

**How does the environmental factors and
psychological factors impact a child's
academic achievement:**

**A
comparative study
of
Yemen and Norway**

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Introduction

Have you ever stopped to think about how our surrounding and what's going on in our heads might impact how well we do in school? I mean, there could be various reasons, right? Is it because of our parents or something as an individual's? Well, that's exactly what I'm wondering too. See I've been thinking about how environmental and psychological factors might affect a child academic achievement. Like is it how our parent treats us and what they expect from us?

The importance of education has been a big role in the society for decades. Serving as empowerment across generation but also as one of the main reasons for human development. It allows humans as an individual to see different perspectives and cultures. As well as to keep the society going. The ability to have education is every child's right, the right to learn. Yet over 600 million children (according to [unicef.org](https://www.unicef.org)) worldwide are unable to maintain the minimum competency of reading. Without getting the right to good quality education these children suffer later in life. The main reasons to why the quality of education amongst these children is so low is because they come from places with high rank of poverty, Economic fragility, political instability, conflict and natural disasters. The people affected by these are often those from ethnic minority's severely girls in these cases.

The contrast between the education scope in different parts of the globe is huge. Countries like Yemen and Norway are proof on how the socioeconomic factors have an impact on children's academic abilities. A country like Yemen which remain till this day as one of the worst humanitarian crises where most of the populations suffer from psychological damage as traumas. A country in poverty, conflict and limited access to education against a country like Norway, known for social welfare system and a wide-ranging education system. Analyzing the two nations and exploring what are the factors that impact the children born in developed countries and developing countries.

Education isn't something that just comes to us in a second, it takes years to build, to form our brain.

The journey of academic development in children is a complex structure with different threads of family influences, home environment, cultural background and early psychological experiences.

One would think shaping a child personality and logic starts when they first step into the classroom at the age of 6, but it doesn't. It starts off already as a foster in the mother's womb

with the size of a poppy seed. The parental influence starts already here with the mom, development of future personality and the cognitive abilities begin. Home environment serves as a complex factor that unconsciously shapes a child's academic development. Among these factors are parental education, psychological factors, cultural background and parental attitude, playing a crucial role in influencing the child. Here the children learn from the role of observation learning, where individuals learn by observing other as displayed in Albert Banduras psychological theory.

In this project I want to conclude to what are the different factors that influence a child's academic skills. To do this I will be looking in to two contrasting countries. One of the countries will be Yemen and the other country will be Norway. As we dive into this research project my mission is to unveil how the different factors of family influences, home environment, cultural background, society factors and early psychological experiences play a part in how kids perform academically. I will be aiming to uncover the secrets behind academic success but also to see the unique strengths that shape the minds of each individual child.

Theory and Past Research

Albert Banduras social cognitive theory is based on the complex interaction between cognitive process, behavior, and environmental factors in shaping human development. Bandura draws attention to the role of observation learning, where individuals learn by observing others. The concept of self-efficacy the belief in one's ability to succeed. The theory helps us understand how the interaction with teachers, parental support and environmental factors play a role in children's academic achievement.

After being on the hunt to find past research on this similar question I came across the Previous study, "factors influencing student's achievement: A systematic review" by Mazlili Suhaini, Adnan Ahmed, Siti Hawa Harith (Suhaini, 2020) gives us an insight into the multi factors of academic achievement. While this research project gives an review of teacher, students, school and family factors influencing academic performance. It doesn't fully explore the psychological aspects or compare contrasting countries like Yemen and Norway.

Looking through the previous studies and seeing how they have done their research project I am convinced I have to look more into the negatives of these factors as well as look into the

psychological to fully understand what impacts the children. My study will be a study based on mixed methods approaching and combining quantitative analysis of existing data with qualitative methods such as document analysis. The research project will focus on key indicators of academic success, including, student-teacher interaction, parental involvement, access to educational resources and addressing the government policies as to educational equalities. By understanding these factors, the study will further aim to identify patterns in academic achievement across different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.

Bandura's social cognitive theory

The psychologist Albert Bandura had a theory about social development. I will be using this theory to understand and explain various factors that developed us the way we are, the cognitive. Bandura's cognitive theory also known as social cognitive theory puts forward that human behavior is influenced by a complex interaction of cognitive processes, behavior and environmental factors. Bandura believed in that we as individuals learn not only through our own experiences but also by observing and imitating the behaviors of others, process also known as observational learning (Kendra .C. 2022). Something that is also a focus point is self – efficacy, the belief an individual has in their ability to successfully perform tasks and have good outcome. Based on the research and analysis provided, we can see that the theory highlights how children learn not only through direct instruction's but also by observing and imitating others, in this case particularly figures as teachers and parents. For example, the positive interaction between the teacher and student discussed in the project can be understood as shaping the student's academic achievement. If they get positive feedback through the discussion it gives them confidence in their academic abilities. On the other hand, if it's given a negative interaction, with a lack of support it can undermine the students' self-esteem further impacting their academic performance. The concept of self- efficacy, where high self – efficacy on individual's is explained as someone who is resilient when it comes to challenges which is essential for academic success. Therefore, adopting the "can - do "and growth mindset can really enhance their academic performance.

The interaction between the teachers and students

The interaction between teachers and students is a crucial key factor in academic achievement, as highlighted by Mazlili Suhaini, Adnan Ahmad and Siti Hawa Harith. In their systematic review on factors influencing students' academic success (Suhaini, 2020) . A

project that had focused on investigating the factors influencing students' achievements in academic settings. Throughout the systematic review and looking into existing literature they concluded four main themes: Teacher factors, student factors, school factors and family factors.

Teachers are one of the important pillars when it comes to shaping students' academic performance and overall development. Teachers' methods and strategy's and how they approach their students have a big impact on the student's achievement.

Based on the seven studies Mazlili Suhaini, Adnan Ahmad and Siti Hawa Harith (Suhaini 2020) looked deeper into did they found that six out of the seven said that student's achievement was influenced by the teachers teaching method. Students struggling to interact with their teacher's as well as not feeling comfortable in their present is an argument that shows how important the interaction between a student and a teacher is. A teacher's attitude and characteristic's such as interaction style were also shown influencing on the student. In the project it was shown that students tend to perform better when they are in a environment where they feel respected and comfortable in the teacher presence. The reason for why some student's struggle with their relationship with their teachers are because of the negativity in favoritism of certain groups.

We all have might have had a class where we feel as if the teacher has a preference of a specific group or favorites within students, this could hinder students' interaction as well as have an ultimately impact their achievement. Furthermore, teachers tend to impact a child's self- esteem.

If we see it from a psychological perspective, Albert Bandura (Kendra 2022) had a theory about the social cognitive emphasizes the role of interaction between people, their behavior and their environments. Learning in shaping self- esteem. According to Bandura's theory children learn about themselves through interaction with people, including teachers who works as an important socializing individual .When teacher give positive feedback and encouragement it helps children's beliefs in their ability of the work they do contributing to a positive self- concept. Contrarily to when getting negative feedback, lack of respect undermining a child's self- esteem. The feeling of constantly being neglected, humiliated can lead to the feeling of self- doubt. Self-esteem is closely linked to motivation and resilience. Children with high self-esteem face challenges better, sets goals for themselves as well as

they strive more for success. On the other hand, children with low- self-esteem leads of feeling a fear of failure and will most likely avoid academic challenges.

Therefore, supportive environment in the classroom is an essential for expanding their self-esteem and their psychological well-being. By creating positive relationships with their students and being inclusive and understanding will be contributing to their academic success.

From the analysis in the project, we can emerge the student's factors in three sub themes, attitude, interest and motivation. Each individual has their own priorities, students with an attitude towards learning has an significant academic performance. Studies have shown that factors as to taking actively notes in class, class discussions, actively participation, study habits tend to perform better academically. Conversely to lateness, poor concentration, bad group influence associate with lower academic performance. This also submerges with the interest levels the students have in the subjects. Students who are genuinely interested in a subject puts more effort in the material and are more likely to perform well. This also gives them more motivation and confidence to better. Appreciation shown by the elders as teachers and quality education especially, enhances the student's motivation. Lack of motivation will most likely eventually lead to lack of confidence as well as lower academic performance. The mindset is a key in this factor, students with a growth mindset believe I their abilities, they believe that they can develop trough dedication and effort. Leading them to challenge themselves. On the other side you have students with fixed mindsets, they don't believe in their own abilities and have the feeling of failure always in the back of their mind. Therefore, fostering a growth mindset in students from an early age can be an advantage and a crucial point for the positive attitude, teacher again play huge part in this where they can make the students adapt the "can – do" mindset.

School environment

Within the school environment, fostering "can – do" mindset among students involves more than just the teacher (Suhaini 2020) . To adapt the mindset, you need various factors as the facilities, environment and leadership. Effective school leadership, exemplified by principals who encourage education and organize supportive programs for the parents, positively influence student's achievement. It shows the student's that they aren't the only one in putting effort in the education but that is a really important factor focused on by other adults as well. This factor, which another study has also highlighted, will be explored in greater detail later in the project.

Family Factors

In exploring family factors influencing students' achievement, it becomes clear that parental support and educational background play a central role (Suhaini 2020)

The family influence starts already when the child is a fetus in the mother's womb. The mother's lifestyle choices as to diet, exercise, exposure to harmful substances such as alcohol and tobacco have an impact on the developing fetus. Adequate intake of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients is essential for a healthy development and growth of the fetus. Maternal nutrition also has a huge impact on the brain development in the fetus. Furthermore, the mother's emotional and psychological well-being can also influence the fetus. One critical factor is Maternal stress, as human beings, experiencing stress is natural it can even be beneficial when it's at a manageable level and is effectively controlled. However, when the stress becomes overwhelming as intense stress it can have harmful effects, especially when developing a fetus. The

high levels of stress hormones also called cortisol, can cross the placenta whilst impacting the fetal brain influencing the cognitive abilities and emotional development (Amici.F.,2022) Therefore it's important to maintain a balance with the stress levels for the well-being and the full development for the fetus as well as the mother.

The outcome has shown that children who are born with mothers who had a healthy diet, and a good mental health state can have better cognitive abilities, including improved memory, attention and problem-solving skills. Contrasting to children born with mothers who have had difficult pregnancies with stress, anxiety and depression can have a negative outcome as low birth weight or premature birth (Glover 2015) Overall, the mother's influence on the fetus with various aspects can shape the child's neurodevelopment and set foundation for the later education.

According to the research project "factors influencing Students Achievement" the relationship between students and their parents works as a support factor. Supervising the children's learning process and having high expectations that are reachable positively impacts students' educational success. This study has also shown that parental education level has a strong effect on the students as to achievement. As to having past experiences in education and being a more reliable source to help their kids as well as supervising the children's learning process.

As to speaking on behalf of many teenagers and children's who have parent with different ethnicity and background where their teaching methods have been different, isn't it always as easy to supervise the children. Which leads to a relationship where the parents expect more from the children whilst they can't provide the right amount of help and making an unstable relationship. Also leading to put a lot of pressure, hindering a supportive environment where the children can have a better emotional well-being and develop their academic skills. Family stability also plays a role in child's educational outcomes. Children who come from a stable family with less problems and more emotional well-being positively impact's them and gives them an ability to focus on their learning tasks. Children from unstable family backgrounds face challenges as stress, trauma or lack of parental support that negatively effects the educational success.

[The design of educational spaces.](#)

Gilavand arguments underscores the importance of considering the psychological effects of color when designing educational spaces. As to how it impacts a child's educational achievement, cognitive skills and stress levels.

Earlier in my project I wrote about the research project "factors influencing Students Achievement" A systematic reviewed by Mazlili Suhaini, Adnan Ahmad and Siti Hawa Harith (Suhaini, 2020) Here they concluded with four main themes, where one of them were the school factors that affected the child's academic skill. Whilst looking for other research projects on my topic I came across the research project "Investigating the impact of environmental factors on learning and academic achievement of elementary students: Review by Abdolreza Gilavand (Gilavand, 2016).

His research project aimed to explore the influence of environmental factors within educational institutions on the learning outcomes and academic achievements of elementary school students. One of Gilavand arguments underscore the importance of considering the psychological effects of color when designing educational spaces. As to how it impacts a child's educational achievement's and the psychological as reducing stress and their cognitive skills. In the research project there were both studies that showed that colored had no impact on the students and other that showed that it had a positive impact. One of the studies done by Gimbel and Pile (Gilavand 2016)) stated that green might be the best color for classrooms, as it promotes balance and judgement. Gilavand himself investigated this to see if environmental

coloring impacted the academic achievement of elementary schools in Ahvaz. The study found out that the appropriate coloring of the learning environment had a positive impact on students learning and their academic performance.

As a 17-year-old high school student currently in my second year, I've observed that the colors of our classroom, mainly a very light olive green, often go unnoticed. As I mentioned earlier the color green has been studied on and mentioned as the best color for classroom since it promotes balance and judgement. The walls and the roof are mostly wooden planks, giving the space a rustic yet modern feel. However, what stands out the most are the two glass doors on the two sides of the room, allowing a constant view of students entering and exiting the neighborhood classrooms, which can be quite disturbing. Opposite of the entrance where the teacher's instruction area is a huge window giving us a glimpse of the outside world.

While the olive light green color doesn't seem to have a remarkable impact on our learning environment, I believe that the presence of natural elements such as wooden planks, the large window contributes to a more positively well-being. Mainly because as human beings we have comforting connection to nature because our bodies and brains are still adapted to living in natural environment's. Which I believe calms us and enhances our focus. Additionally, the newness and organization of our classroom facilities foster a sense of calm, reduces stress and improves focus. Despite the positive aspects, the noises from the neighboring classrooms and constant activity through the glass can disrupt the learning process. In general even though the colors or layouts of classrooms may not be perfect, it's a space where one can learn and grow to make the most of our educational experiences it's what counts I believe.

Poverty's effect on students. A comparative study on Yemen and Norway

Educational inequalities and the impact of poverty on academic achievement are critical issues affecting students worldwide. In a comparative study on Yemen and Norway various factors emerge, reflecting on the complex interaction between socio-economic factors and educational opportunities.

In Yemen, poverty rates are high, and the access quality education is limited. This is due to the Yemen Crisis. Yemen Crisis remains till this day one of the world's worst humanitarian crisis. According to UNCHR the civil war started due to government forces to clash. Since 2015 has the civil war been going on, 8 years of conflict. The country is at its last on the edge

of totally collapsing (unhcr.org). The Yemeni government has been demanding restriction on humanitarian organizations, like aids projects. Approximately 21.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. UNICEF states that « Years of conflict, misery and grief have left millions of people in Yemen in need of mental health and psychosocial services. »

(unicef.org) The vulnerability in killing and using children by parties in the conflict as well as violence, abuse and child labor are some of the reasons to the traumas. As if the psychological damage isn't enough the damage of school buildings and hospital are one of the main reasons to limited accesses to education and health services. According to unrefugees.org “More than 2.5 million children are out or not attending school, and 8.6 million school-aged children need education assistance” (unicef.org). The ongoing conflict for the past 8 years has had a huge negative impact on the educational opportunities. Displacement of the families also disrupts the education of many children as to not getting the supervision they need. The trauma and violence they have experienced has also led to mental health challenges that hinder their academic performance. When children experience trauma, whether its violence, natural disaster or neglect their brain undergo changes that can end up interfering with learning and academic skills. Trauma in a way encourages stress responses which leads to a difficulty regulating emotions, making it challenging for children to focus and pay attention to learning new skills. The economic hardships as to not being able to recover and the ruined school facilities further depriving the chance to attending school regularly, this also makes it difficult for the students to focus on their studies (unicef.org)

Conversely, Norway a highly developed country with a stable political environment and low on poverty, often remarks it's high standards of living and resilient social welfare system (Braathe. 2014)

The Norway education system are well- funded schools, with highly trained teachers. Children In Norway benefit from early childhood education programs, where they have access to free primary and secondary education. Besides this they have a wide range of activities and a huge source of support services. Norway has an huge focus on equal opportunities to make sure that every child with different socio- economic background can grow to succeed in. This commitment made by the govern made makes a huge impact on shaping the child's academic success. Ensuring that they have the right tools and sources to reach their full potential. The school facilities in Norway are known for having high standards. Providing safety and having modern and equipped school buildings. These factors promote academic creativity, and student well- being. Typically, the Norwegian

classrooms are spacious, with natural light and modern technology. They are also designed to incorporate elements of nature, as to outdoor space, green areas and eco-friendly elements to engage the student's connection to the environment. Overall Norway's investment in education contributes a lot to the high-quality academic success (Braathe 2014).

The role of school facilities plays a huge role when it comes to academic performance. Having the availability of teaching materials, and appropriate facilities impacts students significantly. It's somewhat unfair to think that there are children born into such privileged environments where schools are not only free but also safe. This relativity shows us the importance of ensuring that every child should have access to high quality education. That it should be considered a necessity and accessible to all regardless of their socioeconomic background or the country they live in.

Conclusion

In conclusion, exploring the impact environmental and psychological factors on child's academic achievement reveals the complex interplay that shapes the educational outcomes. Education is beyond doubt a crucial for human development, serving as a gateway to society progress. However, the lack of equality in educational opportunities worldwide, as evidenced by the contrasting case of Yemen and Norway proves the critical role of socioeconomic factors. While Norway has well-funded schools and a supportive environment, Yemen a country suffering from poverty, conflict and limited access to education severely hinders children's academic success.

Within educational settings, factors such as teacher-student interactions, student attitude and school facilities play a huge role. Positive relationship with teachers, a growth mindset and a learning environment contribute to academic success. Conversely favoritism, lack of motivation hinders achievement. From Bandura's cognitive theory, we understand that human behavior is shaped by the three factors of cognitive process, behavior and environmental influences. Throughout the research we can conclude that every child deserves the opportunity to thrive academically, regardless of their socio-economic background or geographic location. By recognizing and addressing the factors that influence the child's academic achievement, we can work toward creating a more inclusive and supportive educational landscape for all students.

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