

# HOME ENVIRONMENT AND ENGLISH LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT: A CASE STUDY AT ONE UNIVERSITY IN NORTH SULAWESI

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated the affect of home environment towards students' English learning achievement at one university in North Sulawesi. Three variables were included parents' education background, parents' occupation, and parents' income. The population was the students from second semester who enrolled in General English II. The instruments were used in data collections. They were information about parents' socioeconomic status, English final grade of the students, and information about the family condition. The results showed that negative correlation, only mothers' occupation had positive correlation towards students' English learning achievement. These findings were extensively discussed and appropriate recommendations were made.

**Keywords:** Home Environment, Learning Achievement, Socioeconomic status, English Final Grade

## **Introduction**

The effect of family in someone's life is important especially in education. The condition of family drives two probabilities. First, family with good relationship among family members at home can increase their children learning such as getting higher point in their learning. Second, family with low relationship among family members may not increase their children learning, children can get low point in learning achievement.

Home environment is one of the factors that could affect students learning achievement, Egunsola (2014) states that home "is a place where the pupils begin to learn the norms and values of the society in which they find themselves" (p. 46). On the other hand, each child has different condition in their home environment. For instance, some parents sometimes try to find other alternative to help their children in learning achievement. In other cases sometimes the parents do not pay sufficient attention to their children when the children start to take a step in first school.

Some parents are not interested in English. They think that learning English is expensive. They have another negative perception about English. These parents wish their children become a famous athlete or scientist, but behind that their children have to have the ability to speak with other international athletes or scientists, which mean their children should know English. Many parents think that English is not important, they only think, as long as you want to go to school, it is more important. In fact, English helps children to think broadly. It helps children to be more creative in their thinking about something. Some children should sacrifice their ability in English because of their parents wish. Without motivation and encouragement, they will be poor in English. Based on this background, the study reported the investigation about what elements of home environment affect English learning achievement and how does home environment affect English learning achievement.

The objectives of the study are to find out the impact of home environment toward English learning achievement. This study might give insight that home environment factors do not strongly affect students' English learning achievement especially in this university, give input to the lecturer about the influence of home environment on students English learning achievement, help parents to understand and be more interested in their children development and give the best education for their children and help students to understand their own achievement by seeing the condition on their home and help them to be more autonomous in learning English

### **Theoretical bases**

Home is the one aspect that influences the earliest possible time of child life at a time when their mind is most receptive. Society is composed of families, and the heart of the community and of the nation is the house hold. The well- being of society, the prosperity of the nation depend upon home influences. The environment of the home in which a child is raised can advance or hinder wholesome personality adjustment. Family relationships also determine in large measure the young person's developing attitudes toward home and family life. Parveen (2007) stated that "one of the most important influences upon the adolescent is the emotional climate of the family" (p.18). Some families evidence a prevailing mood of gaiety, joy, optimism and happiness. Other families reflect a climate of fear, depression, cynicism, and hostility, which has a negative effect on children.

Satisfying relationship between parents is generally reflected in a warm and supportive family climate. Conflict between the parents is likely to result in a generally unsatisfactory home environment. Fighting between parents is clearly unpleasant for children, and in the long term, the consequences can be serious for them.

When talking about home environment, it also talks about family, because family is include in home environment. For some children, having family is more meaningful than having other things. Relationship in family is important. This means each member of the family should interact one another. Parveen (2007) mentioned that “Family relationships also determine in large measure the young person’s developing attitudes toward home and family life” (p. 19). Home environment is the most thing on child learning achievement. Davis (2005) stated that in general, family process model shave examined how parenting behaviors, such as the structure of the home environment, influence children’s achievement outcomes (p. 1). Parents are included in home environment. Parents take the most responsibility in child learning. Dietzman (2002) also suggest that parents have the responsibility.

#### *Parents’ Socioeconomic status*

Every person has different socioeconomic status from each other. Some have high and some have low socioeconomic status (SES). Sirin (2005) pointed “Socioeconomic status describes an individual’s or a family’s ranking on a hierarchy according to access to or control over some combination of valued commodities such as wealth, power, and social status” (p.418). Sometimes because of socioeconomic status, children can change their habit when they make interaction with their friends and when they start to learn something in the classroom. Not only the children, sometimes it also effects adults. In some cases, those who have high socioeconomic status is more confident than those who have low socioeconomic status.

Children from low-SES households and communities develop academic skills more slowly compared to children from higher SES groups Initial academic skills are correlated with the home environment, where low-literacy environments and chronic stress negatively affect a child’s preacademic skills. The school systems in low-SES communities are often underresourced, negatively affecting students’ academic progress. But in other cases those who have high SES and low SES have same level in learning achievement. Children from low-SES environments acquire language skills more slowly, exhibit delayed letter recognition and phonological awareness. They become aware that society rewards individuals of varying SES differently. Caro, McDonald, and Willms (2009) argued that “students of low SES families realize they are likely to be excluded from desirable jobs and, consequently, they go through a process of disillusionment” (p. 563).

#### *Parents’ education background and occupation*

Parental education is considered one of the most stable aspects of SES because it is typically established at an early age and tends to remain the same over time. Also occupation is ranked on the basis of the education and income required to have a particular occupation. Parents’ occupation is related much to their education background. It means those who get

good education can get good occupation. Those who get good occupation will have good salary to support their life. Some other people believe that when they get good or high education, it will be easy to find a good or better job for them. Because of these things, sometimes it make the children conscious to learn, or increases their learning achievement.

The influence of family educational climate is defined by the amount and the style of help that children receive from the family; that is determined by elements of the family context, like the dynamic of communication and affective relationships, attitudes toward values, expectations, *etc.* Along these same lines, Egunsola (2014) reported that “parental expectations have a notable influence on academic results, even when controlling for initial knowledge and socio-economic context” (p. 48). He also found indirect relationships with performance from the student’s perception of how much importance his or her parents assign to study at home.

Generally, in the family the head of family is father, who usually gets high education and has good job or occupation. But, in the family this is also the mother, sometimes, has same level with father. Even though father has that all, mother has important job in the house. Marks et. al (2000) stated “the argument is that mothers (compared to fathers) are more involved with the socialisation of a child; they spend more time with the child, spend more time reading and helping with the child’s homework, and generally are more aware of the child’s world at school” (p. 15). Parents’ education and occupation are some aspect that can make their children success in many things, especially in learning achievement. In this present, many parents try and work very hard to give the best for their children especially in education or in learning achievement.

#### *Parents’ Income*

Sirin (2005) stated that “parental income as an indicator of SES reflects the potential for social and economic resources that are available to the student” (p.418). Of course, each family has different income. Every family has their own income to support their family life and also children education especially in learning achievement. Maftukhah as cited in Putang and Sitompul (2012) said that income consisted of formal income and informal income. Formal income is earnings that include stuffs like rice, medicine, transportation, and facilitation, also regular earnings as salary. Informal income is an income like goods, and service, or money the received as wages that one receives from their own business, income from social clappers, etc. Those kinds of income were all included in family income.

The type of home, clothing, spending money, and other material possessions the adolescent has, all are influential in determining his social class status in the peer group. Parveen (2007) stated that “the adolescent from an upper or upper-middle class family is more assured of status than one from the lower-class family.” When the adolescent finds

that his lack of social acceptance by his peers is due to lack of money, it frequently brings strong resentments towards his parents.

Income can affect children's cognitive, the way they think of something. Those with high income can think clearly than with low income. It is because of children in high income family can get more stock of food with enough portion which means they get appropriate nutrition, meanwhile those who low income cannot get stock of food with enough portion. For some parents it is important to give some food with good nutrition.

Income has important role to increase children learning achievement. Parents with stable and high income are usually able to give the best for their children such as give the best stock of food. It also means that when the parents are able to buy some food with good nutrition, they help their children to increase their interest in study to get good learning achievement.

#### *English learning achievement*

Speaking a foreign language improves the functionality of your brain by challenging it to recognize, negotiate meaning, and communicate in different language systems. This skill boosts your ability to negotiate meaning in other problem-solving tasks as well. Students who study foreign languages tend to score better on standardized tests than their monolingual peers, particularly in the categories of maths, reading, and vocabulary. Murphey (2014) gave his opinion, he said that "ideally English Language Learner students should be assessed using measures that are valid in terms of their sensitivity to culture, and to the amount of exposure to English these students have had." (p. 2)

#### *Socio-economic status and English learning achievement*

Socio-economic status affected student English learning achievement. Kamuti (2015) stated that "parents from the higher economic status are more involved in their child's education" (p. 11). Parents with high socio-economic can fulfill their children needs especially needs in education.

One of the factors is education background. Parents with high education background can teach their children better than those with low education background. As Egunsola (2014) stated that "the educational background of the parents can be expressed in their frequent use of English language as a medium of communication in the home" (p.48). This will help in laying a good foundation for self-expression, confidence in speaking good English in the public and good understanding of basic English concepts in the school since English language is used for communication in schools.

In regard to parental occupation, a child from a well-educated with high socio-economic status is more likely to perform better than a student from an illiterate family. This is because the child from an educated family has a lot of support such as a decent and

good environment for academic work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent feeding. He or she is likely to be sent to good schools where well- seasoned teachers will handle his or her subjects.

## Research Design

Quantitative research was used in this research. The population was the students from second semester, at one university in North Sulawesi. The sample was students who enrolled in General English subject. They surveyed into four classes. Questionnaires were employed in this study. There were three parts in the questionnaire, first was asking about the parents' occupation, education background, and income. Second was asking their final grade, and the last was asking about the condition in their home and family. The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents. Microsoft Excel was used in this research for analysis.

## Findings and discussion

Based on the analysis it was found that private sector employee become the highest percentage of students's father's occupation. There are 42 respondents gave their answers. The percentage is 42 %. Mothers' occupation, the highest percentage is others, it is 37%. Terms of fathers' education, the highest percentage is high school, it is 52% and the lowest percentage for fathers' education is S3, it is 1%. For mother, the highest percentage is high school, it is 46%. The lowest percentage of mothers' education is S2, it is 3%.

For income, the highest percentage is parents' with low income such as less than Rp. 1.500.000, from 100 respondents, there are 25 students gave their answers, it is 25%. The lowest percentage of parents' income above Rp. 6.500.000. in achievement, students who got A and A- have the same percentage. The percentage is 22%. The lowest percentage of students' achievement, in this case on final grade is B- and the percentage is 4%.

Based on the data, fathers' occupation affected the students English learning achievement with negative correlation, it is -0,04. Mother occupation has positive correlation, it is 0,016, it means mother with good occupation affected the student to get great achievement. The correlation between mothers' occupation and students' English learning achievement is positive

The correlation between parents' education and students' English learning achievement is negative. The correlation between fathers' education and learning achievement is -0,188 and correlation between mothers' education and learning achievement is -0,104.

Parents' income has negative correlation toward students' English learning

achievement. It means parents' income does not ensure students to get good achievement. The correlation is -0,211.

On the questionnaire, there are 10 questions that generally related with achievement of the students. Those are 1,3,4,8,9,13,19,26,29, and 30. All the questions, specific number, have negative correlation with grade, it means the statements of these questions do not strongly affected students achievement in English

### *Discussion*

Father and mothers' education have negative correlation toward students' English learning achievement. Parents' with low education can educate their children to get good achievement and bad achievement, it also happens to parents' with high education. Father with good occupation unensure their children to get good achievement in English learning. Also father with standard occupation unensure their children to get bad achievement in English learning. Mother with good occupation ensure her children to get good achievement in English learning, but mother with standard occupation can be affected her children to get bad or low achievement in English learning. Parents with high income do not ensure their children to get good achievement in English learning.

In students' English learning achievement, in this case on final grade, students' who got A and A- have same percentage, it is 22%. It means, almost half of the students get good points or grade.

In elementary, middle, and high school, the role of parents' such as socioeconomic status strongly affected to their children achievement. But, in college is different, like in this university. In college, students are free to give their opinion about subject that they learn. The collegian can finance their school fee. Collegians are more autonomous than students in elementary, middle, and high school. That is why parents' socioeconomic do not strongly affected to them. In the university, has a way to help the students in financial so the students can study at that university, and that way is the university give opportunity to the students who has low financial to work while study there. The university called it labor.

Based on the questionnaire, especially on specific number, the statements do not strongly affected students English achievement. For instance, statement number 4, based on the data, correlation with grade is negative, it means not all of parents, who can facilitate their children in English, can make their children to get good grade. Sometimes the final result of the students can be unexpected result.



## Conclusion

General English II students can get good achievement and it does not depend on the parents' socioeconomic status. It can be depend on their experience, how they motivate themselves, and how they manage their time to study. It happens in this university. It does not mean the effect of parents' role is not important. In the university, there are some ways that help the students to help them to solve financial problem. It becomes one of some ways to help the students.

Parents' habit does not strongly affect students' achievement. Collegian is more autonomous than student in elementary, middle, and high school. It is not enough only by giving care to student in material, but parents also have to give motivation and give more attention to the children

## Recommendation

1. Parents of students should give motivation and encouragement except fulfill students need.
2. Parents should show to students their care to make students more confident.
3. Students should have confidence to take part in classroom no matter where there are from, high or low socioeconomic status.
4. Parents of students should make preparation for their children education, such as, emotionally, materially, spiritually, and socially.
5. Students should make readiness for themselves in education such as mental readiness and should be autonomous. Also they should understand their parents' socioeconomic level.

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