

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDY
BEHAVIOUR AND HOME ENVIRONMENT WITH
ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT**

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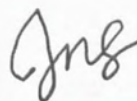
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the materials in this thesis are original except for quotations, excerpts, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

Basically, this is a cross-sectional study that attempted to identify the relationship between students' study behaviour variables and home environment variables towards English achievement of Form Four students in one of the school in Sabah. This study is aimed to determine the relationship of each of the study behaviour variables and English achievement, the relationship of each of the home environment variables and the English achievement. This study was conducted in a Form Four students in a semi-urban school which comprised of the three ethnic groups in Sabah. They were thirty-six males and forty-four females as respondents. The independent variables in this study were study behaviour and home environment. The analysis of the study was based on two sets of questionnaire, i.e., the study behaviour questionnaire and the home environment questionnaire, whereas, the dependent variable in this study was the students' achievement in English. Chi-square test is being used to determine the relationship between study behaviour and home environment with English achievement. This study found that there is a relationship between study behaviour and English achievement. This study also found that there is a significant relationship between home environment and English achievement. The mean of three English evaluations namely The First Semester English Examination, July English Test and Final Semester English Examination. In view of the importance of study behaviour, it is recommended that good learning strategies be taught to students in school to facilitate them develop the right attitude towards English learning, and therefore helps them improve their performance in English. As the study is done within the limitation of time, collecting data by using questionnaire in gathering information on study behaviour and home environment from the respondents might gathered limited information. Therefore, it is recommended that the future study will be carried out by using a more precise measure such as interview and observation on students, teachers and parents.



ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN DI ANTARA CARA BELAJAR DAN SUASANA PEMBELAJARAN DI RUMAH DENGAN PENCAPAIAN BAHASA INGGERIS

Pada dasarnya kajian ini adalah satu kajian tinjauan yang cuba melihat hubungan di antara cara belajar dan persekitaran rumah terhadap pencapaian pelajar dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Kajian ini telah dijalankan ke atas lapan puluh pelajar Tingkatan Empat pelbagai suku kaum Sabah dari lapan buah kelas di sebuah sekolah menengah kawasan luar bandar. Responden tersebut merangkumi tiga puluh enam lelaki dan empat puluh empat perempuan. Cara belajar dan persekitaran rumah adalah pemboleh ubah tidak bersandar, di mana pengumpulan data menggunakan dua set soal selidik, iaitu soal selidik cara belajar dan soal selidik persekitaran rumah. Pembolehubah bersandar pula adalah pencapaian pelajar dalam mata pelajaran Bahasa Inggeris mengikut purata dalam tiga ujian yakni Peperiksaan Semester Pertama, Ujian bulanan bagi Julai, dan Peperiksaan Akhir Semester. Analisis Khi-Kuasadua digunakan bagi melihat hubungan di antara cara belajar dan persekitaran rumah terhadap pencapaian pelajar dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Hasi kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa cara belajar mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan pencapaian Bahasa Inggeris pelajar. Kajian ini turut mendapati persekitaran rumah pelajar juga mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan pencapaian bahasa Inggeris pelajar. Oleh itu, saranan dan cadangan yang diselitkan di akhir kajian ini diharap dapat membantu dan memberi inspirasi kepada guru serta ibu bapa, dan juga pelajar untuk meningkatkan pencapaian dalam Bahasa Inggeris. Oleh kerana kajian ini hanya berdasarkan kepada soal selidik ke atas cara belajar dan juga latar belakang atau persekitaran rumah responden, maka maklumat yang diperolehi adalah agak terhad. Oleh yang demikian, adalah dicadangkan kajian seterusnya adalah lebih baik jika menggunakan ukuran yang lebih tepat seperti pemerhatian dan temu duga dengan guru, ibu bapa selain daripada pelajar.



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LIST OF SYMBOLS, ABBREVIATION OR NOMENCLATURE

SPM :	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia
PMR :	Penilaian Menengah Rendah
UPSR:	Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah
STPM:	Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia
MUET:	Malaysian University English Test
SB :	Study Behaviour
HE :	Home Environment
SBQ :	Study Behaviour Questionnaire
HEQ :	Home Environment Questionnaire
X^2 :	Chip-square
e.g. :	Example
i. e. :	That is
p :	Significant value

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

There are many factors that play the role to effect the English achievement in any school. It is a common belief that students' English achievements are highly related to the individual differences and also the school's environment. Basically, students' study behaviour and home environment play great variables on their English learning in terms of competency, proficiency and examinations. This study is carried out to identify the relationship between student's study behaviour and their home environment towards the English achievement among the Form Four students in the District of Keningau, Sabah.

The researcher had used questionnaire and English achievement records of Form 4 to collect data for the study. The sets of questionnaires were later being analysed by using the Statistical Package of Science Social (SPSS) for Windows Version 12.0 to test the relationship of the variables.

1.1 Background of the Study

The fundamental educational research question: 'what makes a good school?' still remain a question today, and one which some would argue still remains largely unanswered (Verma & Mallick, 1999:18). Although English language is just a second language in Malaysia, it is treated as a compulsory subject to all Malaysian students both in primary and secondary schools.

Platt and Weber (1980), described English as 'an effective second language in Malaysia'. Despite its' status, it (English) provides many advantages to pass this subject in all sorts of examination especially in Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) and Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), as well as in Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR).



Meanwhile, in the Form six examination, i.e., Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia (STPM), English is a compulsory subject since the year 1999 (Majlis Peperiksaan Malaysia: 1999). This is to give more exposure to the students in that language when they are sitting for the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) as one of the requirement to further their study at the university level.

In the field of occupation, English provides good chances in handling certain job situations, and at the same time it enables Malaysia to engage meaningfully in local and international trade and commerce. Therefore, as a matter of fact, English is important both in the educational and employment field. Nesamalar *et. al.* (1995), summarized the aims of English language education in Malaysia clearly as follows:

It is taught in both the primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. Its position is that of a second language. It is a means of communication in certain everyday activities and certain job situations. It enables Malaysia to engage meaningfully in local and international trade and commerce. It also provides an additional means of access to academic, professional, and recreational materials.

Nesamalar; 1995

The researcher had selected her respondents from one of the six secondary schools in Keningau among the Form Four students. Only one school is chosen as all the six secondary schools in Keningau are relatively the same in term of students' characteristics such as race, socio-economic status and English achievement. Eighty respondents were selected randomly among the eight classes of Form Four students of the school identified for this study. There are eight Form four classes consist of the Science, Commerce and Arts streamed classes in this school. There are two hundred fifty-eight students in those classes of multi racial, i.e., Kadazan/Dusun, Murut, Bajau and other minority such as the Chinese, Indian, Bugis, and Suluk. The Kadazan/Dusun, Murut and Bajau are the major population in the District of Keningau, Sabah.



English achievement among the fully assisted secondary schools in Keningau were overall quite discouraging. This brings the researcher to find out some probably variables that may influence the English achievement of among the students in school. So, the researcher chose to study the two most expected variables, i.e., the students' study behaviour and their home environment. Researcher would like to know whether these two variables are significantly related to the English achievement among the secondary schools students in this semi-urban area of Keningau.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The official aims of the English language programme for upper secondary are 'to equip the students with the skills and knowledge of English to communicate in certain everyday activities and certain job situations, and also to provides point of take-off for various post – secondary school needs' (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1989:1). In other words, the program scales to enable the students to utilize the English language in a meaningful and relevant way in the everyday context of need to communicate.

Despite the learning exposure to English language, students entering Form Four differ widely in their ability to communicate effectively in English. In terms of ability, students range from those who can hardly cope with basic communication needs to those who are very proficient. Parents, teachers and those concerned with education realize that the level of English proficiency among the present-day students has dropped drastically. In a local newspaper, "Sunday Star" dated May 28, 1995, it was reported that the former Education Minister, Dato Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak noted in a speech delivered at The Malaysian English Language Teaching Association (MELTA) Third Biennial International Conference at Petaling Jaya:

Today, however, declining standards in English must be arrested. The country is now playing a more serious role in world affairs and it is becoming increasingly clear that Malaysians should have a good command of the language.

Dato Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak; 1995



Although the ministry of education has put in a lot of effort to improve the standard of English in schools through the implementation of new curriculum, methodology, in-service training and provision of facilities in schools, the wide disparity in ability among present-day students still exist and warrants investigation.

Therefore, based on the views, presented above, the researcher feels it is important to look at other variables such as study behaviour and home environment to find out to what extent these variables are related to students' achievement in English subject. Moreover, since April 2000, English Literature component is being absorbed into all Malaysian secondary schools as a compulsory subject. This mean that English language subject become more challenging. Therefore, variables should be identified on how to remedy the problem being faced by Malaysian students especially those in the semi-urban and rural area in learning English language. The findings later on will be able to help to identify that particular subject.

The process of English language learning is very much affected by the students' study behaviour. Studies have shown that study behaviour has a significant effect upon students' academic performance (Biggs, 1970, 1972). Many of our teachers also feel that a majority of the students who are weak in English may need help in using the right strategies when learning English, but there is the question of knowing where and how to begin remedying this problem.

The importance of having a supportive environment at home to help students improve their English problem also cannot be over looked. Asiah Abu Samah (1977) in her study among primary school pupils shows that home environment positively effect the primary pupils' language development. Since students' study behaviour and home environment may influence their levels of proficiency and affect the teaching learning situation, a study of the variables and their influence would help in giving a better understanding of the situation. It is hoped that the findings may serve us input in the process of planning and preparing materials, and will successfully facilitate the teaching



and learning of English subject so that students will be able to use the language effectively.

Thus research questions are then can be focused on:

- i). Is there any significant relationship between student study behaviour and student English achievement?
- ii) Is there any significant relationship between the students' home environment and student English achievement?

1.3 Aims of the Study

This study is intended to analyse the study behaviour and home environment relative to the English achievement among the students who came from the three main ethnic groups in East Malaysia, i.e., the Kadazan/Dusun, Murut and Bajau. It is hoped that the data collected may reflect how these ethnic groups, each with their own language and dialects, perception in English language learning.

It is very important for an educator to find out or to survey the related causes of Malaysian students' low performance in English. As a consequent, the researcher as an educator plays her role to do the investigation by scoping on study behaviour and home environment because these two aspects are the most suspected in that mixed race students in a semi –urban area.

On the other hand, this study is also hoped to be one of the reference to the education ministry to refer to the decline of English performance in Malaysia, such as the MUET (Malaysian University English Test). Report from "Majlis Peperiksaan Malaysia" reported that the result of 2004 for Malaysian University English Test is not convincing. Most of the candidates, students on the threshold of a university education, were found to be only average or "modest users". Less than 12 % of the students who sat for the examination achieved the highest classification of Band Six. Many were categorized as "limited and extremely limited users" (of the language) – Band One and Two.



1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study is principally concerned with assessing the relationship among various variables of the study behaviour, variables of the home environment and students' achievement in English. Thus the objectives of this study are to identify:

- i. the relationship between students' study behaviour and achievement in English among the Form 4 students.
- ii. the relationship between students' home environment and English achievement among the Form 4 students.

By investigating the respondent with these variables, it is a hope that the findings being obtained will eventually find out the contributing factors to the poor English achievement among the students. It is also being carried out with the hoped to avoid hesitation or vague perception of the researcher and the respective teachers of the low performance on English language among the respondent of multi racial. On the other hand, by discussing or informing the parents about their child's abilities in that language, both parties will find alternatives to overcome the problem, hence to improve the English achievement, not only to their particular child but to the school in overall.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

This study was meant to find out whether study behaviour and home environment contribute to the problem of low performance in English among the students in Keningau secondary school. The researcher found out that the two variables mentioned might be the most suspected factors in that mixed races students.

The researcher also believed that after the findings, it would help educators to improve their teaching after they have detected the problems being faced by each and every student, and so forth work out a proper and suitable way of conducting the lessons,



especially in a multi racial class. In this way, teachers may help the students to find the types of activities that they prefer more, rather than to follow all of the procedure that being set by others. Most approaches to instruction assume that children should have freedom to be passive learners or, if active, should have freedom to act only to meet the goals set by others. As a result, pupils do not learn how to direct their own learning activities for learning.

Hence, at the same time, it is also hoped that it would give sample to the parents to visualize the problems being faced by their child or children in learning English and get the alternatives to help their children in learning that second language, and simultaneously might change the parental attitudes. Barbara Tizard (1975) in her study, as cited in Vincent (1996), showed that the relationship between home and school could be changed in such a way that parents take a more active role than formerly the case in their children's education. She found five major outcomes, which were expected from such a change:

- the equalizing of opportunity;
- influencing mother-child interaction so that no child was under-stimulated;
- increasing parental knowledge of education;
- promoting intervention in the first five years of life;
- altering the relationship of the schools with the communities they served.

Mittler and Mittler (1982) in Vincent, C. (1996) introduced a model claiming that parental involvement is more advanced and accepted in special than in mainstream schools. He made an assumption that, if home influences far outweigh those of school, it is essential that parents and teachers adopt common strategies and methods to maximize the learning experience of school.



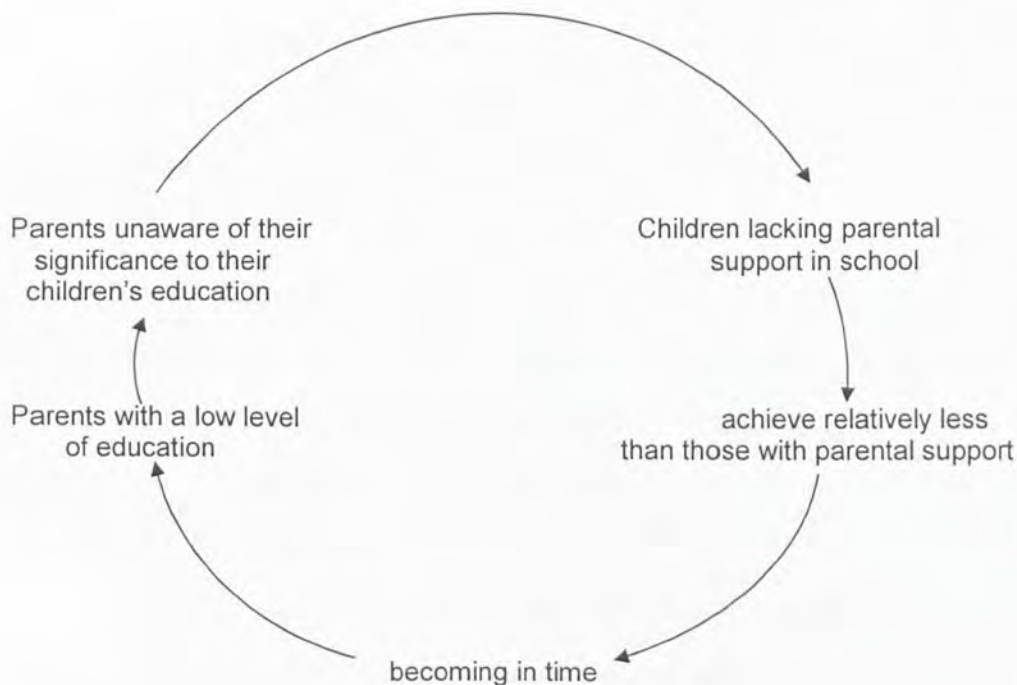


Figure 1.1: Mittler & Mittler (1982) : *A model from special education*

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study looks at the relationships of student behaviour and home environment with the English achievement in school. As a matter of fact, it is commonly assumed that students' study behaviour has significant effect upon performance in examination and so does home environment.

Reports on studies carried out in western societies and some in developing countries have established a link in the relationship between home background variables and academic achievement in general terms. Some studies show the relationship between home background parental participation (encouragement or interest, involvement) and academic achievement.

Although findings from these studies proved to be of tremendous use in formulating and directing educational policy, perhaps, a supplementary study will serve well to provide

directions in specific area of education, e.g. English language. These findings can then be utilized by English teachers to improve the study behaviour of those students who were weak in English and whose study behaviour deviated seriously from the practices for the successful ones, especially in a multi-racial class.

It is also hoped that findings from this study can be used as a basis to advise parents on how they can provide a favourable environment at home to help their children do well in English. In this respect, it is hoped that the investigation of the factors operating in the dimension of the home, may lead to better understanding of the cognitive and affective growth of the learners.

Next, by focusing on the forces operating in the home environment press, it is hoped that teachers will benefit by being made aware of the great need to understand their students as individuals who come from differing attitudes, interest, and abilities with their studies, included their varies background. Schools, now are more than ever before, are expected to respond to the challenge of educating children from different social, cultural, and religious background. Teachers at all levels have to confront racism, sexism, and classicism, which they ignored in the past. Questions research is essential to help educators not only to understand the problems but resolve them so as to help schools to provide equality of opportunity to all (G.K. Verma & K. Mallick, 1999). Related studies also have been undertaken by many researchers, for example, Verma, Zec and Skinner (1994), which investigate the way that pupils from differing ethnic and cultural background get on.

Hence, it is hoped again that teachers will be encouraged to seek pedagogical strategies to assist their students. As suggested by Majoribanks (1974) in his study of environment abilities of children, the identification of the malleable aspects of the environmental forces would be instrumental in introducing educational strategies to compensate inherent environmental deficiencies of the learner, by the school authorities and those concerned with any English program. Finally, teachers and parents will be able



to see the benefit of mutual cooperation in helping children to acquire knowledge in that second language and thus, performed well.

1.7 Hypotheses

Based on the statement of the problem discussed early, and the objectives of the study, it was hypothesized that in this study as :

- i. There is a significant relationship between students' study behaviour with their achievement in English.
- ii. There is a significant relationship between students' home environment with their achievement in English.

1.8 The Framework Model of the Study

This study would look specifically into the relationship between study behaviour and home environment with the English achievement among the Form Four students. The respondents were investigated by filling up two sets of questionnaires on their study behaviour and home environment.

In the terms of study behaviour, it is divided into three aspects, i.e., classroom study behaviour, study behaviour during individual study, and interaction behaviour outside the classroom. More specifically, it was meant to find out the students' behaviour in scope of the way they study, that is during the specific lesson together with the teacher, such as, while the teacher is explaining or giving tutorial, were the respondents paying attention by listening attentively, and able to answer oral questions whether in groups or individually. Whereas, for role-play, are they able to act and speak in the language. For group work or pair work were the respondents actively involve or take part and work together with their partner or peers, and were they using English to communicate. Outside the class activities were also being investigated to see whether they speak English occasionally or often especially during English week.

Meanwhile, in terms of the home environment aspect, investigation will scope on parental attitudes and expectations towards their children’s achievement, and home practices and resources in English.

For further investigation, the result of the respondents’ English achievement based on the three assessment, i.e. First Semester Examination, July monthly test and Final Semester examination were also being measured to look into the relationship between their study behaviour and home environment. In addition, the researcher also includes the perception of cognitive and acculturation theory, and the learning strategies made by linguists to support this study.

As this study is premised on the ground that there is relationship between study behaviour and home environment to the achievement of students in second language learning. Study behaviour and home environment are taken as indicators and are related to achievement of the students. The study’s model framework is presented in Figure 1.2.

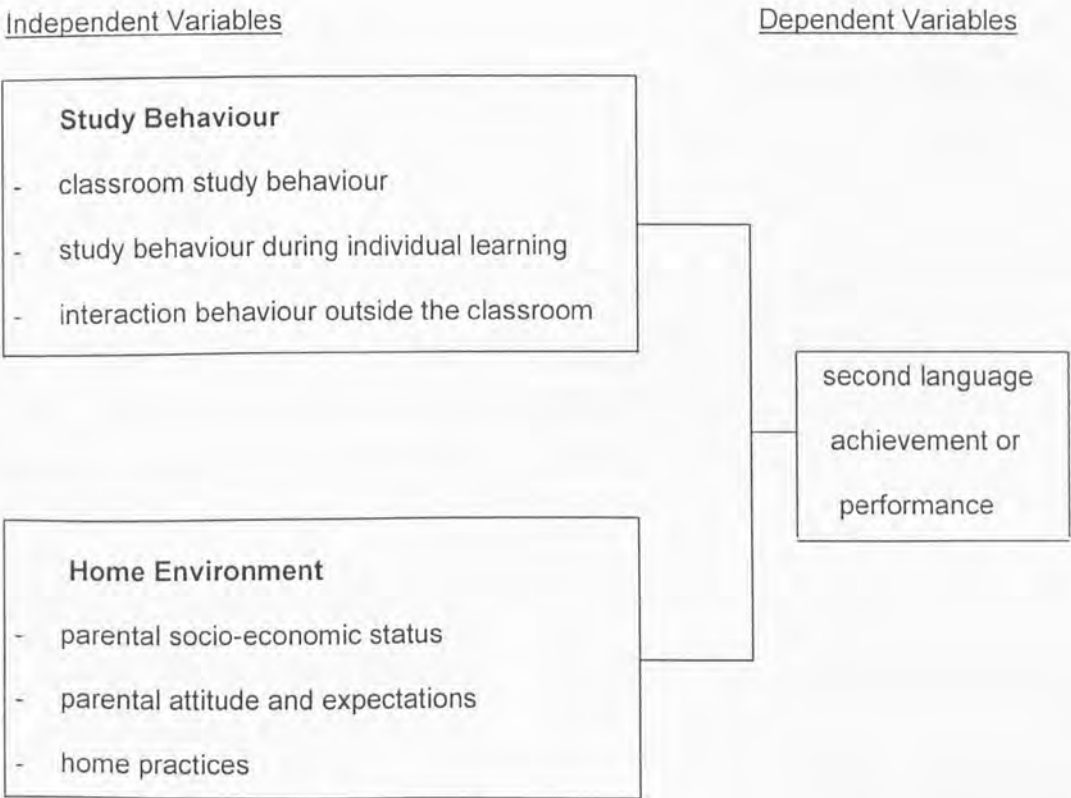


Figure 1.2: The Framework Model

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