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# The Effect of the Home Environment on Adolescents' Motivation to Succeed

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## **ABSTRACT**

The rapid pace of technological change in recent decades has put a heavy burden on our pupils' ability to concentrate and study. Adolescents' academic achievements are determined by their own aspirations and level of desire. One's goal orientation reflects their inclination toward striving for certain outcomes. Focusing on improving one's own knowledge, ability, and competence in comparison to one's prior performance is indicative of a mastery goal orientation. Performance objectives center on doing better than one's classmates in the classroom. Parents play a crucial role in their children's education and development. We spend so much time with our families that studying how that environment affects our motivation to achieve our goals is an urgent need. Data for this research came from a survey administered to 610 ninth-graders at matriculation schools in Madurai. Various statistical methods, including the t-test, product-moment correlation, and multiple regression, were explored. Goal-setting skills are stronger among children of college graduates, city dwellers, and girls. There is a strong correlation between a learner's mindset and all aspects of their home life. It has been observed that family cohesiveness has a considerable impact on students' performance approach orientation, as does the presence of an active recreational orientation in the home.

**Key Terms:** *Goal Orientation, Mastery Orientation, Family Environment.*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Modern technological advancements have placed a heavy burden on our kids' time and energy spent studying. The rise of new forms of mass communication, the evolution of youth culture, the decentralization of decision making, the diversification of employment, the need for a wide range of skills and abilities, the expansion of metropolitan areas, and the resulting increase in international migration are all hallmarks of our rapidly evolving world. Most of our teenagers' productive time has been sucked away by the proliferation of television channels, social networking sites, portable media players, and video games. Other sets of influences, such as parents' employment, parents' participation, and parents' expectations, place additional strain on adolescents' efforts to learn. Depression among teenagers is on the increase, according to several research (Verma et al., 2002; Taj, 1999; Katyal & Vasudeva, 1999). This tendency is exacerbated by a number of factors, including a lack of available resources, inadequate knowledge, and peer pressure. Depending on their aspirations and drive, teenagers will make different levels of academic success. Adolescents who have well defined academic objectives are better able to concentrate their study efforts and make progress in the right way.

## **GOAL ORIENTATION**

Goal orientation is one's goal preference in achievement setting and it one's desire to develop, realize, and exhibit the capability to perform a specific activity. Researchers have identified several types of goal orientation. Mastery

goal orientation or Learning goal orientation focus on the development of knowledge, skill, and competence relative to one's own previous performance and is thus self-referential. Performance goals concern a striving for demonstrating competence by trying to outperform peers on academic tasks and concerned with gaining favourable judgements of their competence and a tendency to avoid challenging situations. Elliot & Harackiewicz (1996) proposed that performance goals can be broken down into performance approach and performance avoidance goals. Approach type performance goals involve the goal of demonstrating one's competence relative to others. Individuals with these goals are interested in demonstrating their ability relative to others. In contrast, avoidance type performance goals involve the goal of avoiding looking incompetent at a task. When the perceived competency is high, individual will go with approach type of performance goal, in another way, if the competency

is low, individual will select the avoidance type of goal in order to avoid the demonstration of incompetence. When school personnel use practices that encourage social comparison and make ability different salient, performance goals become significant. In contrast, when school personnel use practices that focus on improvement, effort, and self-comparisons, mastery goals become prominent (Maehr & Midgley, 1996).

## **FAMILY ENVIRONMENT**

From infancy through adolescence, and beyond, children look to parents to provide them with important psychological resources. Parents' provision of such resources shapes children's personality development (Eccles, Early, Frasier, Belansky & McCarthy, 1997). When parents create a psychologically positive environment, children flourish; when they fail to do so, children suffer. Parents are one of the important forces behind every one's learning and motivation. Educators, policy makers and researchers have long focused on parental involvement as a complement to the fundamental importance of strong teaching and curricula to student achievement. Since we spend much of our time in family, exploring family environment's relationship with goal orientation becomes important need of this hour.

## **NEED FOR THIS STUDY**

In order to improve the learning skills of students, it is important for the educators to identify learning strategies, and motivational conditions which would facilitate the process of learning. Mastery orientation and performance approach orientation will lead to deeper level of processing of information which helps the learner to retain the information for a long period of time. Identifying the facilitating condition from the family, for students' learning also important need of this globalized nation. Hence, this study attempted to study the goal orientation of adolescents and their family environment.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To assess Goal orientation of adolescents
2. To assess Family environment and Goal Orientation of adolescents
3. To compare adolescent's Goal orientation based on their gender, Parent's income, parent's education and locality.
4. To explore the relationship between Goal orientation and Family environment of adolescents.
5. To assess the impact of Family Environment on adolescents' Goal Orientation.

## **HYPOTHESES**

1. There is a significant difference in goal orientation of adolescents based on their gender.
2. There is no significant difference in goal orientation of adolescents with respect to their parent's income.
3. There is a significant difference in goal orientation of adolescents on the basis of their parent's education.
4. There is a significant relationship between adolescent's goal orientation and the quality of family environment.
5. Family environment of adolescents' have a significant impact on their goal orientation.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted survey method. Stratified random sampling technique was adapted to select the samples from

Madurai City Matriculation schools. The following tools were administered.

## TOOLS USED

1. Family Environment Scale by Bhatia & Chadha (1993) - This scale consists of 69 questions, divided into three subscales and eight different dimensions. The dimensions are cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, acceptance & caring, independence, active recreational orientation, organization and control.
2. Goal orientation measure by Zweig and Webster (2004)- This tool consists of 21 items, measuring goal orientation of students in three dimensions, Performance Approach Orientation, Performance Avoidance Orientation, and Learning Orientation in a seven point scale.

## SAMPLE

The samples of the study comprise of 610 ninth standard studying matriculation school students from Madurai city. 't' test, product moment correlation and multiple regression were used in this study.

## DISCUSSION

From the gender wise comparison Table:1, female students have shown significantly higher performance avoidance orientation as well as learning orientation. Girls are more sensitive to negative feedback than boys. Performance of any activity leads to evaluation by others and the fear of negative feedback/ criticism would make the female students avoid the task than approaching it. Present education system is more achievement (Knowledge) oriented than developing skills. Generally, females have better verbal ability and memory than boys, which gives them an advantage over boys. Hence, females tend to have higher learning orientation. Studies by Hardeep (2006), Tara Motha (2005), Wolters (1999), Niemivirta (1997), and Pokay & Blumenfeld (1990) have supported this result. Parent's education wise comparison is shown in **Table:2**. Students of college educated parents have better performance approach orientation and learning orientation. Highly educated parents know more about what their children are being taught, and are able to help them with homework and to provide appropriate cognitive stimulation. They could also train their children to be career oriented. They use to create conducive atmosphere for the learning activities of their children and motivate them to set higher targets and consistently working towards the targets. This requires the tendency to approach the task and better orientation towards learning.

Urban and rural comparison of goal orientation is presented in **Table:3**. Urban students have shown a higher mean score in all the goal orientation constructs. Urban pupil get wider opportunities to learn and from their environment, they easily get the feedback about their performance. This has enabled them to be more learning oriented when the learning orientation is high which in turn helps the development of approach orientation. Learning capabilities provide the confidence to approach a task. Also in performance avoidance orientation, the urban students have got higher scores than their counterpart. Students from urban area show more knowledge than competence due to their excessive reliance on technology and also they have inadequate interpersonal skills. These inadequacies may promote tendency to avoid.

**Table:4** shows the correlation analysis of Family environment and goal orientation. Learning orientation has significant relationship with all dimensions of family environment. Family cohesion, expressiveness, caring, independence, active recreational orientation is highly correlated to learning orientation. In conflict dimension of family environment also highly correlated with learning orientation. High score in conflict dimension indicates low conflict in the family. Every dimension of family environment has significant relationship with learning orientation. In table:5, we could see the results of regression analysis of family environment on student's goal orientation. Family cohesion and active recreational orientation in family have 28% influence on students learning goal orientation. It is to be noted that, active recreational orientation has negative influence on learning orientation. Parents need to keep recreational activities at minimum to have better learning. Family cohesion also influenced performance approach orientation, in which individual feel capable of performing a task. Even though students motivation is very personal, family's influences on one's motivation is explicit in this study. Schools and academic institutions have to consider learners' family environment as an important contributor of their motivation behind learning.

## CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

This research concludes that female students are more focused on studying and less concerned with how well they achieve. Children of college graduates tend to excel in all academic areas.

orientation. Students from affluent families and students from large cities tend to be more goal-oriented. A student's learning philosophy and attitude to performance are strongly influenced by their home life. More intervention research is required to support rural students' aspirational development. Underachieving kids may benefit from increased access to family counseling programs at school. To better equip college-educated parents to raise their children, schools may provide workshops tailored specifically to them.

**TABLE: 1 GOAL ORIENTATION OF STUDENTS: GENDER WISE COMPARISON.**

Dimensions of Goal Orientation	Male N=363		Female N=247		't' value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Performance approach orientation	31.38	6.74	31.55	7.11	0.298 NS
Performance avoidance orientation	28.54	5.71	29.75	5.95	2.530*
Learning orientation	34.25	7.91	37.79	8.12	5.370*

<sup>NS</sup> - Not Significant

\*- Significant at 0.05 level

**TABLE: 2 GOAL ORIENTATION OF STUDENTS WITH RESPECT TO THEIR PARENTS' EDUCATION.**

Dimensions of Goal Orientation	College Edu. N=379		School Edu. N=231		't' value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Performance approach orientation	32.15	7.15	30.29	6.27	3.274*
Performance avoidance orientation	29.24	5.68	28.68	6.07	1.134 <sup>NS</sup>
Learning orientation	36.56	8.13	34.24	8.06	3.429*

<sup>NS</sup> - Not Significant

\*- Significant at 0.05 level

**TABLE: 3 GOAL ORIENTATION OF STUDENTS BASED ON THEIR PARENTS' INCOME.**

Dimensions of Goal Orientation	Low N=334		High N=276		't' value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Performance approach orientation	30.11	6.45	32.55	7.05	4.425*
Performance avoidance orientation	28.38	5.78	29.57	5.83	2.517*
Learning orientation	34.47	8.26	36.67	7.98	3.335*

<sup>NS</sup> - Not Significant

\*- Significant at 0.05 level

**TABLE: 4 FAMILY ENVIRONMENT AND GOAL ORIENTATION – CORRELATION ANALYSIS.**

Family Environment Dimension	Performance Approach Orientation	Performance Avoidance Orientation	Learning Orientation
Cohesion	0.250**	0.161**	0.501**
Expressiveness	0.157**	0.072	0.377**
Conflict	0.037	0.025	0.203**
Caring	0.175**	0.085*	0.392**
Independence	0.038	-0.01	0.233**
Active recreation orientation	0.149**	0.07	0.362**

Organization	0.103*	0.081*	0.254**
Control	0.095*	0.025	0.301**

**TABLE: 5 INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT ON GOAL ORIENTATION: REGRESSION ANALYSIS.**

Independent variable	Dependent variable	$\beta$	't' value	Model Summary
Cohesion	Performance approach orientation	0.245	4.114	<b>R<sup>2</sup>=0.075</b> <b>F=6.071</b> <b>P&lt;0.01</b>
Cohesion	Learning orientation	0.342	6.52	<b>R<sup>2</sup>=0.283</b> <b>F=29.695</b> <b>P&lt;0.01</b>
Active recreational orientation		-0.113	-2.691	

\*- Significant at 0.05 level

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