



O c c a s i o n a l P a p e r S e r i e s

Factors Affecting
Malay/Muslim Pupils'
Performance in Education

Association of Muslim Professionals Singapore



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Factors Affecting Malay/Muslim Pupils' Performance in Education

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Association of Muslim Professionals

ABSTRACT

This paper presents the findings of a research study on factors affecting Malay/Muslim pupils' performance in education. An analysis of these factors was carried out and a package of strategies was recommended to improve the performance of Malay/Muslim pupils in schools.

In this study, Malay/Muslim pupils are identified into four achievement groups namely High-Achievers (HA), Over-Achievers (OA), Under-Achievers (UA) and Low-Achievers (LA). These achievement groups were studied to determine the relationship between academic achievement and background factors such as parental support, students' and parents' aspirations and the home environment.

The study found that there is a correlation between academic achievement and parental support and the quality of parental assistance. Parental control, the setting of high but realistic expectations for the child and the conduciveness of the home environment are also equally important factors for academic success.

A profile of the achievement groups is also presented to better understand the characteristics of each group. The package of strategies recommended to improve the performance of Malay/Muslim pupils includes enhancing family education programmes, adopting a differentiated approach in tuition programme and improving the home environment.

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FOREWORD

The Malay/Muslim community's effort to propel itself upwards is laudable. However, conscientious action without thorough thinking may lead to recklessness and a misguided sense of direction. Action backed by careful and proper study increases effectiveness. It is in this context that AMP is increasing its emphasis on research.

The AMP Seminar Series launched in February 1994 provides a platform for discussion on issues and developments affecting the Malay/Muslim community, such as the socio-economic landscape of Singapore in the next century or the implementation of new government policies. It is expected that through such a forum, research expertise both local and regional may be effectively tapped to study trends, issues and Malay/Muslim developments. The seminar series is part of AMP's effort to lay the groundwork for the long-term emergence of the Research Institute of Malay/Muslim Affairs (RIMMA). Such an institute can then act as a full-fledged resource centre and a reference point for Malay/Muslim affairs. It will also steer research efforts for the community.

Several seminars had been held as part of the AMP Seminar Series. The publication of the deliberations and findings of these seminars will add to the availability of reference materials for the Malay/Muslim community in particular and the Singaporean society in general. This inaugural publication on 'Factors Affecting Malay/Muslim Pupils' Performance in Education' marks the launch of the AMP Occasional Paper Series.

Ahmad Mohd Magad
Chairman, AMP

CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Early researchers (Raph, Goldberg, and Pascow, 1966) and some recent authors (Davis and Rimm, 1989; Rimm, 1986) have defined underachievement in terms of a discrepancy between a child's school performance and some ability index such as an IQ score. That is, an underachieving child may possess high general ability, yet not performing academically up to expectations. On the other hand, a child who has lower general ability, yet performing better than expected is considered as an overachiever. High achievers are those with higher general ability and are high performers in school. Low achievers are those with lower general ability and perform poorer in school. What is of great concern to educationists and parents are the underachieving and the low achieving child. Underachievement, first and foremost, is a behaviour and as such, it can change over time. Often, underachievement or low achievement is seen as a problem of attitude or work habits. However, neither habits nor attitude can be modified as directly as behaviour. Thus, referring to 'underachieving behaviour' pinpoints those aspects of children's lives which they are most able to alter.

Underachievement or low achievement is often content and situation specific. For example, a child who does poorly in most school subjects may display a talent or interest in at least one school subject. Thus, labelling a child as an 'under or low achiever' disregards any positive outcome or behaviour that the child displays. It is better to label the behaviour than the child. For example, 'the child is underachieving or performing poorly in maths' rather than indicating that the child is a low or underachiever. Or one can say that the child is good in graphic arts and other technical skills but poorer in academic work. Such a balanced description of the child gives a more positive outlook to the child. After all, even a child in the Normal Technical Stream may turn out to be very good in computer graphics and computer art. However, low-achieving students need further clinical diagnosis as they may well suffer from some learning disabilities.

Underachievement and low achievement are tied intimately to self-concept development. Children who learn to see themselves in terms of failure eventually begin to place self-imposed limits of what is possible. Any academic successes are written off as 'flukes' or chance affairs while low grades serve to reinforce negative self-perceptions. This self-deprecating attitude often results in comments such as 'Why should I even try? I'm just going to fail anyway', or 'Even if I do succeed, people will say it's because I cheated'. The end product is a low self-concept, with

students perceiving themselves as weak in academic studies. Under this assumption, their initiative to change or to accept a challenge is limited.

Research studies have indicated that:

- a) Low and under achieving students were less liked and well-known by classmates. (Vaughn and associates, 1993).
- b) High achievers tend to dominate learning activities in the classroom leaving out the low or underachievers (King, 1993). High achievers tend to make more decisions (Hunt, 1992).
- c) A study on the social interactions of students shows that high achievers were able to verbalise effectively. Low achievers apparently lacked a metacognitive framework for organising learning tasks (Jones & Carter, 1994).

Intervention Strategies to Reverse Patterns of Underachievement

Whitmore (1980) describes three types of strategies that she found effective in working with underachieving behaviour in students:

1. Supportive Strategies. Classroom techniques that allow students to feel they are part of a 'family' versus a 'factory', include methods such as holding class meetings to discuss student concerns; designing curriculum activities based on their needs and interests; and allowing students to bypass assignments on subjects in which they have previously shown competence.
2. Intrinsic Strategies. These strategies incorporate the idea that students' self-concepts as learners are tied closely to their desire to achieve academically (Purkey and Novak, 1984). Thus, a classroom that invites positive attitudes is likely to encourage achievement. In classrooms of this type, teachers encourage attempts, not just successes; they value student input in creating classroom rules and responsibilities; and they allow students to evaluate their own work before receiving a grade from the teacher.
3. Remedial Strategies. Teachers who are effective in reversing underachieving behaviour recognise that students are not perfect-that each child has specific strengths and weaknesses as well as social, emotional and intellectual needs. With remedial strategies, students are given chances to excel in their areas of strength and interest while opportunities are provided in specific areas of learning deficiencies. This remediation is done in a safe environment in which mistakes are considered a part of learning for everyone, including the teacher.

Students should be provided with a wide variety of opportunities for success, a sense of accomplishment, and a belief in themselves. They should be encouraged to volunteer to help others as an avenue for developing tolerance, empathy, understanding, and acceptance of human limitations.

Over-emphasis on achievement or results rather than a child's efforts, involvement, and desire to learn about topics of interest is a common parental pitfall. The line between pressure and encouragement is subtle but important. Pressure to perform emphasises outcomes such as winning awards and getting A's, for which the student is highly praised. Encouragement emphasises effort, the process used to achieve, steps taken towards accomplishing a goal and improvement. It leaves appraisal and valuation to the youngster. Underachieving and low achieving students may be thought of as discouraged individuals who need encouragement but tend to reject praise as artificial (Kaufmann,1987).

Dinkmeyer and Losoncy (1980) caution parents to avoid discouraging their children by domination, insensitivity, silence, or intimidation. Discouraging comments, such as 'If you're so gifted, why did you get a D in ...?' or 'I've given you everything; why are you so...?' are never effective. Constant competition may also lead to underachievement, especially when a child consistently feels like either a winner or a loser. Parents and teachers should avoid comparing children with others. Children should be taught how to function in competition and how to recover after losses.

Study-skills courses, time-management classes, or special tutoring may be ineffective if a student is a long-term underachiever. This approach will work only if the student is willing and eager, if the teacher is chosen carefully, and the course is supplemented by additional strategies designed to help the student. On the other hand, special tutoring may help the concerned student who is experiencing short-term academic difficulty.

Some students, particularly those who are highly capable and participate in a variety of activities, appear to be high achievers when learning in a highly structured academic environment, but are at risk of underachieving if they cannot establish priorities, focus on a selected number of activities, and set long-term goals. On the other hand, some students appear to be underachievers but are not uncomfortable or discouraged. They may be quite discontent in an average secondary school (in part because of the organization and structure), but happy and successful when learning in an environment with a different structural organization. They may handle independence quite well.

Underachievement is made up of a complex web of behaviours, but it can be reversed by parents and educators who consider the many strengths and talents possessed by the students who may wear this label.

CHAPTER II BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Rationale of Study

Malay/Muslim organisations had in the past organised tuition programmes as a strategy to tackle the problem of underachievement amongst Malay/Muslim pupils. We believe that this strategy, though effective to a certain extent in improving students' performance in examinations, is merely treating the symptoms of the problem. It does not address the problem of unsatisfactory home environment, negative personality characteristics, lack in quality of parental care and family disorganisation which have strong influences on academic success. This view is supported by research carried out by several western scholars such as Bloom & Sosniak, 1981; Covington & Beery, 1976; and Davis and Rimm, 1985.

In the light of the findings mentioned above, existing strategies have to be reviewed and new ones may have to be developed to uplift the academic performance of Malay/Muslim pupils. This has motivated AMP to conduct a study on factors associated with academic performance of Malay/Muslim pupils.

Statement of the Problem

Notwithstanding the progress made in education over the last decade, examination results reveal that when compared to pupils of the other ethnic groups, Malay pupils still lag behind at all the three crucial levels of education in Singapore namely: PSLE, GCE 'O' Level and GCE 'A' Level. Lower academic performance of Malay pupils when compared with that of other ethnic groups is a persistent problem that needs to be resolved.

Table 1: Percentage of Pupils Passing PSLE Mathematics By Ethnic Group

Year of Exams	Chinese	Malay	Indian	Other Races	All Races
1985	83.1	39	52.5	65.2	74.9
1986	81.5	39	52.1	68.3	73.7
1987	81.4	40	51.3	70.1	73.8
1988	81.4	40.4	52.2	70.9	74.6
1989	82.2	45.3	53.1	73.2	75.4
1990	82.8	45.2	54.1	70.7	76
1991	84.9	46.6	55.9	71.9	78
1992	85.2	50.6	56.3	75.6	78.4

A more specific problem is the underachievement of Malay pupils at all levels in two core subjects: Mathematics and English. Of the two, Mathematics seems to need more attention.

As shown in Table 1, the percentages of Malay candidates passing Mathematics at PSLE examinations since 1985 are lower in comparison with Chinese and Indian pupils. From 1985 to 1992 an average of only 43% passed the subject compared to 83% for Chinese students and 53% for Indian students.

Other aspects of the education problem that are of interest to the Malay community in general and researchers in particular are:

1. the high percentage of Malay pupils entering the normal stream at secondary level and
2. the high attrition rate of Malay pupils at all levels in the education system.

Hypothesis

As the type of research to be adopted will be "correlational" in nature, we have listed several hypotheses at the outset to determine, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more variables. These hypotheses were identified from earlier studies and they are outlined as follows:

- ◆ *Hypothesis 1* Variation in parental attitudes is most influential in affecting variations in attainment.
- ◆ *Hypothesis 2* The following three specific parental attitudes have the greatest influence on academic performance: educational aspirations, literacy of the adults at home and parental interest on the child's school work.
- ◆ *Hypothesis 3* Aspects of home circumstances that have the most influence on academic success are: the physical amenities of the home, the number of dependent children and the parents' education.
- ◆ *Hypothesis 4* There is a positive relationship between quality of parental care of young children and their academic achievement.

- ◆ *Hypothesis 5* There is a positive relationship between language skills and academic success.
- ◆ *Hypothesis 6* Academic failure is also related to issues such as social disorganisation: high birth rate, high incidence of crime, neglect of children, dirty homes and broken families.

Due to the non-availability of data and the limitations of the study, hypothesis 6 was not verified.

Objectives

The research project is carried out to:

- *Classify Primary 3 and Primary 5 pupils into four achievement groups.*
 - the High Achieving Over-Achievers (OA), the Low Achieving Under-Achievers (UA), the High-Achievers (HA), and the Low-Achievers (LA), using tests of Basic English and Basic Mathematics as predictors, and a General Ability test as a criterion.
- The four groups are defined as follows:
- High-Achievers (HA)** - These are high achieving pupils, i.e., those who possess both high general ability and high academic achievements.
 - Over-Achievers (OA)** - These are high achieving over-achievers, i.e., pupils with low general ability but high academic achievements.
 - Under-Achievers (UA)** - These are low achieving under-achievers, i.e., pupils with high general ability but low academic achievements.
 - Low-Achievers (LA)** - These are low achieving pupils, i.e., those who possess both low general ability and low academic achievements.
- *Assess pupils' characteristics and perceptions through home interviews.*
 - *Identify factors associated with achievement and recommend strategies for improving achievement of Malay/Muslim pupils.*

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND METHODOLOGY

This research study applied several test instruments for the collection of data. The instruments used for this research project are the Basic Mathematics, Basic English and the General Ability tests.

The Basic Mathematics Test

The Basic Mathematics test comprises three sub-tests: Number, Measurement and Geometry. The instruments assess the numeracy and spatial proficiency levels of pupils. All items have been vigorously pre-tested for content validity. Items of each of the sub-tests are designed to test at up to four proficiency levels. The lower proficiency level items are those that test basic facts and definition of terms. The items are more complex at the higher proficiency levels where problem solving skills are involved. Lower ability pupils are able to solve problems testing the lower proficiency levels but may have difficulties solving those testing the higher proficiency levels.

The Basic English Language Test

The English Language test comprises three sub-tests: Listening, Writing and Reading Comprehension. These three sub-tests assess the listening, writing and reading comprehension skills of pupils. Listening comprehension items are those that test pupils' ability to listen to vowels, consonants, consonant clusters and to interpret intonation. Writing items are those that test pupils' ability in grammar, spelling and language structure. Reading comprehension items are those that test pupils' ability in general language comprehension where both verbal and figurative stimuli are given. The three sub-tests attempt to give a comprehensive and complete assessment of the language ability levels of the pupils.

The General Ability Test

There are two sub-tests which form the General Ability test: Verbal analogy and numerical analogy. Analogies are a form of testing pupils' general intelligence level. Analogy items test pupils' ability in identifying relationships in numbers and words, as well as identifying patterns to formulate a relationship. Pupils with high analogy skills are those who are able to think and reason more abstractly. They have the potential for higher achievement performance in school.

Data Collection and Analysis of Test Findings

For the collection of baseline data, these instruments were administered to a total of 1313 pupils from nine schools selected for this project. All scores derived from the tests are standardised and converted to T-scores. Both the Mathematics and English language test scores are combined to give an achievement T-score composite. Based on the achievement composite T-scores and the General Ability T-scores, a two dimensional Achievement-General Ability plot was produced (see Graph 1).

Graphical analysis of the plots resulted in the classification of pupils into the four achievement groups, i.e., High-Achievers (HA), Over-Achievers (OA), Under-Achievers (UA) and Low-Achievers (LA) of primary 3 and primary 5 Malay/Muslim pupils as shown in Graph 1. The breakdown of these pupils into the four achievement groups identified for in-depth study are as follows:

HA:	56 (4.3%)
OA:	82 (6.2%)
UA:	67 (5.1%)
LA:	43 (3.3%)

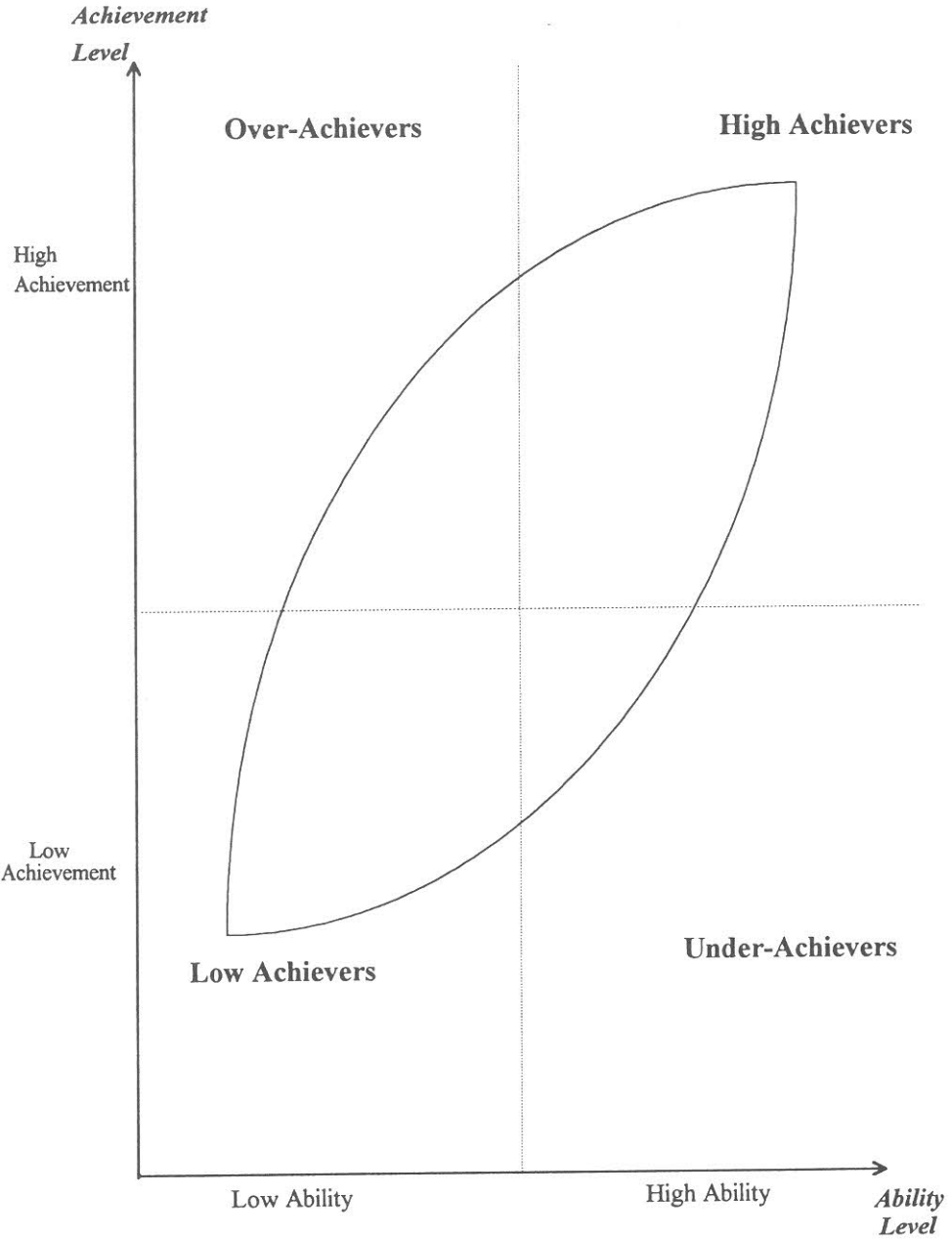
Total:	248 (18.9%)

As a follow-up, home interviews were then carried out on the 248 pupils. The remainder of 1065 pupils classified as 'average' pupils are not involved in the follow-up study.

The home interviews involved an in-depth study of the students by establishing their profiles and studying them to identify the relationship between their academic achievement and factors such as parental support, students' personal traits, home environment, educational aspirations and parents' educational qualifications. The 248 pupils comprise 138 over-achievers as well as high-achievers, and 110 low-achievers and under-achievers.

The interview questionnaire has been formulated specifically to capture the variables highlighted in the hypotheses. Where direct inference could not be made for some of the variables, information is derived through implied means from related variables. For example, information on parental control is derived from variables such as parents' control on the number of hours the pupils are allowed to watch TV. Parental attitudes are captured through questions on whether parents assist their children in their school work, academic expectation of the parents, provision of adequate reading materials in the home for the pupils and engagement of private tutors for the pupils.

Graph 1: Graphical Definition Of The Achievement Groups



CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS OF SURVEY FINDINGS

The Parental Factor

Parental Involvement In Schoolwork

In this study the level of parental involvement is determined by the degree of assistance given by the parents to the pupils in their schoolwork. This could take the form of checking the child's homework, helping the child with school projects or providing relevant books and materials.

The proportion of pupils in the four achievement groups who received assistance in schoolwork from their parents are as follows:

Table 2: Parental Assistance In Schoolwork

Achievement Group	Proportion of Pupils Who Receive Assistance in School Work (%)
High-Achievers (HA)	79.2
Over-Achievers(OA)	77.6
Under-Achievers (UA)	80
Low-Achievers (LA)	70

The findings here show that on average about 77.6% of pupils from the four achievement groups received assistance in their school work from their parents.

This is a strong indication that the majority of Malay/Muslim parents are now more actively involved in their child's schoolwork. This trend is very encouraging as it suggests that Malay/Muslim parents are now more concerned about their child's education and consciously trying to assist their child to perform better in school. It appears that Malay/Muslim parents are responding well to efforts made to inculcate the importance of education in the community.

Let us look at the extent of parental involvement for pupils with *similar ability levels but different achievement levels* viz. over-achievers and low-achievers

or high-achievers and under-achievers. In the case of the over-achievers and the low-achievers where both groups have low ability levels, it is observed that the extent of parental involvement for the over-achievers exceeds the low-achievers by 7.6%.

This may explain the better academic achievements of the over-achievers compared to the low-achievers. This finding also implies that for pupils with lower ability levels, the extent of parental involvement has, to a certain extent, a direct and significant relationship to the pupils' academic achievements.

For the other two groups, both with high abilities, (i.e., the under-achievers and the high-achievers), the extent of parental involvement of these pupils are more or less equal. This may imply that for pupils with high abilities, parental involvement may not be a significant factor in determining their achievement level.

Therefore in reviewing the extent of parental involvement for students of similar abilities, it is noted that parental involvement has a greater impact on the child's achievement level for children with low abilities (viz. over-achievers and low-achievers).

For those pupils with high abilities (viz. high achievers and under-achievers), the impact of parental involvement is not significant.

Although the high proportion of parental involvement for pupils in all groups augurs well for the community, the observations on the under-achievers and the low-achievers make it imperative that we also examine the quality of the involvement of the parents with their children.

Parents' Educational Background And Quality of Involvement

This study also aims to establish the effects of the quality of parental involvement and the parents' educational background. Table 3 shows the proportion of parents with educational qualifications of GCE 'O' level and above for the four achievement groups identified in the study.

Table 3: Distribution of Parents' Academic Qualifications

Achievement Group	Parents With GCE 'O' Level and Above (%)
High-Achievers	67.6
Over-Achievers	64.9
Under-Achievers	28.1
Low-Achievers	16

The findings show that the students who are high-achievers and over-achievers have a high percentage of parents with GCE 'O' level qualifications and above.

This appears to suggest that there is a strong correlation between the parents' educational background and the pupil's achievement level. This may then imply that given the overall high degree of parental involvement, better qualified parents are likely to give better quality assistance to their child and hence resulting in better academic achievements.

In the case of the under-achievers, although they have the highest proportion in terms of parental involvement as shown in Table 2, the above observation suggests that the quality of parental assistance is suspect. Of the 80% under-achievers who receive parental assistance, only about 28% have parents with GCE 'O' level qualifications or above.

Hence we may conclude that the quality of parental assistance received by the pupils strongly influences their achievement levels. The high-achievers and the over-achievers benefit from high quality parental involvement. In the case of the under-achievers and the low-achievers however, the quality of their parental involvement appears to be wanting.

Parental Supervision

This study also examined the extent of parental supervision exercised on the pupils. Parental supervision is measured in this case by the amount of control over the child's leisure time by limiting the number of hours the child is allowed to watch TV. Table 4 is the outcome of pupils' response to the question on whether their parents exercise control over the number of hours they are allowed to watch TV.

Table 4: Parental Control Over Children's Time Watching TV

Achievement Group	Control over watching TV (%)
High-Achievers	43.6
Over-Achievers	51.7
Under-Achievers	50
Low-Achievers	50

It is noted that generally a high proportion of pupils in all achievement groups responded that their parents did exercise control over their time watching TV.

Since exercising such control indicates positive parental involvement, this finding reinforces the earlier observation that Malay/Muslim parents are now more involved in their child's education.

We also observed from Table 4 that the over-achievers constitute the highest proportion (51.7%) in terms of parental control over their child's time watching TV. As noted earlier they also received greater parental assistance and involvement in their school work. These factors collectively suggest strong and consistent parental support. Hence it may be fair to surmise that although they have low abilities, such pupils can reform well academically with strong parental support and hard work.

The high-achievers were found to have the lowest proportion of parental supervision (43.6%). This may suggest that they are highly self-motivated, disciplined and likely to be independent. Despite the lower degree of parental supervision, the academic achievements of these pupils are high.

We also reviewed the number of hours the pupils actually spent watching TV. Table 5 below shows the proportion of pupils by achievement groups and the number of hours they spent watching TV.

Table 5: Number of Hours Spent Watching TV

Achievement Group	Pupils who watch TV Less than an Hour daily	Pupils who watch TV for More than an Hour daily	Pupils with Varying Response
High-Achievers	19.2	61.5	19.3
Over-Achievers	43.4	43.3	13.3
Under-Achievers	26.3	63.2	10.5
Low-Achievers	20	66.7	13.3

The findings show that the over-achievers have the highest proportion among those who watch TV for less than an hour daily. The low-achievers however have the highest proportion of those who watch TV for more than an hour daily.

These observations imply that although the over-achievers have the same ability level as the low-achievers, they performed better with greater parental control over their time watching TV and lesser actual hours spent on the activity. These findings reiterate the point that with strong parental involvement and

supervision, pupils with low ability levels can perform well in their academic performance.

In reviewing the extent of parental supervision and the time spent watching TV, we may conclude that pupils with poor academic achievements, (viz. the under-achievers and the low-achievers), have lesser parental supervision and tend to spend more time watching TV.

Assistance in Schoolwork From Others

In this study, pupils were also asked about help they received from people other than their parents. The findings show that in general, besides parents, the pupils received assistance from siblings, elder relatives, friends and school teachers. Table 6 below shows a summary of the findings:

Table 6: Proportion of Pupils Receiving Assistance From Others

Achievement Group	Help From Siblings or Relatives (%)	Help From Friends (%)	Help From Teachers (%)
High-Achievers	50	47.5	2.5
Over-Achievers	35.7	47.6	16.7
Under-Achievers	51.5	39.4	9.1
Low-Achievers	59.2	31.8	9

The findings indicate that the high-achievers and the over-achievers have a higher proportion of those receiving assistance from friends compared to pupils in the other two groups. This suggests that the high-achievers and the over-achievers are likely to have benefited from positive peer influence in their attainment of high academic performance.

It was also observed that 16.7% of the over-achievers have received assistance from their teachers – a relatively high figure compared to pupils in the other groups. This shed some light on the resourcefulness of the over-achievers in that they are likely to take the initiative to approach their teachers for any assistance required.

The low-achievers form the highest proportion of pupils who received

assistance from siblings or elder relatives. As it is likely that such assistance is received within the family circle, this observation again raises the question of the quality of assistance rendered to these pupils.

It is encouraging to note that pupils in general received assistance in their schoolwork either from within the family circle or others. For the high-achievers and over-achievers, it seems that they have benefited from positive peer influence and cooperative learning. The over-achievers are also found to be very resourceful in seeking assistance from others. The assistance received by the low-achievers however are confined mainly to their siblings and elder relatives which raises the question on the quality of assistance rendered to these pupils.

Availability of Private Tuition

Private tuition is another possible source of external assistance for all pupils. However this form of assistance may not be available to all pupils unless it is provided for by their parents or through their own initiative. In this study, private tuition is deemed to be provided for if pupils received some form of structured supplementary teaching either individually or in small groups. Centralised tuition classes conducted by any organisation are not considered in this study. The proportion of pupils who receive private tuition in the four achievement groups are as follows:

Table 7: Proportion of Pupils With Private Tuition

Achievement Group	Proportion With Private Tuition (%)
High-Achievers	54.2
Over-Achievers	50
Under-Achievers	42.5
Low-Achievers	40

From the findings we observe that the high-achievers and the over-achievers form a higher proportion of pupils who receive assistance through private tuition.

In comparing the high-achievers and under-achievers (i.e., pupils of high ability but different in achievement level), it was found that the proportion of high-achievers with private tuition is higher than under-achievers by 11.7%. It appears

that the availability of private tuition could have contributed to the difference in the achievement levels between these two groups of pupils.

The same observation was noted in the case of over-achievers and low-achievers (i.e. pupils of low ability but different in achievement level). The proportion of those with private tuition for over-achievers is 50% while that for low-achievers is 40%. This clearly supports the view that private tuition does make a difference in assisting the child to perform better regardless of his ability.

When a further comparison was made between the over-achievers and the under-achievers, it was also found that the proportion of over-achievers with private tuition exceeds those of the under-achievers by 7.5%. This may again suggest that private tuition does contribute to the better academic achievements of the over-achievers despite their lower ability as compared to the under-achievers.

The above findings support the hypothesis that availability of private tuition in the form of structured supplementary teaching does help in improving the achievement levels of pupils. It is also heartening to note that a high percentage of Malay parents are now prepared to spend money on providing private tuition for their children indicating sound priority in family expenditure.

Educational Aspirations

Educational Aspirations of Students and Parents

This study also aims to determine the impact of academic aspirations of the pupils as well as their parents on performance. Educational aspirations of the parents are measured by the pupils perception of their parents' academic expectations of them. In this case, the pupils are asked on how they perceive their academic performance/achievements in relation to their parents' expectations and their own. In the questionnaire, pupils were required to state whether they perceived their achievements as either below, above or at par with what their parents expect of them. By assessing educational aspirations, we hope to establish the relationship between academic performance and attitude of both parents and pupils towards education.

The findings on the pupils' perception of their performance in relation to their parents and self expectations are shown in Table 8.

A high proportion of the over-achievers (62.1%) felt that they were performing below their parents' expectations. The majority of this group (55.2%) also regarded themselves as having performed below their own expectations. As a very resourceful group, it is very likely that this perception of under-performance

viz-a-viz their parents' expectations and their own may have also motivated the over-achievers to work harder. This may explain their good academic achievements.

The under-achievers have the next highest proportion (57.5%) of those who believed that they are performing below their parents' expectations. A high proportion of this group (50%) feels that they are under-performing against their own expectations. This seems to suggest that they are aware of their underachievement but apparently have not performed well.

Table 8: Pupils' Perception Of Parents' Expectations

Achievement Group	Pupils Who Feel That They Are Performing Below Their Parents' & Self Expectations (%)		Pupils Who Feel That They Are Performing Above Their Parents' & Self Expectations (%)		Pupils Who Feel That They Are Performing At Par With Their Parents' & Self Expectations (%)	
	Parents	Self	Parents	Self	Parents	Self
High-Achievers	47.9	33.3	16.7	35.4	35.4	31.2
Over-Achievers	62.1	55.2	20.7	24.1	17.2	20.7
Under-Achievers	57.5	50	20	27.5	22.5	22.5
Low-Achievers	53.3	46.7	16.7	30	26.7	20

It is interesting to note that 42.5% of the under-achievers feel that they are performing at par or above their parents' expectations. It is probable that their parents may have, consciously or unconsciously, set very low expectations for their children. To some extent this reflects the parents' lack of awareness in the need to set higher expectations on the children and be seen to be doing so.

This finding appears to reinforce the earlier observation on the lack of quality of parental involvement for under-achieving students. We may surmise that the effects of a lack of quality commitment and low aspirations on the part of parents seem to take its toll on the students' propensity to achieve despite their ability to do so.

In the case of the high-achievers (i.e., students with high abilities), a high proportion (52.1%) feel that they are performing at par or above their parents' expectations. The proportion is 66.6% viz-a-viz their own expectations. It would therefore appear that the high-achievers are generally performing up to their parents' expectations and their own.

Parents of the over-achievers have very high aspirations for their child and this is reflected by the high expectations placed on them. Coupled with the high level of parental involvement and assistance, it is clear that the high aspirations placed on the child have a positive impact on their achievement level despite their general lack of ability. It suggests that strong parental commitment over the child's education and high educational aspirations are important factors in nurturing over-achievement amongst our pupils.

Home Environment

Family Size and Type of Housing

Home conditions have been often cited as having the most significant influence on the pupil's academic success. These circumstances include the physical amenities of the home, the number of home dependents and the home structure. However, deficiencies in the home structure or conditions are found to be the most difficult or sometimes even impossible to remedy.

In this study we intend to establish the relationship between several aspects of the home conditions and the pupil's academic achievements. We would also like to ascertain whether the home is actually a conducive place for the pupils to study. For this purpose, the pupils were asked on where they often study.

Table 9: Proportion of Pupils Who Study At Home

Achievement Group	Pupils Who Study At Home (%)
High-Achievers	87.5
Over-Achievers	86.2
Under-Achievers	85
Low-Achievers	83.3

The findings indicate that a large proportion of pupils (more than 80%) in all the achievement groups study at home. This is not surprising as the students in the sample group are only in Primary 3 and Primary 5. In order to have a better assessment of the home environment we have to look into other variables, viz. the family size and type of housing.

Family size, in this study, is divided into three broad categories, i.e., families with less than 4 persons, between 5 to 7 persons and more than 8 persons living in the same house. Classification of families into small, medium and large families are however highly subjective. For comparison purposes, classification of families are made in relation to the type of dwelling.

We found that a majority of pupils in all achievement groups have a family size of between 5 to 7 persons living in the same house. This is reflected in Table 10.

Table 10: Distribution of Pupils' Housing Types

Family Size Living In The Same House	High-Achievers (%)			Over-Achievers (%)			Under - Achievers (%)			Low - Achievers (%)		
	5	4	3	5	4	3	5	4	3	5	4	3
Type of flat (No of Rooms)												
Less than 4 persons	0	15.8	50	12.5	26	30	0	15.8	15	0	16.7	33.3
5 to 7 persons	100	68.5	37.5	87.5	69.6	70	100	78.9	65	0	66.7	50
more than 8 persons	0	15.8	12.5	0	4.3	0	0	5.3	0	0	16.7	16.7

From the above data, we found that an average of 71% of pupils across all groups have family size between 5 to 7 persons living in the same household. To conclusively determine the conduciveness of the home for studying, it would be appropriate to supplement this finding with the type of housing.

Table 11 shows that a large proportion of pupils in all the achievement groups are living in either 3 or 4 room flats.

Comparing groups with high ability (viz. high-achievers and under-achievers), we found that the proportion of high-achievers living in 4-room flats and above exceed the under-achievers by 11%. However for those living in 3 room flats and below, the proportion of under-achievers exceed the high-achievers by 11%.

Table 11: Pupils by Achievement Group and Type of Housing

Type of Housing	High-Achievers (%)	Over-Achievers (%)	Under-Achievers (%)	Low-Achievers (%)
5-Room Flat & Above	20	12.3	4.9	0
4-Room Flat	42.2	35	46.3	24
3-Room Flat	35.6	46	48.8	72
2-Room Flat & Below	2.2	4.6	0	4

A similar comparison between the over-achievers and the low-achievers (i.e., pupils with low ability level) reveals that for those living in the 4-room flats and above, the proportion of over-achievers is greater than the low-achievers by 23.3%. For those living in 3-room flats and below, the proportion of low-achievers exceeds the high-achievers by 26%.

We have established that the average family size of all the groups is between 5 to 7 persons living in the same household. This family size is not likely to affect the conduciveness of the home for pupils living in 4-room flat and above. However it may have an adverse effect for those living in 3-room flats and below.

The better academic achievements of the high-achievers may be attributed to the fact that a large proportion of them are living in a more conducive home environment as compared to the under-achievers in view of their bigger flats. Similarly the better academic achievements of the over-achievers compared to the low-achievers may again be attributed to the larger proportion of them living in more conducive 4-room flats and above.

It is fair to surmise that the conduciveness of the home environment is likely to have a positive impact on the academic achievements of the students. The conduciveness of the home environment is in turn dependent on the household's family size and the type of dwelling. The conclusion confirms a long-held view about the issue.

Availability of Reading Materials at Home

This study also examined the availability of reading materials at the pupil's home. Reading materials here refer to sources such as assessment books and supplementary text books that may assist the pupils in their schoolwork. This may help to establish further the home environment of the pupils and the attitude of their parents towards their educational development. Table 12 shows the proportion of pupils by achievement group and the availability of reading materials.

Table 12: Availability of Reading Materials by Achievement Group

Achievement Group	Many (%)	Some (%)	Few (%)	None (%)
High-Achievers	47.9	33.3	14.6	4.2
Over-Achievers	36.2	31	22.4	10.3
Under-Achievers	22.5	27.5	37.5	12.5
Low-Achievers	16.7	20	33.3	30

The findings indicate that the the high-achievers and over-achievers have reading materials readily available at home. In contrast, a large proportion of the low-achievers and the under-achievers have few or no reading materials available at home.

The high proportion of the high-achievers and the over-achievers with reading materials readily available at home may be an indication of the positive attitude of parents in ensuring that the home is sufficiently resourced to assist the child's educational development. The availability of many reading materials may help to create a conducive home environment for the pupils' overall intellectual growth.

Conversely, the high proportion of the under-achievers and the low-achievers with few or no reading materials available at home seems to suggest a lack of provision for such materials by parents. Although it may be possible that the lack of reading materials is due to financial constraints, parents of these pupils should

encourage their children to obtain these materials from the school or public libraries.

The provision of reading materials at home is important towards providing a conducive home environment as it affects the pupils' educational development and their academic success. This becomes more pertinent considering that the majority of all pupils (about 80%) study at home. There appears to be a correlation between availability of reading materials at home and the academic achievements of the pupils.

Proficiency of English Language and Achievement Level

This study also examined the pupils' proficiency in the English Language in relation to their achievement level. This was determined through the English Language test administered for this project. The proportion of pupils who have attained a minimum score of 50% of the total marks is in Table 13.

Table 13: Proficiency in English Language and Achievement Level

Achievement Group	Pupils Who Pass the English Language Test (%)
High-Achievers	100
Over-Achievers	65.9
Under-Achievers	1.5
Low-Achievers	0

The above findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between the proficiency in the English Language and academic achievement. The proficiency of the high-achievers and the over-achievers in the English Language may be attributed to several factors. Such as regular usage of the language both in school and at home. At the same time the provision of substantial reading materials at home, the educational background of the parents and the quality of their involvement in their child's educational performance may have also contributed further to the pupils' proficiency in the English Language.

There is a high correlation between language skills and academic success. The proficiency of the English Language is thus an important tool in improving academic performance. More emphasis should be placed to ensure that a reasonable level of proficiency in the language is acquired. This may be achieved through regular usage of the language and the acquisition of positive reading habits.

CHAPTER V

PROFILE OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GROUPS

High-Achiever

A high-achiever can be described as one who is likely to be self-motivated, independent and possesses high self-esteem. His parents are likely to have an educational level of GCE 'O' or above and are actively involved in their child's schoolwork. They usually monitor the child's educational performance and provide assistance when required. Apart from receiving parental assistance in his schoolwork, the high-achievers are also given private tuition.

The high-achiever tends to be selective with the company he keeps and it is likely that his academic performance is in part affected by positive peer influence. His parents also set very high expectations on him and his self expectations are equally high. The educational performance of the high-achiever is likely to be at least at par with his parents' expectations and his own.

Parents of the high-achiever also tend to adopt a positive attitude towards their child's schoolwork and educational development. In this regard they would make available many relevant reading materials and ensure that the home environment is conducive for studying. The high-achiever is also likely to live in either in a four-room flat or bigger with 5 to 7 people living in the same household. This suggests that the high achiever enjoys better home comfort and hence a more conducive home environment for studying.

Over-Achiever

The over-achiever displays high academic achievements despite his low ability. The over-achiever may be described as one who is very resourceful, hardworking and motivated. His parents are likely to have educational qualifications of GCE 'O' level or above and are actively involved in his schoolwork. They also exercise a high level of supervision on him.

They set relatively high educational expectations on their child compared to the parents of the low-achievers whose children also have the same general ability. However, the over-achiever usually perceives that his educational performance is below his parents' expectations and this somewhat motivates him to set higher goals and work harder. Partly for this reason as well as the high level of parental supervision, the over-achiever tends to watch less TV.

The over-achiever also benefits from positive peer influence and private tuition classes. He is also likely to live in either a 3 or 4 room flat with a family size of between 5 to

7 persons living in the same household. There is a substantial amount of relevant reading materials in his home. These factors together with strong parental support have provided him with a good home environment which in turn have contributed towards his good academic achievements.

Under-Achiever

The under-achiever possesses high ability but does not perform to his potential. He has low self-esteem and is found to be less motivated and less enthusiastic in his attitude. His parents are found to be actively involved in his schoolwork but are likely to have low educational qualifications. For this reason, the quality of assistance they render to their children may be suspect. His parents would usually exercise some form of control but the under-achiever is likely to spend more than an hour daily watching TV. Apart from parental assistance, he also tends to receive assistance in his schoolwork from either his siblings or elder relatives. It is very likely that he does not have private tuition.

He usually lives in either 3 or 4 room flats with a family size of between 5 to 7 persons living in the same household. Reading materials are not readily available at home and together with the lack of quality parental supervision, he lives as a result in a less conducive home environment.

The under-achiever believes that he is performing below his parents' expectations and seems to be aware of his under-achievement.

Low Achiever

The low-achiever is usually found to be at a disadvantage in many aspects. He lacks self-motivation, possesses low self-esteem and is deprived of proper guidance. Compared to pupils in the other achievement groups, parental involvement for the low-achiever is found to be somewhat lacking. To a certain extent this may be due to the generally low educational qualifications of his parents.

The low-achiever also tends to watch more TV possibly due to poor parental supervision. It is likely that the low-achiever receives no private tuition to help alleviate his academic weakness.

The low-achiever is usually found living in either 2 or 3 room flats with a family size of between 5 to 7 persons living in the same household. This suggests that his home is overcrowded and may not be conducive for studying. Reading materials are also not readily available in his home. The poor home environment coupled with the lack of quality parental supervision and guidance could have contributed to his poor academic performance.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has found that the academic achievements of pupils are closely related to the extent and quality of parental involvement, the academic expectations of parents and pupils and the home environment. In line with these findings, the following recommendations are proposed.

Family Education Programmes

As this study has highlighted, parents are generally found to be involved in their child's schoolwork. However the quality of parental involvement is found wanting for the under-achieving and the low-achieving pupils. To help improve the quality of parental involvement, particularly for these parents, we should review our existing family-education programmes with the view of enriching the content of these programmes. These programmes should now place more emphasis on improving the quality of parental involvement and stress on active participation of parents in their child's schoolwork. This is a step further from the conventional awareness-building programmes that are the norm now. Perhaps seminars or workshops could be organised to discuss relevant topics such as selecting the right reading materials for children, choosing the right private tutor, how to effectively guide a child in his schoolwork, setting higher expectations for the child, etc.

Currently, there are several Malay/Muslim and private organisations in Singapore which conduct early childhood development and family-education programmes. However, it is noted that most of the participants of these programmes are already motivated parents who constantly strive to improve their children's educational development. Furthermore, these families come from either the middle or high income group which usually can afford the time and money to attend these programmes.

Given the above considerations, family education or development programmes should also be targeted at parents with low educational background or from the low income group so that they would be properly equipped to provide assistance to their children. However it has been found that these disadvantaged families, which are in need of such assistance, do not usually come forward or would not participate in such programmes. Thus more out-reach programmes should be organised to attract greater participation from these families. Malay/Muslim organisations, in particular those which are non-profit and community-based, should ensure that there is a minimum number of participation from these families. Perhaps

the organisers should also consider bringing the programmes directly to the home of the participants instead of organising them at centralised locations. Training packages could instead come in the form of audio-visual materials which are produced and thereafter distributed to the participants. Beside this, the materials could also be documented into a manual for these families to use as guidelines in effective parenting.

It is also observed that family development programmes are usually mass-based and the presentation is either in the form of a public talk or seminar. Such an approach may not be effective as there is very little personal participation and interaction between the speakers and audience. Moreover a lot of effort and resources are utilised to ensure greater participation of the said activities. Perhaps the main concern of the organisers should not be the number of participants but more on the quality of the programme. Some of the programmes can instead be organised in the form of workshops or small working groups to ensure success and effectiveness.

Parents should also be made aware of the need to instill higher aspirations on the child's educational attainment. As the study has indicated, pupils who are likely to perform better in schools have parents who placed high aspirations for their children's educational attainment. This is best exemplified in the case of the over-achievers who are motivated to work harder because they perceived that they are not performing up to their parents' expectations. Although having high aspirations may motivate the pupils to work harder, parents should also be aware that the expectations which they set on their child should be realistic and achievable. The pupils may not be motivated and instead lose interest in studies if they find that their parents' expectations are not practical nor achievable. Thus parents should be taught on how to set realistic expectations for their child and what it takes to have high aspirations for their child. Parenting programmes should explore the possibility of introducing new topics addressing these concerns such as setting higher aspirations for the children or how to motivate them through higher expectations.

Differentiated Approach In Tuition Programmes

The study also highlighted that a large proportion of the high-achievers and the over-achievers have private tuition. This suggests that the availability of private tuition does contribute to the achievement levels of pupils. Thus the under-achievers and the low-achievers should be encouraged to seek assistance through some form of private tuition. However if it is not possible for the pupils to have a private tutor due to financial constraints or other reasons, the next alternative is for them to attend tuition classes conducted by community organisations.

We also like to propose that organisations conducting tuition classes consider adopting a differentiated approach for their tuition programme based on different achievement groups to cater to their different needs. The effectiveness of a tuition programme is impaired if pupils of different achievement groups are grouped together in the same class. There is a need to identify and classify the pupils according to their abilities and achievement levels. This could be carried out using the methodology adopted in this study. A differentiated approach is thus proposed so that specialised coaching would be provided to assist pupils with specific needs and to effectively tackle the problem of low-achievement and under-achievement. At the same time, special programmes can be organised for the parents of these pupils to equip them with the right parental skills and motivational tools. In this way, the problem of under-achievement is tackled taking cognizance of the pupil-cum-parent relationship.

Improving The Home Environment

The study has found that the provision of reading materials has, to a large extent, contributed towards creating a conducive home environment for study. This in turn has been instrumental in improving the child's academic performance. Towards this end, parents are encouraged to provide ample reading materials at home for their child. Pupils should also be urged to supplement their available reading materials with other books borrowed from the libraries. Provision of reading materials should not be confined to books alone but to an array of other source of information such as magazines, audio-visual materials and CD-ROM's.

Reading materials are becoming cheaper in Singapore. Nevertheless, financial constraints should not be a hindrance to pupils having access to reading materials. Parents with low incomes should encourage their children to obtain relevant or supplementary reading materials from the school or public libraries. Efforts should also be made to educate parents, especially those with low educational qualifications, on the choice of reading materials for children of different age groups.

At a more fundamental level, the Malay/Muslim community should be encouraged to inculcate positive reading habits. Parents should set a positive example by being readers themselves. Their efforts to promote and create a conducive home environment should not focus solely on the provision of reading materials but to impress upon their children the need to foster an inquiring mind.

Apart from the provision of reading materials and inculcating good reading habits, parents should also be role models to their children. Parents should make efforts to attend self-improvement and skills upgrading courses to show the importance of education and training to their children. This may motivate their children to similarly show positive attitude towards school work and instill positive values towards education.

AMP's Efforts in Tackling the Problem of Under-Achievement

In line with the efforts to tackle the problem of under-achievement, AMP has embarked on a number of educational programmes. At the primary school level, there are the Upper Primary (UP) and the Lower Primary (LP) programmes. The UP programme caters for the low-achieving and under-achieving pupils at the upper primary level. The main component of this programme is personal development and the acquisition of core language as well as numeracy skills. The thrust of the personal development component is to nurture and instill in the pupils greater self-esteem. English Language and Mathematics are the focus of the core skills component. The Lower Primary programme conducted jointly with MENDAKI (i.e. Council for the Development of Singapore Muslim Community), on the other hand, caters for pupils in Primary 1 to Primary 4. This programme emphasises the acquisition of core skills in English Language and Mathematics.

At the secondary school level, AMP has embarked on PROMAP - Programme to Maximise Potential - to fully maximise the potential of under-achieving secondary students in the express stream. This is done through enrichment activities such as creative thinking, writing skills and public speaking workshops.

To cater to the problem of low and under-achievement amongst pupils from the normal (academic) and normal (technical) streams, AMP has launched DR. BOLA and DNA. DR. BOLA aims to attract the participation of male under-achievers in the tuition classes through recreation (especially soccer training). The weekly rigorous training has proven to be effective in instilling team-work, self-discipline and determination.

The DNA (Developing New Aspirations) programme caters for the female under-achievers. Similarly this programme organises tuition classes and meaningful activities such as arts and crafts, personal-grooming and sewing lessons. The objective of this programme is to produce well-balanced and responsible girls through comprehensive educational, social and religious enrichment programmes.

The Early Childhood and Family Education (ECFE) programme caters especially for parents. Through this programme parents are taught the knowledge and skills of effective parenting and in developing children to optimum levels. The programme has two levels - Basic and Advanced. The Basic ECFE is lecture-based while the Advanced ECFE comprises interactive and intensive workshops for small groups.

The existing programmes mentioned above will be fine-tuned to take into account the findings of the research and its recommendations. It is hoped that the above mentioned programmes together with its refinements will help to alleviate the problems of under-achievement in schools and to maximise the potential of Malay/Muslim pupils.

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COMMENTARIES

*These commentaries were presented at
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1994 at the Royal Holiday Inn
Singapore*

COMMENTARY 1

by

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The research study is timely and useful in re-orienting mindsets about poor academic performance. While poverty and poor language competence are still major contributing factors towards poor academic performance, parental education, parenting practices, parental values and attitudes are also gaining recognition as important influences on children's achievement. A notable example is the role played by parents in the better-than-expected performance of the over-achievers and their tight supervision over their offspring. Parents need to be good role models as learners. Most parents have high expectations of their children but few know how to translate these expectations into constructive actions to achieve these goals. But one needs to be cautioned on the anxiety and despair possibly generated by unrealistic parental aspirations.

Based on this set of data, intervention programmes can be developed to alleviate some of these problems. The parenting issue is a serious one. Formal talks and forums on parenting are usually attended by people who are well-informed and eager parents. Parents who are in dire need of this information usually stay away from these organised talks. Books and other written media have negligible impact on parents who could not or would not read. The only way to reach these parents who could not or would not read is probably via the radio and television. Most Singaporeans watch the television, especially those with little means of alternative entertainment. But they are not likely to be attracted to the documentary kind of programmes. It will not be an easy solution to reach out to this group of parents.

But I am optimistic that the selfless effort of the AMP will bring about some measures of success in improving the academic achievement of the low and under-achievers.

COMMENTARY 2

by

Mr Maarof Salleh*

*Educationist, Nanyang Junior College
and Community Leader*

The research has undoubtedly shown the crucial roles of parental support and home environment in the educational performance of children. However the study should have also analysed the role of school environment (i.e. the attitude of teachers as well as the school culture) and its impact on the educational performance of the pupils.

We should study whether the educational background of parents has a direct influence on the educational performance of pupils. Indeed there are many successful people whose parents are poorly educated. Furthermore, it would be interesting to analyse whether the proficiency of the parents in a particular field of study would result in their children having similar interest.

We must survey the kind of books or materials parents provide for their children. We should also take note that some materials which appear “not educational” may actually nurture good reading habits.

We should not be too disturbed by the lack of control over the time spent on television viewing. Selective television viewing is an important alternative medium to seek knowledge. Some television programmes impart good values. The provision of private tuition seems to benefit many pupils. However, pupils should also be equipped with proper study skills. Programmes implemented to tackle underachievement should not be based on methodologies alone but on concepts too. In this regard there is a need to define the meaning of achievement as there are various interpretations to it. Therefore, we should work towards forging a common definition of achievement which is practical and realistic. Efforts should be stepped up to imbibe good habits and values which would lead to good educational performance and personal success.

Finally I would like to commend AMP for its efforts to help tackle the problem of under-achievement within the Malay community. I hope my comments contribute in some way towards this effort.

**Presently, Mr Maarof Salleh is the Vice-President of the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore.*

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About The Association of Muslim Professionals

The Association of Muslim Professionals (AMP) is one of the five community self-help groups in Singapore. It was established in October 1991. AMP is granted the status of an Institution of Public Character and is registered as a charitable organisation.

Its mission is to play a leading role in the development and long term transformation of the Malay/Muslim community in Singapore into a dynamic community taking its pride of place in the larger Singaporean society. Since 1991, AMP has actively pursued community-based projects in the areas of education, social action, research and economic development.

The idea to form an organisation capable of accelerating the development of the Malay/Muslim community into the 21st Century was discussed at the first ever National Convention of Malay/Muslim Professionals held in 1990. The proposal was unanimously endorsed and the establishment of the AMP was a key resolution of the Convention.

The Research Department's corporate objective is to promote research on issues and areas of interest affecting the Malay/Muslim community. Its basic function is to provide research support in the implementation of all AMP's community-based projects.

The AMP Seminar Series is an integral part of the activities organised by the Research Department. The Occasional Paper Series is a documentation of papers and research findings presented and discussed at the Seminar Series.

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