) assumed that the father represents social order and that his adherence to time schedules gives the child an important lesson in social functioning. The paternally deprived boy may find it very difficult to follow the rules of society. Anti-social acts are often impulsive as well as aggressive, and there is evidence that inability to delay gratification is associated with inaccurate time perception, lack of social responsibility, low achievement motivation, and juvenile delinquency. The father-absent boy often lacks a model from whom to learn to delay gratification and to control his aggressive and destructive impulses. A boy who has experienced paternal deprivation may have particular difficulty in respecting and communicating with adult males in positions of authority.

John Stone and Jiyano (1983) reports that many studies have been undertaken in an effort to identify the main determinant of academic achievement including school based factors and out of school factors. In most of the studies, it is found that home background is an important determinant of the level of achievement. In his study, Laosa (1982) has found that discontinuity between home and school is the major cause of poor academic achievement among low income parents. Fathers' involvement in the schooling of the children has a great influence on their achievement. Nord and Winqvist (1999) conducted a study to find out fathers' involvement in their children's education. Findings indicated that children are more likely to do well academically, to participate in extra- curricular activities and to enjoy school if their fathers have high involvement in their schools. Jeynes (2005) in his study on 'parental involvement and student achievement : a meta analysis' found that the facets of parental involvement that required a large investment of time, such as reading and communicating with one's child, and the more subtle aspects of parental involvement, such as parental style and expectations, had a greater impact on student educational outcomes than some of the more demonstrative aspects of parental involvement, such as having household rules, and parental attendance and participation at school functions.

At this juncture, the significance of the present study is very clear. As the parents work hard for the well-being of their children, it is significant to study how much parents' attention influence the achievement of their children during adolescence. When the fathers are abroad, the mothers must work with double

attention and deal with their children with extra ordinary care and responsibility. The present study is to reveal whether the absence of fathers from their children has any effect on their achievement.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To compare the level of Achievement of secondary school male students of expatriate parents who get different levels of Parental Attention.
2. To compare the level of Achievement of secondary school female students of expatriate parents who get different levels of Parental Attention.

Hypotheses

1. Academic achievement of secondary school male students of expatriate parents who get different levels of Parental Attention is not influenced by the parental attention they receive.
2. There is no significant correlation between the academic achievement of secondary school female students of expatriate parents and the level of parental attention they receive.

Methodology

Survey method was used for the purpose of research. A sample of 600 students was collected using stratified random technique. Sample covered government, aided and unaided schools; all from both urban and rural areas. A self made Inventory was used to collect the needed data for the study on Parental Attention. Previous year Annual examination marks (of class VIII) were taken as the measure of Achievement. Estimation of percentage, the mean, SD and t- test were employed to analyze the data.

Analysis

Classification on the basis of Parental Attention

The total sample was classified into three groups on the basis of the score obtained in the inventory. They are:

- i. Students who get High Parental Attention.
- ii. Students who get Average Parental Attention.
- iii. Students who get Low Parental Attention.

For this classification, at first the mean of the total scores was found and then the standard deviation also. Mean $+1 \sigma$ and above were treated as High Parental Attention and mean -1σ and below were treated as Low Parental Attention. The rest were treated as Average Parental Attention. The mean score

was 172.225. The standard deviation was 13.137 Hence, the score 185 and above were considered to be with High Parental Attention, the score between 184 and 160 were to be with Average Parental Attention and the score 159 and below were to be considered with Low Parental Attention.

Table 1: Shows the number of boys and girls who get different types of parental attention and the percentage of their achievement.

**Table-01
Percentage of Achievement
of the sample based on Gender (N=600)**

Level of Parental Attention	Samples	N	% of Achievement
	104 72		
High Attention	Boys	42	66
	Girls	62	76
	387 63		
Average Attention	Boys	201	59
	Girls	186	66
	109 56		
Low Attention	Boys	69	51
	Girls	40	64

Comparison of the level of achievement of boys in high attention, average attention and low attention groups

At first the investigator compared the levels of achievement of the boys who get high parental attention, average parental attention and low parental attention. Details of the analysis are given below.

1. Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Boys with High Parental Attention and Boys with Average Parental Attention

Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Boys with High Parental Attention and Boys with Average Parental Attention was done and the data and results are presented in Table 02.

Table 2: Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Boys with High Parental Attention and Boys with Average Parental Attention

Variable	Sample				Critical Ratio	Level of Significance
	Boys with High Attention		Boys with Average Attention			
	N1	P1	N2	P2		
Achievement	42	66	201	59	0.8421	NS

Note: NS= Not Significant.

From Table 02, it is clear that the critical ratio for Achievement between Boys who get High Parental Attention and Boys who get Average Parental Attention is 0.8421. It indicates that there is no significant difference in Achievement between Boys who receive High Parental Attention and those who receive Average Parental Attention because the critical ratio is 0.8421 which is less than the table value for significance at 0.05 level.

2. Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Boys with High Parental Attention and Boys with Average Parental Attention

Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Boys with High Parental Attention and Boys with Average Parental Attention was done and the data and results are presented in Table 03.

Table 3: Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Boys with High Parental Attention and Boys with Low Parental Attention

Variable	Sample				Critical Ratio	Level of Significance
	Boys with High Attention		Boys with Low Attention			
	N1	P1	N2	P2		
Achievement	42	66	69	51	1.5481	NS

Note: NS=Not Significant.

From Table 03, it is clear that the critical ratio for Achievement between Boys who get High Parental Attention and Boys who get Low Parental Attention is 1.5481. It indicates that there is no significant difference in Achievement between Boys who receive High Parental Attention and those who receive Low Parental Attention because the critical ratio is 1.5481 which is less than the table value for significance at 0.05 level.

3. Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Boys with Average Parental Attention and Boys with Low Parental Attention

Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Boys with Average Parental Attention and Boys with Low Parental Attention was done and the data and results are presented in Table 04.

Table 4: Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Boys with Average Parental Attention and Boys with Low Parental Attention

Variable	Sample				Critical Ratio	Level of Significance
	Boys with Average Attention		Boys with Low Attention			
	N1	P1	N2	P2		
Achievement	201	59	69	51	1.1581	NS

Note: NS= Not Significant.

From Table 04, it is clear that the critical ratio for Achievement between Boys who get Average Parental Attention and Boys who get Low Parental Attention is 1.1581. It indicates that there is no significant difference in Achievement between Boys who receive Average Parental Attention and those who receive Low Parental Attention because the critical ratio is 1.1581 which is less than the table value for significance at 0.05 level.

From the above three comparisons, the investigator could reveal that there is no influence of parental attention on achievement of secondary school male students of expatriate parents.

Comparison of the level of achievement of girls in high attention, average attention and low attention groups

After comparing the levels of achievement of the boys, the investigator compared the levels of achievement of girls who get high parental attention, average parental attention and low parental attention. Details of the analysis are given below.

1. Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Girls with High Parental Attention and Girls with Average Parental Attention

Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Girls with High Parental Attention and Girls with Average Parental Attention was done and the data and results are presented in Table 05.

Table 5: Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Girls with High Parental Attention and Girls with Average Parental Attention

Variable	Sample				Critical Ratio	Level of Significance
	Girls with High Attention		Girls with Average Attention			
	N1	P1	N2	P2		
Achievement	62	76	186	66	1.4744	NS

Note: NS= Not Significant.

From Table 05, it is clear that the critical ratio for Achievement between Girls who get High Parental Attention and Girls who get Average Parental Attention is 1.4744. It indicates that there is no significant difference in Achievement between Girls who receive High Parental Attention and those who receive Average Parental Attention because the critical ratio is 1.4744 which is less than the table value for significance at 0.05 level.

2. Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Girls with High Parental Attention and Girls with Low Parental Attention

Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Girls with High Parental Attention and Girls with Low Parental Attention was done and the data and results are presented in Table 06.

Table 6: Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Girls with High Parental Attention and Girls with Low Parental Attention

Variable	Sample				Critical Ratio	Level of Significance
	Girls with High Attention		Girls with Low Attention			
	N1	P1	N2	P2		
Achievement	62	76	40	64	1.304	NS

Note: NS=Not Significant.

From Table 06, it is clear that the critical ratio for Achievement between Girls who get High Parental Attention and Girls who get Low Parental Attention is 1.304. It indicates that there is no significant difference in Achievement between Girls who receive High Parental Attention and those who receive Low Parental Attention because the critical ratio is 1.304 which is less than the table value for significance at 0.05 level.

3. Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Girls with Average Parental Attention and Girls with Low Parental Attention

Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Girls with Average Parental Attention and Girls with Low Parental Attention was done and the data and results are presented in Table 07.

Table 7: Comparison of the Level of Achievement between Girls with Average Parental Attention and Girls with Low Parental Attention

Variable	Sample				Critical Ratio	Level of Significance
	Girls with Average Attention		Girls with Low Attention			
	N1	P1	N2	P2		
Achievement	186	66	40	64	0.2422	NS

Note: NS= Not Significant.

From Table 07, it is clear that the critical ratio for Achievement between Girls who get Average Parental Attention and Girls who get Low Parental Attention is 0.2422. It indicates that there is no significant difference in Achievement between Girls who receive Average Parental Attention and those who receive Low Parental Attention because; the critical ratio is 0.2422 which is less than the table value for significance at 0.05 level.

From the above three comparisons, the investigators could reveal that there is no influence of parental attention on achievement of secondary school female students of expatriate parents. From the above comparisons, it is also clear that the percentages of Achievement of Boys and Girls in High Parental Attention Group are 66 and 76 respectively. The percentages of Achievement of boys and girls in Average Parental Attention Group are 59 and 66 respectively. The percentages of Achievement of boys and girls in Low Parental attention Group is 51 and 64 respectively. So it is also revealed that in all the three groups, girls obtain higher levels of achievement than boys.

Findings of the Study

1. There is no significant difference between the percentages of achievement of boys who get high, average or low parental attention.
2. There is no significant difference between the percentages of achievement of girls who get high, average or low parental attention.
3. Girls obtain higher levels of Achievement than Boys

Conclusion and Educational Implications

Based on the above findings, the researchers could reach at the conclusion that the achievement of secondary school students of expatriate parents-irrespective of their gender-is not influenced by the parental attention they receive. This indicates that the attention of the expatriate parents with regards to education of their children is not effective; it may be because of that the children are deprived of the care of their fathers due to physical absence. It is evident that mothers can't handle the duties and responsibilities of the fathers in their absence. The researchers could also reach at the conclusion that the girls' achievement level is better than the boys. Even though the girls' achievement is higher than the boys, they both remain on the same level when the achievement is compared to the parental attention. It shows that boys as well as girls exploit the physical absence of their fathers in the field of education.

As the teachers are the second parents, parents are the second teachers of the students. Parents should be aware of their responsibilities regarding the schooling of their wards. Each of the father and mother should play their role successfully. Children perform well when they understand that their performance is attended to and rewarded. Parents should arrange for the students an atmosphere conducive to learn at home. It is also a need of the time that father and mother should be in constant relation with the school officials hence it acts as a remote controlling. If any of the father or mother is living away from the children, an alternate authority must be in charge of the care of their children to supervise the education of the children.

From the part of school also, certain steps can be initiated to ensure higher achievement of such students whose parents are expatriates. A separate Parent Teacher Association (PTA) can be formed for such students. Mothers' PTA can be formed for the father absent students hence such venues can be used to discuss the matters related to the children in detail. School can conduct some sessions regarding the effective parenting periodically. It's only when the teachers and parents join their hands, the education of the children becomes successful.

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