

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Effects of family educational background, dwelling and parenting style on students' academic achievement: The case of secondary schools in Bahir Dar

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This study predominantly focuses on investigating the respective impacts of family educational background, dwelling background and parenting styles on students' overall academic performance with respect to governmental secondary schools in Bahir Dar town, Ethiopia. A descriptive survey method was employed. 'A 42-item questionnaire was constructed and pilot tested. The computed reliability coefficient was 0.76. Moreover, data on students' academic achievement were obtained from the archive offices of sampled schools. While proportionate sampling was employed to determine representatives of each school and grade level, systematic random sampling technique was used to identify individual samples; making a total of 240 students. The methods of analysis employed were t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA). ANOVA and t-test results with regards to the impact of family educational background and residence upon students' overall academic achievement was found non-significant at  $F=0.59, df = 3$  and  $209, \alpha=0.05$  and at computed t- value of 1.35, and critical t- value (1.96) respectively. Whereas, parenting style had been found statistically significant to impact on academic achievement at ( $F=6.4, df= 3$  and  $209, \alpha=0.05$ ). In an attempt to identify the parenting style conducive for better performance, Tukey test or Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test had been employed, and the results revealed that authoritative parenting is far better over the rest three parenting styles.

**Key words:** Family educational background and parental residence, parenting styles, academic achievement.

## INTRODUCTION

According to science educationists, educational achievement of school children can be either poor, average or high depending upon many contributing factors such as parenting style, parental educational background and level of involvement, family structure and social status, peer influence, school environment related factors (teachers quality, availability of school educational

facilities, quality of the curriculum...), family economical background, student's preschool educational experiences, their self-efficacy and effort and the likes (Yalew, 1997; Gutman et al., 2000; Amare, 2001; Megan, 2002; Admasu, 2004).

The feeding, smoking or non-smoking and drinking habits, emotional, health and psychological status of the

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mother during prenatal and post natal stages significantly impact the overall personality development of the child. In a family, the mother took the upper hand roles for the development of trust in the newborn baby. The trust developed at this age level does have considerable positive impacts later in life. Later on, the role for the healthy social as well as educational development of the child will be shared among the father and more probably elderly family members. The degree of involvement is of course affected by a number of factors such as: family educational background, parental residence and parenting style the parents are adhered to (Bempechat, 1992; Dandapani, 2001; Sheila, 2005).

Partnerships among families and schools are essential for two basic reasons. First, children spend the vast majority of their time throughout their lives outside of school, and families heavily influence this out of school time. Second, families are among the most important determinants of children's attitudes, learning, behavior, healthy development and overall wellbeing (Eccles and Harold, 1996; Hoover- Dempsey and Sandler, 1997; Epstein, 2001; Henderson and Mapp, 2002; Jeroen, 2007).

One study of parental involvement based on a model of children reading to parents found that children who read to their parents on a regular basis made greater gains than children receiving an equivalent amount of extra reading instruction by reading specialists at school (Tizard et al., 1982). Aeurbach (1989) also shows that "indirect factors including frequency of children's outings with adults, level of maternal outings, emotional climate of the home, amount of time spent interacting with adults, level of financial stress, enrichment activities and parental involvement with the school had the stronger effect on many aspects of reading and writing than did direct literacy activities, such as help with homework".

A growing body of research suggests that; how parents rear their children may be more important than the parents' occupation, income or educational level (Heath, 1983; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1988; Snow et al., 1991). In relation to the parental influence on students' academic achievement, Henderson and Berla (1994) argued that, the most accurate predictor of students' academic achievement is the degree to which families encourage learning or get involved in children's education which varies across parenting styles. The more the family members communicate with mutual understanding and the more their expectations (authoritativeness) goes in parallel with children's actual potential the better the child's success in education and social life.

Likewise, according to Sarah (2006), pure authoritative families (high on authoritativeness and low on permissiveness and authoritarianism) had the highest mean grades while inconsistent families that combined authoritarianism with other parenting styles had the lowest grades.

It is general truth that, the family's role in the children's

education varies in degrees and types from family-to-family and from culture-to-culture. The roles may either be fulfillment of basic needs and learning material requirements or may include these needs and requirements plus direct engagement in: scheduling study programs, doing home works and assignments, tutorial provisions, rewarding and pushing for better achievement and still may extend to arranging for extracurricular activities such as field trips and refreshment programs (Bempechat, 1992).

In relation to the impacts of family's educational background on children's academic achievement, Dandapani (2001) underlined that, parents with high level of educational qualification are likely to create an environment that is intellectually stimulating for their child in education and social life. In addition, this high level of educational qualification could make parental support systematic, proper and timely. This kind of support provision is regarded as "hidden curriculum" by him and this contributes too much for the betterment of their children's academic achievement.

In relation to the second concern of this research, with the effect of parental residential background on academic achievement, there is a considerable body of literature that support this (Broomhall and Johnson, 1994) DeYoung (1985) concludes that rural students perform less well than urban students on standardized tests of educational achievement. One hypothesis for the existence of this condition is that; expenditure on education does matter, and they are smaller in rural areas than in urban areas (Mulkey, 1993; Reeder, 1988; DeYoung, 1985).

A second hypothesis for the existence of the difference in educational achievement between rural and urban students involves the relationships between the values in use of particular inputs and the level of such achievement (Hanushek, 1991). And, the third hypothesis is that differences by location in attitudes of individuals, parents and peers about education exist and result in the observed differences in educational achievement by location (Broomhall and Johnson, 1994; Hanson and Ginsburg, 1988).

On the other hand, social psychologists such as Vygotsky argued that; human beings are highly influenced by social life. The smallest of such social groupings, the family, does have paramount impacts in the child's personality development-such as in education. As has been indicated in PSEA (2007) professional learning exchange advisory paper (2007), decisions parents make about diet, entertainment, health care and discipline correlate with different (high or low) outcomes in terms of students' learning.

According to this study, many schools in America provide parent education and support programs to help parents build more effective, and develop more appropriate parenting skills. According to the writer's belief, this kind of intervention program is utmost minimal

or none existent in Ethiopia. There is no at least consciously designed intervention program to address the influence of poor parenting style in children's educational life.

Parents are both legally and socially responsible to play key and primary roles in developing self-confidence, trustworthiness, awareness and interest in their children. In this connection, Santrock (1998) argued that; parental scaffolding behavior serves too much for child's success. He further noted that, parental scaffolding behavior serves to support children's efforts, allowing them to be more skillful than they would be if they relied only on their own abilities.

Stringer and Neal in Santrock (1998) underlined that, scaffolding is not just confined to parent-infant interaction; rather it can be used by parents to support children's effort at any age. For instance, parents can support children's achievement-related efforts in schools by modifying the amount and types of support they provide to best suit their children's developmental stage. The home environment like that of the school environment has got an increasing recognition as an important institution in socializing and educating the child. Cognitive, social and recent developmental theorists argued that; the home or the family and the school are important institutions in the holistic personality development of the child (Jeroen, 2007).

Studies in the area of parental influence on students' academic achievement have come up with positive effects of parental engagement in their child's education. For instance, Fehrman et al. (1987) asserted that, if parents encourage their children, monitored daily activities and the progresses made, and provide conscious academic guidance and support, students would get high academic grades. Ferguson (1991) on his part argued that, parental education accounted for about 24% of the variance in students' test scores, while socioeconomic status accounts for about 26%. Other researchers contend that dysfunctional home environment, low parental expectations, ineffective parenting, language differences and high level of mobility might account for lower level of academic achievement (Frymier and Gansneder, 1989).

In the Ethiopian case, Admasu (2004) concluded that; proper parental involvement in their children's education resulted in better academic achievement. Kassahun (2005) in his part evidenced that parenting style is significantly associated with school performance. Furthermore, Habtamu (1995) in reviewing previous studies underscored that, authoritarian parenting style which is not conducive for the development of entrepreneurial characteristics is found to be the dominant parenting practice in Ethiopia.

Further searches for research works ensured that; there are no recent attempts on the impacts of family educational background and dwelling (residence) on academic achievement in and nearby Bahir Dar Town.

Moreover, with regards to the impacts of parenting practices, there are only few attempts such as the study of Abesha (1997) and Kassahun (2005).

The writer had a belief that, parental involvement; which is significantly influenced by educational background, dwelling place (rural and urban) of parents and parenting practices is poor, and what has been done by schools in creating awareness is not yet encouraging. Moreover, parents seem to employ strict rules in their home management which do have adverse impact on student's school performance. These issues had instigated the researcher to investigate the respective impacts of family educational background, residential area and parenting style on students' academic achievement, so that, constructive actions will be taken to curve or at least lessen the negative impacts. This research was aimed at addressing these basic research questions:

1. Do children from families with better educational acquaintance level outsmart those children from families with low educational acquaintance level in academic achievement?
2. Does rural versus urban parental dwelling have considerable impact on students' overall academic achievement?
3. Does parenting style have impacts on academic achievement? Which one is better for better academic achievement?

### **Objectives of the study**

The general intent of this study is to make an investigation upon the impacts of family educational background, parental residence and parenting style on children's academic achievement. Specifically, the study aims at:

1. Examining the impact of parenting style on academic achievement.
2. Investigating the impact of parental residence (dwelling) on students' academic achievement; and
3. Assessing the impact of family educational background on students' academic achievement.

### **Significance of the study**

This study is expected to have certain immediate and /or long term academic implications to the different stakeholders of the study area. Thus, the findings of this research are hoped to:

1. Make parents aware of the vital parenting roles to play for the betterment of their children's academic

achievement.

2. Serve as an input for schools: teaching staff and the administrative bodies, to work towards awareness creation through the bondage they have and in planning compensatory measures.
3. Make students change agents in introducing good parenting styles into the community.
4. Initiate the municipality's education bureau and desk to take valuable actions in alleviating parental malpractices and discouraging engagements in their children's educational achievement.
5. Provide some insights for other researchers who do have interest in the area.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Design

In order to properly answer the basic research questions and meet the purposes well, both qualitative and quantitative research approaches were used. Descriptive survey method was employed, for it helps to illustrate the current situations related to the variables of this study as they were.

### Study population, sample and sampling techniques

The study had focused on secondary schools found in the Amhara regional State capital, Bahir Dar Town. In the capital, there are three government secondary schools namely: Tana Haik Compulsory Secondary School, Gion Secondary School and Fasilo General Secondary School which were rendering educational services to secondary school students of the town and nearby rural dwellers. The researcher had targeted 9 and 10th graders who were enrolled in the three schools since 2008. These students are heterogeneous in their background; such as in dwelling (some from rural areas and others from urban areas), economic and social status. Since the rate of dropouts was not recorded, the writer was forced to consider the initial figure as population size for this study.

### Determination of sample size

Because of the difficulty to collect data from the whole population, a need arises to determine samples for the study. The sample size was thus determined by employing the formula suggested by Israel (2008). According to him, whenever the target population size is beyond the capacity of an individual researcher to manage, he or she can employ the following formula to determine sample size:

$$n = N / (1 + N (e)^2)$$

Where; n = Sample size; N = total population size; and e = level of precision (0.05).

Accordingly, the sample size becomes 240.

### Sampling method employed

In identifying the respondents for this study, stratified, proportionate and systematic random sampling methods were employed. In employing these methods, students were categorized into three levels of academic achievement: high, medium and low

achievement categories. The target schools as well as grade levels had different size of student enrollment.

Thus, for the sake of having fair data, the schools and grade levels were required to have proportional representations. Consequently, each stratum of academic achievement had been proportionally represented on the basis of the theoretical normal distribution curve.

According to Koul (2003), about 68% of a given population will fall under medium or average category of a specific character such as academic achievement. Roughly speaking, the rest 32% will fall proportionally in two sides of medium category (16% under high and 16% under low category). Subjects of the study were identified employing systematic random sampling technique. For this, the 'K' value was computed and the 'K<sup>th</sup>' subjects in each category were considered as informants.

### Data gathering instruments

In obtaining the desired data for this study, the researcher had administered a few open-ended and alternative type questionnaires. Moreover, students' average academic achievement was taken from the archive office of respective sample schools by referring the students' mark list (Roster) in order to see the impacts of family educational background, parental residential background, parenting style upon the dependent variable and academic achievement.

The major sources of information for this study were questionnaires administered to students. The questionnaire administered consisted of three parts. The first part was composed of two major items emphasizing on family educational background and residence background (1-item in each case).

The second and third parts of the questionnaire were composed of 20 items each. These items were used to identify the most preferred parenting style from students' perspective and to label the actual parenting style experience of each student under the four categories: authoritarian, authoritative, indulgent and neglectful. These items were adapted from previous research (Kassahun, 2005).

Students were required to put their parents' realistic parenting practice into one of the four parenting styles. In order to determine the parenting style of each sample student, the researcher had considered the highest frequency of parenting style characteristics tick marked by a student as an indicator.

### Data analysis and reporting

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analysis purpose. The means and standard deviations of the two grade levels of each sample school were used to single out the three achievement groups (above average, average and below average). Then, analysis of variance (one-way ANOVA) was employed to compare the mean scores of students' academic achievement with reference to family educational background and parenting style independently. Moreover, t-test had been used to test the impact of parental residence (dwelling) on same dependent variable, and academic achievement.

### Pre-test of the instrument

Before the research instrument was used for collecting data from the respondents, it was found essential to conduct a pilot study as suggested by Schnetler (1989) for the sake of checking the reliability of the instrument, in order to see whether or not refinement is needed (Oppeheim, 1992). Such a pretest is recommended to be done upon a few representative subjects of the

study before launching the actual investigation (Koul, 2003).

Having this literature background, the instrument was pilot tested in same site of the study. Before launching this preliminary test, the face and content validity levels of the instrument were evaluated by someone who had research engagement in the area and by the advisor in charge. To ease data collection, the questions were transcribed into Amharic language, mother tongue to participants and official language of Ethiopia, and had been evaluated by a language expert for correction. The questionnaire on parenting style was pretested upon 50 student subjects selected from Fasilo General Secondary School.

The responses gathered were scored and the reliability coefficient was computed employing Kuder-Rechardson's  $KR_{20}$  formulae ( $KR_{20} = k/k-1 (1 - \sum pq/s^2)$ ). Where;  $k$ = the number of questions in the questionnaire,  $p$ =the value obtained by dividing the number of students who rated 1 for each question to the total number of students who filled the questionnaire,  $q=1-p$  and  $s^2$ =standard deviation.

According to Kassahun (2005), previous studies in Ethiopia have reported reliability of alpha (Markos, 1996), 0.83 and 0.81 (Kassahun (2005), 0.87 and 0.90 (Abesha, 1997), and 0.91 and 0.78 in his case for the warmth/love and control/demandingness sub-scale respectively. In this study, the questions were not divided into sub-scales and thus, reliability of 0.76 was obtained. On the basis of the pilot test, instructions were further clarified and some vague items were made clearer for final administration.

#### Data collection procedures

The questionnaire prepared was administered in respective sample schools during regular learning days at rest time. In collaboration with unit leaders, informant students were made to bear in a safer place of respective schools and provided short explanations about the purpose of the study, and on how to fill the questionnaire. Moreover, they were made clear not to discuss on the items and fill out independently in order to avoid the interference of one over the other.

The questionnaire was administered on 240 students of the three sample schools. However, the analysis was made on the basis of the data gathered from 213 respondents. This was so because, 27 questionnaire sheets were discarded as a result of; having nothing at all (8), being incomplete (9) and been inappropriate in the information they contained (7). The rest 3 were absentee informants.

## RESULTS

In this part, the gathered data are organized, tabulated and analyzed. As noted in part one, the main concern of this research was to examine corresponding impacts of the three independent variables; namely, family educational background, parental residence and parenting styles on academic achievement of 9 and 10th graders of government secondary schools in Bahir Dar town, Ethiopia.

#### Background of the respondents

Primarily to the statistical analysis, the data on the sources of variation, proportion of informants under sub categories, academic scores of corresponding categories

and informants overall mean academic achievement are presented to have general overview about the informants (Table 1).

Since family members of any one could not necessary fall under one level of education, the level with the greater proportion of members was assumed as the educational background level of the students' family. The families educational background labeling employed during data collection were the ones noted in Table 1. The data presented in Table 1 revealed that children from families; who attended their secondary school education and/or 1-year certificate, diploma and above, pre-primary and full cycle primary took the first, second, third and fourth ranks in average academic achievement respectively.

The other aspect studied was the identification of the proportion of participants parenting styles employed in and around Bahir Dar Town. The data in Table 4 reveals, authoritative parenting style as it had been the dominant one followed by authoritarian, neglectful and indulgent respectively. This finding coincides with Abesha (1997) on one hand but, contradicts with the research findings of Habtamu (1995) on the other hand. According to Habtamu (1995) finding, the parenting style dominantly exercised at Bahir Dar nearby rural areas was authoritarian parenting style. This implies that; there is no static nature of parenting indorsed by people of similar culture across different times, which had been probably impacted by education and experience.

#### Impact analysis of family educational background on students' academic achievement

In examining whether or not family educational background had statistically significant impact on students' academic scores, ANOVA test was employed. In applying this statistical method,  $SS_b$ ,  $SS_w$ ,  $SS_t$ ,  $MS_b$ ,  $MS_w$ , and  $F$  were computed. These values are summarized in Table 2. The finding presented in Table 2 revealed that there existed no statistical significant difference between the scores of students resulting from been different in families level of educational acquaintances at ( $F=0.59$ ,  $df = 3$  and  $209$ ,  $\alpha=0.05$ ). This is so because, "F" computed (0.59) is less than table value of "F" (2.64).

#### Impact analysis of parental residential background on academic score using t-test

The second most important area of concern in this research was examining the effect of parental residence background; particularly being urban or rural, on academic achievement. t-test was employed to test the statistical significance level of residence on academic achievement, and the analysis made had been

**Table 1.** Sources of variation for academic score, and comparison of group average and overall means.

Sources of variation	Proportion of students per category		Average mean per category	Overall mean of all categories
	Number	Age (percentage)		
Family educational background				
Pre-school education	85	39.91	63.95	64.36
Attended grades 1 to 8	33	15.49	63.30	
Attended grades 9 to 12 and /or get 1 year certificate	56	26.29	65.84	
Have diploma and above qualifications	39	18.31	64.05	
Parenting styles				
Authoritarian parenting	69	32.39	62.01	64.36
Authoritative parenting	78	36.62	67.55	
Indulgent parenting	30	14.09	59.91	
Neglectful/uninvolved parenting	36	16.90	61.60	

**Table 2.** ANOVA summary table for students from different family educational background.

Source of variation	Sum of square	df	Mean squares	Computed 'F'	Table 'F'
Between groups	177.62	3	59.21	0.59	2.64
Within groups	20,994.79	209	100.45		
Total	21,172.43	212	-		

\*P &lt; 0.05.

**Table 3.** Means, standard deviations and t-test values for urban and rural children.

Source of variation	N	Mean	Std. deviation	df	Computed t- value	t-critical value
Urban	112	63.26	9.53	211	1.35	1.96
Rural	101	65.58	10.12			

\*P &lt; 0.05.

summarized and presented in Table 3. The result summarized in Table 3 revealed that; the computed t-value (1.35) is less than the critical t- value (1.96). Thus, no statistical significance difference was found in average academic score of students resulting from being urban or rural in their parental dwelling background. That means, urban and rural children did not show considerable difference in overall academic performance in and around Bahir Dar Town.

### Parenting style preference of students

The parenting preference of sampled students of Bahir Dar Town secondary schools is summarized in Table 7 to see whether or not there is a match between students'

personal understanding of good parenting and their parents' child rearing styles (Table 4).

People do have different preferences for diet, clothing, friendship, field of study, job, recreation and the likes. Likewise, we do have different personal preferences of parenting style as per to our individual perception. For such a purpose, sample students were requested to rate their preferred parenting style in order to see the gap between the "actual practice"-(according to students self-rating) and ideal or preferred practice.

Table 4 revealed that; authoritative parenting comes first in the rank order of both cases (under students' preference and "actual practice"). But, there exists a big mismatch in the number of informants between preferred and actual parenting practices (84.51 to 36.62%, respectively). While authoritarian parenting got the

**Table 4.** Comparison of students' parenting style preference and actual practice (as to the students' rating).

Parenting style	Students' preference			Actual practice as to students' rating		
	N	Age in percentage	Rank	N	Age in percentage	Rank
Authoritarian	13	6.1	3	69	32.39	2
Authoritative	180	84.51	1	78	36.62	1
Indulgent	20	9.39	2	30	14.09	4
Neglectful	-	-	4	36	16.9	3

**Table 5.** ANOVA summary table for students from different parenting background.

Sources of variation	Sum of square (SS)	Degree of freedom (df)	Mean square (MS)	Computed F value	Critical F value
Between groups	1,780.44	3	593.48		
Within groups	19,406.8	209	92.86	6.4	2.64
Total	21,187.24	212	-		

\*P < 0.05.

second rank in the "actual practice" case, it got the third in case of students' preference.

Consequently, indulgent parenting got the second and fourth ranks and that of neglectful had got 4th (with no voice) and 3rd in cases of preference and actual parenting practices respectively. The salient point here is that authoritative parenting which scholars considered the most effective one for academic success was also regarded as the most effective one by informants.

#### Impact analysis of parenting style on students' academic score using ANOVA

The other main concern of this research was conducting an investigation on the impacts of parenting styles on academic achievement. In determining the significance level of any independent variable upon the dependent variable using ANOVA, computing  $SS_b, SS_w, SS_t, MS_b, MS_w,$  and  $F$  is mandatory and these values were computed employing corresponding formulae and their summary is presented in Table 5.

Table 5 revealed that there is statistically significant mean difference in the achievement of students reared by different parenting style. This shows that some parenting styles enhance academic performance of students as compared to others ( $F = 6.4, df = 3, 209, \alpha = 0.05$ ).

The test on the effect of parenting on academic achievement was found significant because, the computed  $F$  value (6.4) is significantly greater than the critical  $F$  value (2.64) at  $\alpha = 0.05$  and between 3 and 209 degree of freedom. Here, one can raise the question "which parenting style/s is/are better for better academic achievement and which ones negatively (adversely) affect academic achievement?" In seeking solution for

this vital question, the writer had employed the method "multiple comparisons" among means. Among many options to be used to check whether or not there is considerable difference, Tukey test or Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) test had been chosen. The formulae suggested to be applied when respondents are grouped and the group size is varied is:

$$HSD = q(\alpha, k, dfw) \sqrt{\frac{MS_w \left( \frac{1}{n_1} + \frac{1}{n_2} \right)}{2}}$$

Where, HSD = Honestly Significant Difference;  $q$  = table value at  $\alpha = 0.05$  significant level and 209 degree of freedom;  $k$  = number of groups;  $dfw$  = degree of freedom of the denominator ( $N - K$ ) -  $N$ (sample size);  $MS_w$  = mean square within and  $n_1$  and  $n_2$  = number of students of corresponding groups under comparison.

Table 6 revealed that; there is mean score difference ranging from 0.41 to 7.64 among children reared by different parenting styles. The lowest difference was recorded between children of authoritarian and neglectful parents and the biggest between children reared by authoritative and indulgent parents (Table 7).

Tables 6 and 7 are complementary tables in determining (picking out) the best parenting style for better academic achievement. As we can see from Table 9, the mean differences with a star indicate that; the values are significant at corresponding Honestly Significant Difference (HSD) values. As a rule, in order to accept the mean value differences as significant, these values should be greater than or equal to corresponding HSD value (Yalew, 2006). Hence, as we can read from

**Table 6.** Pair way mean comparison table of students from different parenting.

Means	$x_1=62.01$ authoritarian	$x_2=67.55$ authoritative	$=59.91$ indulgent	$x_4=61.6$ neglectful
$X_1=62.01$ authoritarian	0	-	-	-
$X_2=67.55$ authoritative	5.54*	0	-	-
$X_3=59.91$ indulgent	2.1	7.64*	0	-
$X_4=61.6$ neglectful	0.41	5.95*	1.69	0

\* $P < 0.05$ .**Table 7.** Table of HSD and group mean difference comparison.

Variable	Mean difference between groups					
	Between $x_1$ and $x_2$	Between $x_1$ and $x_3$	Between $x_1$ and $x_4$	Between $x_2$ and $x_3$	Between $x_2$ and $x_4$	Between $x_3$ and $x_4$
HSD	5.54*	2.1	0.41	7.64*	5.95*	1.69
	4.09	5.41	5.09	5.31	4.98	6.11

Table 7, while the differences between authoritative and authoritarian, authoritative and indulgent and authoritative and neglectful parenting styles become significant at corresponding HSD values, the mean differences among authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful were not found significant.

## DISCUSSION

In this part of the report, the findings are going to be discussed in detail and justification be given. The discussion is organized into sections corresponding to the three major findings in this study:

1. The effect of family educational background on students' academic achievement
2. The effect of parental dwelling (residence) on academic achievement and
3. The impact of parenting styles on academic achievement.

### Family educational background as a factor to influence students' academic score

In examining the impacts of the family's level of educational qualification upon students' overall academic performance, ANOVA test had been employed and 'F' computed (0.59) had been found less than the critical value of 'F' (2.64) which questioned the statistical significance of family educational background on academic achievement.

Even though family educational background is among the key factors for better involvement of family members in the education of the other member which consequently

positively affect academic achievement, the examination of ANOVA test revealed that the effect was not statistically significant. This implies that, students from families of varied educational qualification levels achieved similar mean scores. This is so because, higher educational qualification level of the family by itself did not necessarily imply or guarantee better involvement.

The lack of significance may be attributed to mediating factors such as; level of family involvement and students' own efforts resulted from intrinsic motivation among others. In connection to the mediating impact of involvement against the impact of higher level of educational qualification, Stevenson and Baker (1987) asserted that the relation between parental education and school performance can be almost entirely mediated by parents' level of involvement.

Moreover, what is important for academic success is what parents do in their home and at school not students' family background (Kellaghan et al., 1993). Heath (1983), Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) and Snow et al. (1991) on their part asserted that what is more important for academic success is how parents rear their children than the parents' occupation, income or educational level. Others such as Stephen et al. (1997), claim that academic success is achieved only if family background resources can be accessed to maximize the association between family influences and outcome.

By the way, the finding on the impact analysis of family educational background on academic achievement in some ways contradicts with what Dandapani (2001) had argued. According to this scholar, parents with high level of educational qualification are likely to create an environment that is intellectually stimulating for their children's academic success.

Surprisingly, the finding fully contradicts with the ideas



of some social theorists such as Coleman et al. (1966) and Heyns (1978). They have noted that a family background factor, parental educational status, is important in predicting school achievement. According to Heyns (1978), educated parents actively “invest” their time, energy and money for their children’s schooling.

Moreover, the finding of this study contradicts with the ideas of Taylor et al. (1993). They documented that, the educational level of parents influences children’s school performance more than the other variables like (income and occupation). Hence, why the finding contradicts requires further in-depth investigation.

### **Residential background as a factor influencing students’ academic score**

The impact of rural versus urban living place (or parental dwelling background) on academic achievement was the second interest area for this study. Parental dwelling background as a factor to influence students’ academic achievement was t-tested and found non-significant in case of Bahir Dar Town secondary schools ( $t=1.35$ ,  $df=211$  and  $\alpha=0.05$ ).

This implies that, both urban and rural children achieved similar mean scores. Though the writer did not come across with what local research findings are about, the limited international literatures referred are found contradicting with this finding. For instance, Broomhall and Johnson (1994), Herzog and Pittman (1995) and Xitao and Michael (1999) noted that; there is significant difference between urban and rural children in academic achievement. These scholars concluded that rural students in parental background perform less well than their urban counterparts. This considerable difference may be attributed to a number of factors such as; access to varieties of learning opportunities, motivational differences, pre-primary and primary educational background, and the type of help they receive and the likes.

In this connection, Fabiyi and Fagbamiye (2001) asserted that; children from more privileged homes usually attend private primary institutions where all round educational foundation is ensured, they thus end up in secondary schools with adequate educational resources and a record of good academic performance. This is true as to the actual life experience of the researcher in that; life in rural Ethiopia is un-conducive and/or more challenging as compared to rural ones.

However, there are times when hardships instigate students to work hard for success instead of giving hands to challenges.

### **Parenting style as a factor to influence students’ academic achievement**

The impact of child rearing practice was the third interest area for this research work. To investigate the impact of

parenting style on academic achievement, the analysis was done by employing ANOVA test. The finding of this study, as indicated in Tables 6 and 7 suggest that parenting style has statistically significant effect on academic achievement ( $F=6.4$ ,  $df= 3$  and  $209$ ,  $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

Therefore, this finding indicated that the different parenting styles used to raise children had differential effects on the achievement of students. Literature says that there are parenting practices which hampered children’s moral, physical, mental and social developmental characteristics which significantly affect their successes in education as there are parenting practices considered ideal ones for successes in education.

For this purpose, an extended investigation was made to identify the parenting style/s conducive for better academic achievement by applying Tukey test or HSD test. The comparison made between mean differences and computed HSD values as summarized in Table 7 indicate that authoritative parenting is the best of the rest in creating conducive conditions for better academic achievement. This is because, while the mean differences between students from authoritative and authoritarian, authoritative and indulgent and authoritative and neglectful parents are greater than corresponding HSD values, the differences among students from authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful parents was found less than the corresponding HSD values. Hence, the study shows that; if we wish to improve the performance of students we need to follow authoritative parenting practice which is greatly associated with better academic achievement. The finding of this study goes in line with the findings of previous local researches such as Kassahun (2005), Markos (1996), Amare (2001), Abesha (1997) and Admasu (2004), and what international literature says. For instance, Leung et al. (1998) asserted that authoritative parenting is typically associated with higher academic achievement.

Moreover, Dornbusch et al. (1987) in their extended research conducted upon diverse ethnic groups noted that; students from a wide range of background tended to get lower grades when their descriptions of parental behaviors indicated more authoritarian, more permissive or less authoritative.

Parenting is noted as the most important influential social factor in determining children’s academic achievement. This is because, school going children including high school ones spent most of their school life time with their parents, guardians or care givers at home compared to the time spent at school. Hence, it is understood that the home environment is by far important than the school environment in influencing academic achievement.

In this connection, Castle in Aggarwal (2004) argued that; it is the home (parenting practices) than the school which determines the quality and direction of any child’s educational life. He further noted that; this major influential factor either fulfills or destroys teachers’ work

in the education of any child. This is the case that parent–school or parent–teacher links are being credited in the New Ethiopian Education and Training Policy.

## Conclusion

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following conclusions had been drawn. The finding on the impact analysis of family educational background as an influencing factor on students' academic achievement was not found statistically significant. From this, it can be concluded that family educational background is not best predictor of academic achievement.

Likewise to that of family educational background, the test for significance on the impact of parental dwelling background on academic achievement was found non-significant, signifying that both urban and rural children achieved similar overall mean scores.

Another conclusion one can make on the basis of the finding of the research was that there is huge mismatch between the number of informants who preferred authoritative parenting style and the rating as their parents "actual practices" are. The ratio for preferred to "actual" was 180 to 78 in Bahir Dar town secondary schools. According to the students self-rating, authoritative and authoritarian parenting styles took the lion's share of respondents (78 and 69 respectively).

The proportion difference between these two parenting styles was so slight and promoting authoritative parenting remains a big assignment. On the other hand, neglectful and indulgent parenting styles got the third and fourth ranks with a share of 36 and 30 informants respectively. From this, one can conclude that the three (authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful) parenting styles which scholars considered not conducive for better academic achievement highly dominate the population distribution. 135 of 213 or 63.38% of the samples were in these categories.

More importantly, an examination of ANOVA on the effect of parenting style on academic achievement showed that parenting style did have significant impact upon the dependent variable (academic achievement). International literatures considered authoritative parenting the most conducive style for better academic achievement. Having this literature background, Tukey test or HSD test had been used to identify which parenting style is conducive. The test had determined that authoritative parenting is advisable to be exercised for better academic achievement.

Consequently, students who rated their parents as authoritarian, indulgent and neglectful in most cases were found poorly performing.

The comparison of differences made among the arithmetic mean scores of students of such parents was so minimal too. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that authoritative parenting is an ideal one for better performance over the rest three.

## RECOMMENDATION

On the basis of the findings and the conclusions of this study, the writer made the following recommendations.

1. Concerning the impacts of family educational and parental dwelling backgrounds, because there are gaps between the findings of this study and what literature says, the writer recommend that the study be replicated in a future study that includes a large sample randomly selected from multiple geographic locations.
2. The regional education bureau in collaboration with school principals, the municipality's education desk and the regional mass media should set FM radio and Television programs to promote positive parental practices and discredit mal practices.
3. The writer strongly recommends schools to set programs and provide the necessary information for parents, guardians or care givers during school opening and closing festivals or events. Moreover, they should establish clubs on good parenting to create awareness and promote authoritative parenting. These awareness creation centers in turn help the school community to test their own leadership style and take self-corrective measures.
4. It is generally accepted that, no individual is identical to anyone else and thus, the writer strongly recommends teachers to establish firm touch with students so that; they can meet the individualized needs of students. Consequently, they can come up with knowing the students' home related problems (mal parenting patterns) and solve the problems through dealing with parents.
5. Different literatures considered the home environment as the most decisive factor for the success of children in both education and social life. The writer therefore; strongly recommends parents to be aware of the impact of own child rearing style on their child's academic achievement, and be committed to improve mal parental practices to guarantee better academic performance.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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