

# IMPACT OF HOME ENVIRONMENT ON SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** The study aimed to investigate the impact of various home environments on the mental health of secondary level students (Grade IX-XII) in Almora district. A sample of five hundred seventy-six students from government, government-aided, and private schools was randomly selected. The study utilized the Home Environment Scale constructed by Akhtar & Saxena (2011) and Mental Health Battery constructed by Singh & Gupta (2013) to assess home environments and mental health outcomes, respectively. Statistical analyses, including percentile, mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, and post-hoc comparisons, were conducted to analyze the data. The findings revealed significant differences in mental health among secondary level students belonging to different home environments. Students from favourable home environments exhibited higher level of mental health compared to students from moderately favourable and unfavourable home environments. It was concluded that to overcome and limit the mental health issues among secondary level students, there is an excessive need of mental health interventions by the multiple stakeholders, including family, government, NGOs and schools.

**Keywords:** Home Environment, Mental Health and Secondary Level Students

## INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of secondary education is not only to impart academic knowledge but also to foster the development of individual identities among students (Abdirahman et al., 2012). Additionally, students realize the significance of acquiring skills and strategies that enable them to become productive members of society (Kapur, 2021). Therefore, secondary education plays a pivotal role in shaping students' futures, laying the groundwork for their eventual success and happiness. While it is our aspiration to enroll children in outstanding schools, it is crucial to acknowledge that their educational outcomes are significantly influenced by their home environments (Mayuri, 2003). The family is the most influential factor in a child's life, where initial relationships are formed, personal space is learned, and communication skills are developed, thus shaping their sense of belonging and worth (Peacock, 2000; Lokuwam et al., 2020). The term 'home environment' encompasses all conditions impacting individuals from childhood through adulthood. Many high-performing students come from families that provide nurturing and supportive environments (Bandhana & Sharma, 2012).

For secondary students, the home environment is crucial for their development and well-being in various ways. It acts as a foundational support system, offering emotional encouragement and stability essential for their mental health during the critical adolescent years (Allroggen et al., 2016; Singh, 2018). Furthermore, the home significantly impacts academic achievement by providing a conducive space for learning, equipped with resources like books and technology (Moeller et al., 2022). Active parental involvement in education, including guidance and setting academic expectations, plays a crucial role in motivating students and fostering their dedication to learning (Vedeler, 2023). Beyond academics, familial traditions and cultural beliefs imparted at home influence students' values, attitudes, and behaviors, contributing to their moral development and sense of identity (Nguyen et al., 2019). Positive role models in the home environment also impart essential life skills such as responsibility, respect, and resilience, crucial for navigating challenges outside the home (Gondiawati & Nurhayati, 2024). Ultimately, the home serves as a cornerstone in the holistic development of secondary students, providing the necessary emotional, academic, and social support for their success in academics, emotional well-being, and social interactions (Bøe et al., 2014; Llorca-Mestre, 2017; Xiong et al., 2023). Parents and caregivers who foster a positive and supportive home environment play an indispensable role in their child's overall growth and future accomplishments (Von Stumm & Plomin, 2015; Allroggen et al., 2016).

As secondary level students navigate their educational journey, their home environment shapes their academic success, career choices, emotional well-being, and social interactions. It serves as a foundational support system that provides essential stability and encouragement during critical adolescent years. Moreover, the values, traditions, and relationships

nurtured at home play a crucial role in shaping students' identities and moral development. Recognizing the pivotal role of families in fostering a nurturing environment underscores the importance of parental involvement and supportive relationships in students' overall growth and achievement. The present study attempts to understand the interaction between home environment and mental health among secondary level students.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem identified for the present study was articulated as follows, "**Impact of Home Environment on Secondary Level Students' Mental Health: A Comparative Analysis.**"

## OBJECTIVES

The present study was guided by the following objective:

1- Analysis and comparison of mental health between sub-groups of secondary level students identified on the basis of their home environment.

## HYPOTHESES

In line with the specific objective of the present study, the following null hypothesis was formulated for investigation:

1- There is no significant difference in the mental health among sub-groups of secondary level students identified on the basis of their home environment.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the present study, researchers employed a descriptive survey method to investigate secondary level students (Grade IX-XII) from schools located in Almora district. The sample comprised 576 secondary school students selected randomly from government, government-aided, and private schools. The study utilized the 'Home Environment Scale' developed by Akhtar & Saxena (2011) to assess the home environment and the 'Mental Health Battery' constructed by Singh & Gupta (2013) to evaluate mental health outcomes. In this study, the home environment served as the independent variable, while mental health was examined as the dependent variable. Percentile was employed by the researchers to categorise home environment in three categories, namely, 'favourable', 'moderately favourable', and 'unfavourable' home environment. Statistical analyses including mean, standard deviation, ANOVA, and post-hoc comparisons were employed to analyze the data comprehensively.

## ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The home environment, with its diverse structure, is likely to play a significant role in shaping mental health patterns among adolescents. To examine the interaction, a detailed analysis was conducted by the researchers, and the results of mean and standard deviation are depicted in Table-1, findings of ANOVA presented in Table-2, while, Table-3 represented the results of post-hoc comparisons.

**Table-1: Comparison of Mental Health Scores among Subgroups of Secondary Level Students across different Home Environments**

Home Environment Categories	N	Mean (Mental Health)	SD
Favourable	145	85.81	7.17
Moderately Favourable	289	83.42	8.01
Unfavourable	142	80.51	8.04

Table-1 revealed that students coming from favourable home environments demonstrated the highest mean score on mental health (85.81). Following closely, students from moderately favourable home environments shown the next highest mean score on mental health (83.42). In contrast, students from unfavourable home environments had exhibited the lowest mean score on mental health (80.51) compared to the other categories of home environments. The highest mean scores on mental health obtained by students from favourable home environments may be, due to the supportive atmosphere characterized by mutual understanding, love, and support among parents, siblings, and other family members, alongside emotional stability, positive reinforcement, and access to resources. Similarly, students from moderately favourable home environments show closely followed mean scores, indicating that even moderate levels of support can significantly benefit mental health. Although these students may lack some elements found in highly supportive homes, they still thrive in a supportive environment. In contrast, students from unfavourable home

environments, who score the lowest, often face challenges such as limited resources, lack of emotional support, and adverse living conditions including poor housing, economic hardship, family dysfunctions (such as domestic violence, abuse, and alcoholism), health challenges, and environmental hazards. These factors may adversely affect their mental health.

**Table-2: ANOVA Results of Mental Health Scores among Secondary Level Students across different Home Environments**

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Square	F-value	Significance at 0.05 Level
Between Groups (SS <sub>B</sub> )	2022.21	2	1011.11	16.56	Significant
Within Groups (SS <sub>w</sub> )	34987.62	573	61.06		
<b>Total</b>	37009.83	575			

**Table-3: Two-group Comparison on Mental Health Scores among Secondary Level Students across different Home Environments**

Comparison of Means Between Two Groups	Significance of Mean Difference at .05 Level	Mean Difference Direction
m <sub>1</sub> -m <sub>2</sub>	Significant	m <sub>1</sub> > m <sub>2</sub>
m <sub>2</sub> -m <sub>3</sub>	Significant	m <sub>2</sub> > m <sub>3</sub>
m <sub>3</sub> -m <sub>1</sub>	Significant	m <sub>3</sub> < m <sub>1</sub>

m<sub>1</sub>- mean of students belonging to favourable home environment

m<sub>2</sub>- mean of students belonging to moderately favourable home environment

m<sub>3</sub>- mean of students belonging to unfavourable home environment

Upon conducting an analysis of variance on the data (refer Table-2), it was found that the variations on mental health scores among secondary level students from different home environments were statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Post-hoc comparisons in Table-3 indicated that students from 'favourable' home environments had significantly higher mental health scores compared to those from 'moderately favourable' and 'unfavourable' home environments. Moreover, students from 'moderately favourable' home environments also exhibited significantly higher mental health scores than their counterparts from 'unfavourable' home environments. These findings clearly highlighted the disparities in mental health levels among students from various types of home environments, underscoring the substantial impact of favourable home environments on mental health outcomes. In alignment with the findings of the current study, Deb et al. (2015), Mahalakshmi & Pugalenty (2015), Rajkumar et al. (2022), and Chen et al. (2024) revealed a significant impact of home environment on the mental health of secondary school students.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

The conclusions reached may be summed up as follows:

- Significant differences were identified in mental health between secondary level students from 'favourable' and 'moderately favourable' home environments, 'moderately favourable' and 'unfavourable' home environments, as well as 'favourable' and 'unfavourable' home environments.
- A favourable home environment significantly enhances the mental health of secondary level students, whereas an unfavourable home environment has a detrimental impact on their mental health.

Home environment significantly contributes to the mental health of secondary level students. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating, there is no significant difference in the mental health among sub-groups of secondary level students identified on the basis of their home environment, was rejected.

## EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The study highlights important insights for educators, policymakers, parents, researchers and NGOs concerning the mental health of secondary level students. To help students effectively, schools should create special support programs tailored to their different home situations. Teachers and counsellors need training to recognize mental health issues related to home life and connect students with the right help. Working closely with families through workshops can encourage good mental health practices at home and improve communication between home and school. Schools should also promote a positive atmosphere with things like peer support groups and mindfulness activities like yoga. More research, especially long-term studies, is needed to understand how changes at home affect students' mental health. Lastly, advocating for policies that prioritize mental health funding and address how home environments and income levels affect students is crucial for creating supportive schools where all students can do well emotionally and academically. These steps are important for making sure every student feels supported and can succeed.

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