



ISSN (E): 2277- 7695

ISSN (P): 2349-8242

NAAS Rating: 5.03

TPI 2020; SP-9(7): 19-22

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www.thepharmajournal.com

Received: 16-05-2020

Accepted: 18-06-2020

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Comparison of home environment of preschoolers across residential area

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Abstract

Preschool period, which continues till the primary school, personify one of the most crucial periods of development. Enriched home environment help in advance the overall development of child. Children from disadvantaged home are poorly equipped in cognitive abilities and socialization as compared to their relatively well-off counterparts. Maternal attitudes that encourage child's independence and reciprocal parent-child interaction positively influence the child's intellectual performance. Everyday experiences provide opportunities for infants to learn about cause and effect. The main purpose of the study was to investigate home environment of preschool children across residential area. The study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana state. For selection of rural data four schools having preschool unit were selected and to draw urban sample five preschools were selected at random. From selected schools 240 pre-school children from the age group of four to five years were selected randomly. The sample consisted of equal number of preschool boys and preschool girls. Home environment of pre-school children were assessed by using Home observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) by Bradley and Caldwell (1981). The collected data was classified and tabulated as per the objectives. For analysis of data frequency, percentages, mean, standard deviation and independent sample 'z' test were used. Results indicated that in urban as well as in rural area majority of the preschool children had moderate level of home environment and urban preschool children had better home environment as compared to rural preschool children.

Keywords: Home environment, modeling, acceptance, physical environment, preschool children

Introduction

The home and school environment plays an important role in cognitive development. In India, majority of children do not receive the required stimulation at home due to acute problems of poverty and literacy. Their parents are able to contribute only to a limited extent to the child's socio- emotional or cognitive development (Najineem *et al.* 2004) [8].

During early childhood years a child spends his most of time with the family and parents are the child's first educators. Child's home environment has a strong impact on his/her areas of development. Many personal and socio-economic variables determine the impact of the home environment but parental attitudes and behaviour, especially parents' involvement in home learning activities, can be essential to children's achievement and can defeat the influences of other factors (Cutler *et al.* 2011) [4].

A child's early home environment has a profound effect on his well-being. Beginning in infancy, a problematic home environment can disrupt the brain's stress response system, reduce the quality of care giving a child receives and interfere with healthy development (Willoughy *et al.* 2011) [11].

A child during early childhood years needs a climate of security and acceptance. He requires a stimulating environment wherein he has enough freedom to explore, observe, touch, feel, handle and manipulate different objects, materials and situations. Early childhood years are critical in a child's life. This is because the rate of development is more rapid during these years. At this stage personality differences among children became increasingly apparent. These become well defined by the time the child attains the age of six. The child begins to learn to use his rapidly developing mental abilities. He starts learning, for the first time, how to fit his behaviour to the accepted pattern of the home, school and society (Gupta, 2013) [5].

Enriched home environment help in advance the overall development of child. Children from disadvantaged home are poorly equipped in cognitive abilities and socialization as compared to their relatively well-off counterparts. Maternal attitudes that encourage child's independence and reciprocal parent-child interaction positively influence the child's

intellectual performance. Home environment provided by parents, parental behaviour and their interaction with child and related factors tend to influence the cognitive development. Everyday experiences provide opportunities for infants to learn about cause and effect (Baillargeon, 2004) [1]. The rearing environment is very powerful supporter of development and it is essential that teacher/parents of preschooler could use in all the possibility that predispose children's development. Moreover, the quality of stimulation goes long way in ensuring efficient processing of child's development. The most important positive factors in the environment of children from 2-6 years of age are appropriate play materials and equipment, playmates, instruction and guidance, and tasks that are challenging, but not too difficult (Weinstein and David, 1987) [10].

Methods and Materials

Research Design

A 'Descriptive Research design' was followed to conduct the present study. Descriptive studies are a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject without influencing it in any way. It gives better and deeper understanding of a phenomenon on the basis of an in depth study of the phenomenon.

Sample size

Separate list of boys and girls were prepared in the age of 4 to 5 years from all nine schools. 60 boys and 60 girls were selected from each location randomly. Total sample consisting of 240 pre-schoolers out of which 120 pre-schoolers from rural area and 120 pre-schoolers from urban area.

Selection of area

From Haryana state district Hisar was selected at random. From Hisar district, block-II was selected randomly. For selection of rural sample two villages namely Chaudhriwas and Gorchi were selected at random from the selected block. From each village two schools were selected randomly i.e. Asha primary school and Play school from village Gorchi, Adarsh senior secondary school and Asha middle school from village Chaudhriwas. Total four schools were selected at random. For selection of urban sample list of schools were prepared from Hisar city, from this list five schools were

selected at random i.e. Little Wings school, Small Wonder school, Guru Jambeshwar school, Kids Heaven school and New Paramount High school. Total nine schools having preschool wings were selected at random from both locations i.e. urban and rural.

Tools used in study

Home environment was assessed by Home observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) by Bradley and Caldwell (1981) [2].

Statistical analysis of data

Calculate statistical inference Frequency, percentages, mean, standard deviation and Z test were computed.

Results and Discussion

Environment plays a vital role in regulate and moulding the behaviour and thoughts of child especially in cognition. Table1, presents data on distribution of respondents for their sub aspects of home environment as per area that majority of the respondent were getting appropriate home environment in urban area corresponding in rural area for their proper development. The trend was towards low to high home environment when observed for each aspect separately.

Table 1 depicted data on status of respondents according to their home environment for urban and rural respondents. The data furnished in the table for total number of respondents focused that maximum number of respondents were in moderate category for learning stimulation (62.50%), language stimulation (75.83%), physical environment (78.33%), warmth and acceptance (73.34%), academic stimulation (85.00%), modeling (90.83%), variety in experience (60.00%) and acceptance (50.00%). Turning towards rural area data furnished in the table for total number of respondents focused that maximum number of respondents were in low category for learning stimulation (50.84%), language stimulation (48.33%), physical environment (58.33%), warmth and acceptance (58.33%) and acceptance (50.00%). While for academic stimulation (75.00%), modeling (62.50%) and variety in experience (66.67%) children were getting moderate level of home environment. Regarding composite, urban as well as in rural of children had moderate level of home environment i.e. 50.00 per cent and 50.00 per cent respectively.

Table 1: Assessment of home environment of preschool children as per area

Area	Urban (n=120) f (%)	Rural (n=120) f (%)	Total (N=240) f (%)
Home environment			
Learning stimulation			
Low (1 - 3)	10(8.33)	61(50.84)	71(29.59)
Moderate (4 - 7)	75(62.50)	50(41.66)	125(52.08)
High (8 - 10)	35(29.17)	9(7.50)	44(18.33)
Language stimulation			
Low (1 - 2)	16(13.33)	58(48.33)	74(30.83)
Moderate (3 - 5)	91(75.83)	54(45.00)	145(60.41)
High (6 - 7)	13(10.84)	8(6.67)	21(8.75)
Physical environment			
Low (1 - 2)	11(9.17)	70(58.33)	81(33.75)
Moderate (3 - 5)	94(78.33)	42(35.00)	136(56.67)
High (6 - 7)	15(12.50)	8(6.67)	23(9.59)
Warmth and acceptance			
Low (1 - 2)	16(13.33)	70(58.33)	86(35.83)
Moderate (3 - 5)	88(73.34)	41(34.17)	129(53.75)
High (6 - 7)	16(13.33)	9(7.50)	25(10.83)
Academic stimulation			

Low (0 – 2)	6(5.00)	23(19.17)	29(12.08)
Moderate (3 – 4)	102(85.00)	90(75.00)	192(80.00)
High (5 – 6)	12(10.00)	7(5.83)	19(7.92)
Modeling			
Low (0 – 2)	6(5.00)	35(29.17)	41(17.08)
Moderate (3 – 4)	109(90.83)	75(62.50)	184(77.07)
High (5 – 6)	5(4.17)	10(8.33)	15(6.25)
Variety in experience			
Low (0 – 3)	38(31.67)	33(27.50)	71(29.58)
Moderate (4 – 6)	72(60.00)	80(66.67)	152(63.34)
High (7 – 9)	10(8.33)	7 (5.83)	17(7.08)
Acceptance			
Low (0 – 1)	2(1.67)	60(50.00)	62(25.83)
Moderate (1 – 2)	60(50.00)	50(41.67)	110(45.84)
High (3 – 4)	58(48.33)	10(8.33)	68(28.33)
Composite home environment			
Low (12 – 23)	8(6.67)	42(35.00)	50(20.83)
Moderate (24 – 34)	60(50.00)	60(50.00)	112(46.67)
High (35 – 46)	52(43.33)	18(15.00)	78(32.50)

Figures in parentheses denote percentages

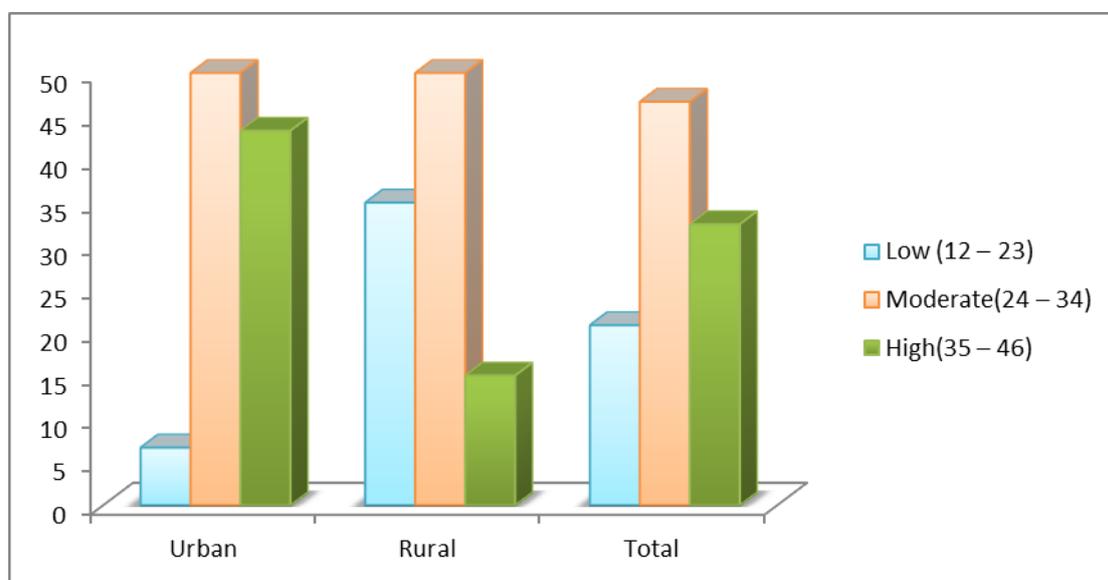


Fig 1: Home environment of pre-school children as per area

Significant difference was in observed variety in experience ($z=2.25^*$) at 0.05 level of significance. Mean score reveals that urban children ($M=4.49$) were more variety in experience than rural children ($M=4.07$).

Results unveils that significant difference was in observed language stimulation ($z=3.59^{**}$) at 0.01 level of significance. Mean score highlighted that urban children ($M=4.49$) were more language stimulation than rural children ($M=4.00$).

Moving towards comparison of children in home environment against place of residence data decomposed that statistically no significant differences were observed with rest of home environment which includes physical environment, academic stimulation, acceptance and composite home environment

against area of pre-schoolers.

Homes with a positive emotional climate produce children who trust others. A positive family environment provides consistency for strong childhood development. With regard to dimension of home environment result revealed that majority of the respondents in urban area were getting moderate level in all dimensions of home environment. While in rural area majority of children had high level of learning stimulation, language stimulation, physical environment, warmth and acceptance, acceptance and composite home environment followed by moderate level in academic stimulation, modelling and variety in experience.

Table 2: Comparison of home environment across area

(N=240)

Home environment	Area	Urban (n=120)	Rural (n=120)	Z-values
		Mean±SD	Mean±SD	
Learning stimulation		5.75±1.51	5.32±1.62	2.13*
Language stimulation		4.49±1.11	4.00±1.00	3.59*
Physical environment		3.86±1.17	3.87±1.08	0.07
Warmth and acceptance		3.50±1.20	3.87±1.17	2.42*
Academic stimulation		3.30±0.90	3.27±0.73	0.28
Modeling		3.07±1.02	3.35±0.88	2.28*

Variety in experience	4.49±1.52	4.07±1.37	2.25*
Acceptance	1.87±0.97	2.03±0.91	1.32
Composite home environment	30.33±9.40	29.78±8.76	0.47

*Significant at 0.05 level

Further comparative mean value showed that urban preschool children outscored rural preschool children in home environment and independent sample z-test was significant for learning stimulation, language stimulation, warmth and acceptance, modeling and variety in experience.

It is observed during the home visit that urban and rural parents verbally responded to their children, appreciate good qualities and involve with the child's day-to-day activities. Similarly Sharma and Bandhana (2012) ^[9] reported that children with high environment have higher level of problem solving ability in comparison to those having low level home environment. Manocha and Narang (2006) ^[6] depicted from study that majority of rural women provided poor home environment to their children. Nayak (2013) ^[7] discomposed that majority of children in rural area fell under the medium category of home environment. While in urban area, children had good home environment.

Conclusion

- At the end of the research it can be concluded that majority of the preschool children had moderate level of home environment followed by high and low level. The significant differences in mean values of home environment of rural and urban pre-schoolers, urban preschool children had better home environment than rural preschool children.

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