

Home environment and personality traits among Higher Secondary School students in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

T. Fairoosa, Ashna S. Kabeer

Postgraduate Department of Home Science and Research Centre, Government College for Women, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India

Corresponding author: T. Fairoosa, Email: fairoosansar@gmail.com

Received: 15/06/2026; Revised: 19/06/2026; Accepted: 20/06/2026; Published: 05/07/26

Abstract

This study explores the intricate relationship between home environment and personality traits among higher secondary school students. Over recent decades, research has increasingly recognized the home environment as a pivotal factor influencing a child's educational and cognitive development, as well as their overall personality. This study aims to fill a gap in understanding how these dimensions interact during a critical phase of adolescent growth. The primary objectives of the study are to assess the personality traits of students and evaluate their home environments, as well as to analyse the correlation between these two variables. The sample comprised fifty higher secondary school students, evenly divided between boys and girls, each contributing unique perspectives to the study. The data collection employed a two-pronged approach: a structured questionnaire to gauge the home environment and a standardized personality assessment tool to evaluate personality traits. The results indicate notable differences in how various family atmospheres influence the development of personality traits among adolescent boys and girls. The analysis revealed that 58% of the selected students were introverts, 22% were ambiverts, and 20% were extroverts. In addition, 86% demonstrated emotional stability, whereas 14% exhibited neurotic personality characteristics. The findings of this study call for a collaborative effort among families, schools, and communities to create supportive environments that foster healthy personality development.

Keywords: Behaviour problems, emotional stability, home environment, neuroticism, personality trait.

Introduction

The home environment has long been recognized as a crucial factor in shaping a child's educational and cognitive development, as well as impacting their personality traits. The formative years of higher secondary school represent a unique developmental stage where students experience significant changes in their identity, social interactions, and cognitive

abilities. As a result, there is a heightened interest in examining the interplay between home environments and personality traits during this period.

Personality, a set of enduring characteristics that influence an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, is shaped by various factors, including genetics, social interactions, and environmental contexts. Among these, the home environment is

particularly influential, as it serves as the primary setting for emotional and social learning. Factors such as parental attitudes, family dynamics, and socioeconomic conditions can significantly affect a child's personality development.^[1] Understanding the relationship between personality traits and home environment is essential for several reasons. First, it can inform educational practices, enabling educators to tailor their approaches to better meet the diverse needs of students. Second, insights gained from this research may assist parents in fostering supportive home environments that promote positive personality development. Lastly, policymakers can leverage these findings to create initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of home environments, particularly in underserved communities.

Parents serve as the initial educators for their children, imparting vital lessons that shape their early development.^[2] Through family norms and values, children absorb various qualities and behaviours that significantly influence their interactions with peers and classmates. The educational process plays a crucial role in moulding a child's personality, fostering behavioural changes that enable them to adapt to diverse environments they may encounter throughout their lives. These behavioural transformations are closely tied to a child's performance in various settings, including academic achievement. Children who exhibit outgoing personalities and readily take the initiative, tend to navigate diverse situations more effectively, often achieving higher academic success.^[3] Thus, the home environment plays a critical role in shaping the personality traits of school-aged children. In light of this understanding, we have chosen to explore the relationship between home environment and personality development among higher secondary school students. This study aims to highlight how the dynamics within the home can influence

students' personalities, ultimately impacting their performance and adjustment in educational settings.

Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in in different higher secondary school students in Kerala. The sampling procedure for the study was selected by a non- random sampling method called convenience sampling. Fifty higher secondary school students comprising boys and girls of 25 each were selected as sample for studying their personality and home environment. The questionnaire was used to elicit information about the home environment and personality among higher secondary students; the questionnaire consisted of both standardized questionnaire tool of personality inventory, questionnaire on home environment and general information schedule. The Eysenck Personality Inventory (EPI), a validated 57-item Yes/No questionnaire measuring extraversion, neuroticism, and response validity, was used for personality assessment. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including percentage analysis.

Results

The majority of the selected students were domiciled in urban areas (42%), while 32% were from semi-urban areas and the remaining 26% belonged to rural areas (Figure 1). It was found that 88% of students were from middle income family, 10 % were from low-income family and only 5 of the students were from high income family (Table 1).

Around 54% of the students reported that they were sometimes involved in decision-making at home, while 24% reported being often involved. A further 22% stated that they were always involved in household decision-making. None of the students reported that

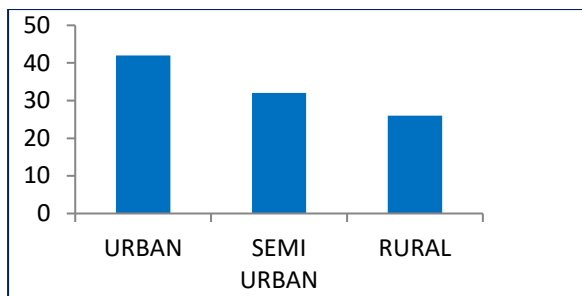


Figure 1: Domicile-wise distribution of students (%) selected for the study

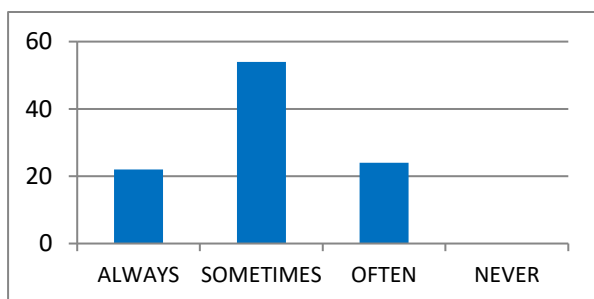


Figure 2. Students' involvement in decision-making at home

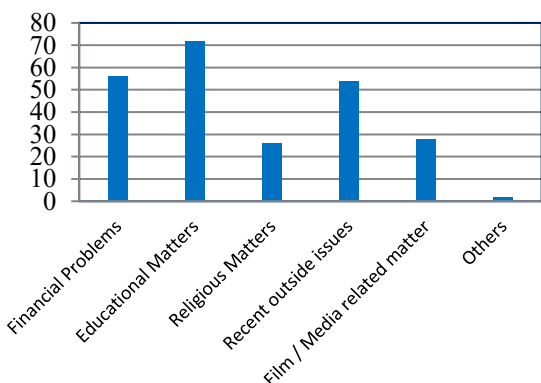


Figure 3: Most frequently discussed topics or problems in the home environment. Percentages for each attribute were calculated separately based on yes/no answer for each item, from the survey questionnaire

they were never allowed to participate in decision-making at home (Figure 2).

In the home environment, educational matters were the most frequently discussed issues, with a score of 72%. Financial matters and recent outside issues were discussed by 56% and 54% of the

respondents, respectively. Film- and media-related matters were discussed by 28% of the respondents, while 26% discussed religious matters. Only 1% of the respondents reported discussing other matters (Figure 3).

Regarding time spent with children, 46% of parents were highly involved, 40% were somewhat involved, and 12% had minimal involvement. Parents who spent no time with their children accounted for only 2% of the total (Table 2).

Table 1: Distribution of students across different family income (n=50)

Family Income group	No. (%)
Low Income Family	5 (10.0)
Middle Income Family	44 (88.0)
High Income Family	1 (2.0)

Table 2: Time spent by parents with students (n=50)

Time spent by parents with students	No. (%)
A lot	23 (46.0)
Somewhat	20 (40.0)
Very little	6 (12.0)
Not at all	1 (2.0)

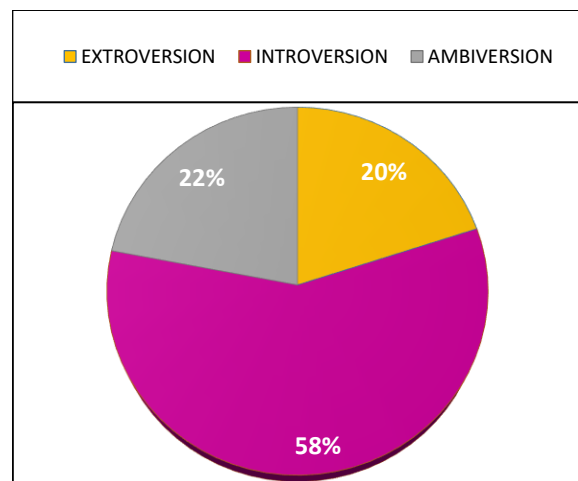


Figure 4: Distribution of personality types among students.

Among the selected students, 58% exhibited an introverted personality, whereas 20% exhibited extroverted personality traits (Figure 4). It was found that 22 % of students have ambiverted personality (personality type that exhibits characteristics of both introversion and extraversion).

Table 3: Personality traits among students: Neuroticism / emotional stability (n=50)

Personality	N score	No. (%)
Neuroticism	Above 12	7 (14.0)
Emotional Stability	Below 12	43 (86.0)

N score=Neuroticism score

For a more detailed analysis of the personality traits of the selected students, the Neuroticism–Stability dimension was considered. Table 3 presents the distribution of the selected sample according to this personality dimension. The Neuroticism score ranges from 0 to 24; higher scores indicate greater neuroticism, whereas scores below 12 indicate emotional stability. Accordingly, 86% showed emotional stability, while the remaining 14% exhibited neurotic tendencies in their personality (Table 3).

Discussion

This study underscores the significant relationship between the home environment and the personality traits of higher secondary school students. Distinct family atmospheres uniquely influence personality development in boys and girls and the observed differences in personality are likely attributable to variations in family nurturing practices, which are reflected in differences in behavioural patterns and personality outcomes.

As adolescents undergo the critical process of identity formation, their experiences and interactions within the home environment

play a pivotal role in shaping their sense of self. It is found in the present survey that most students experienced a favourable family environment, regardless of their economic status and domicile. They also maintained a comfortable and positive relationship with their parents and were involved in various family matters; both of which are crucial factors in developing desirable personality traits during adolescence. The present findings are consistent with those of recent studies indicating that parenting style and the emotional climate within the family significantly influence adolescents' psychological adjustment and personality development.^[4] These observations highlight the fact that the home environment is not merely a backdrop but an active factor in shaping personality traits. Factors such as parental attitudes, family dynamics, and the overall emotional climate of the home have a significant impact on students' academic performance and social behaviour. For instance, a nurturing and supportive family environment is often associated with higher self-esteem and better academic outcomes, whereas a negative home atmosphere may lead to increased anxiety and poorer performance. Similar findings have been reported in recent studies, where positive family support is associated with improved emotional regulation and greater social competence among adolescents.^[5]

It is suggested that for adolescents to cultivate sustainable positive behaviours, they require comprehensive guidance from various societal pillars, including schools, families, peers, media, and the broader community.^[6] This multifaceted approach is essential for fostering resilience and adaptability in young individuals as they face the challenges of adolescence. Schools, in particular, hold a crucial role in this ecosystem, as they can provide structured support and mentorship to help bridge gaps that may arise from home environments. A

substantial body of contemporary literature highlights the role of school and community support systems in fostering adolescent well-being and personality development.^[7]

The finding that more than 50 per cent of the students who participated in this survey were identified as introverts underscores the importance of creating balanced academic environments. This high prevalence indicates the need for educators to employ diverse pedagogical strategies so that introverted students are not disadvantaged by their relatively lower levels of verbal participation in classroom discussions.^[8,9] Furthermore, schools must encourage their participation through inclusive extracurricular activities.^[10] Providing periodic counselling can offer vital mental health support to cultivate self-confidence among these individuals, while fostering an institutional recognition that quietness should not be conflated with shyness or social anxiety.^[10]

Earlier findings have highlighted the importance of recognizing personality traits during childhood and early adolescence.^[11,12] The development of personality traits, particularly neurotic tendencies, is influenced not only by emotional experiences but also by environmental factors, including parenting styles, peer influences, and societal expectations. Adolescents raised in nurturing environments may exhibit resilience against negative emotional traits, while those in less supportive settings may struggle with emotional regulation.^[13] The present study reveals neuroticism in 14% of the students. It must be emphasised that understanding the interplay between neuroticism and personality stability in adolescents has important implications for psychological practice and intervention. Schools and community organizations can play a vital role in creating supportive environments that foster emotional intelligence and strengthen adolescents' coping skills.^[11] The present

findings point out that it is imperative for educators and policymakers to recognize the importance of the home environment in shaping the personalities of students.^[12] Programs designed to educate parents about effective parenting strategies and the significance of emotional support can be beneficial. Schools can also implement family engagement initiatives that encourage parental involvement in the educational process, thereby promoting a more holistic approach to student development.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the intricate relationship between home environment and personality development in higher secondary school students is evident from this study. The findings call for a collaborative effort among families, schools, and communities to create supportive environments that foster healthy personality development. By prioritizing emotional support and constructive interactions, we can better equip adolescents to thrive academically and socially. This holistic understanding of personality development emphasizes that nurturing young minds requires a collective and concerted effort. Despite its limitation to the selected sample, the study offers valuable insights for future research and practical applications.

Acknowledgement

We extend our sincere gratitude to the faculty members of the Department of Home Science and Government College for Women Thiruvananthapuram, for their valuable guidance and support.

Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

Conflicts of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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How to cite this article: Fairoosa T, Kabeer AS. Home environment and personality traits among Higher Secondary School students in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. *Journal of Experimental Biology and Zoological Studies* 2026; 2(2):160-5.