Predicting academic achievement: The role of self-concept and the home environment.

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PREDICTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: THE ROLE OF SELF-CONCEPT AND THE HOME ENVIRONMENT.

by

J.T. Bissonnette

A Thesis Submitted to the
College of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Faculty of Education
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for
the Degree of Master of Education at the
University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2000

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0-612-52515-5
Abstract

The present study examined the relationship of self-concept, home environment, and academic achievement in elementary school children. The home environment variables examined were television viewing, parental involvement, and socioeconomic status (SES). Previous research was extended by examining all variables within the same study. Seventy-eight children from grades 4 - 7 responded to self-report measures on television viewing, self-concept (Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale, 1984), and parental involvement (Watkins, 1997). Parents responded to the same parental involvement scale. SES was determined by parent education and occupation. Academic achievement was based on teacher report and student self-report. Correlational analysis indicated a significant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. No other variables were significantly correlated with academic achievement. SES was positively correlated with self-concept and father involvement was negatively related with self-concept. Results provide support for self-concept as a salient predictor of academic achievement in elementary school children and offers several avenues for future research.
Dedication

I dedicate this research to all parents and professionals who strive to make a positive difference in the life of a child.
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge many people, both personally and professionally, for their assistance. First, I would like to thank Dr. Larry Morton, my thesis advisor, for his continued support and guidance. I am especially grateful for his advice on statistical procedures. I would also like to thank the other members of my thesis committee, Dr. Stewart Page and Dr. Wilfred Innerd, whose ideas and opinions were extremely valuable.

A special note of appreciation goes to all of the parents and students who participated in this study. I would like to thank the Board of Education for allowing me to conduct research within its schools. Thank you to the teachers and principals who were involved, for their time and cooperation. I would also like to acknowledge the Western Psychological Services who provided me with the use of the Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale.

There are several other people that warrant special mention. I cannot conclude without acknowledging my husband, Derek, for his inspiration. Thank you for all of your help. Thank you to my family and friends for their encouragement. I know it is hard to believe that I am actually finished! A final acknowledgement goes to my parents who have always made a positive difference in my life.
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PREDICTING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: THE ROLE OF SELF-CONCEPT AND THE HOME ENVIRONMENT

Examination of factors affecting academic achievement holds applicable value for the educational curriculum both present and future. The level of a child's academic achievement is a powerful force that can influence the direction and future successes within a child's life. Successful academic achievement allows a child to continue to the next grade level, offers possibilities for a post secondary education, and eventually may influence the career they choose. Of the many areas that can influence a child's academic development, past research in the educational field has identified two main areas: the child’s self-concept and the child’s home environment. Past research has not provided definitive answers to which of these variable holds the greatest influence. The aim of the present study is not to provide that definitive answer but to expand the research base and support the conclusions of past research.

Boards of Education, community agencies, and parents, work to strengthen the home-school relationship. As a result, increased attention is placed on the child’s home environment. Research providing information on the factors within the home environment that influence academic achievement is therefore advantageous. Results from the present study can provide information to parents, schools, and community agencies relevant to their common goal of aiding successful academic achievement in children.

Few studies have looked at the variables of self-concept and home environment, and their relationship to academic achievement, in one body of research. Within this limited research base there has been more significant support for self-concept as the
salient influence on a child’s achievement level (Wiggins, 1987; Song & Hattie, 1984) rather than a variable within the home environment (Fantuzzo, Davis, & Ginsburg, 1995). The present study extends past research by examining self-concept, along with several home environment variables, and their relationship to academic achievement in one study.

In research examining the relationship between self-concept and academic achievement only, self-concept was not the salient predictor. Although it is logical that the development of a positive self-concept would foster a positive school experience and therefore influence academic achievement, research has not shown conclusive support for this vein of thought (Pottebaum, Keith & Ehly, 1986; Helmke & vanAken, 1995). Results have led researchers to consider that academic achievement and self-concept are in a reciprocal relationship or that other variables influenced these domains.

The term “self-concept” has been defined in many ways in past research. In some instances, the self-concept measure was developed specifically for the study. While these operational definitions and measures of self-concept have been reliable within studies, the instability of frequent new definitions does not provide for a cohesive research base. To avoid adding to these potential limitations, the present study is using a well-established self-concept measure.

There are many variables in the home environment examined. Past research has shown that the home environment does affect academic achievement (see Walberg, 1984, for review). However, clarification on the variables within this realm is needed. The selection of variables, for the present study, is based on past research that has shown
support for their influence on academic achievement. The home environment variables under investigation are television viewing, parental involvement, and socioeconomic status. Past research examining each of these variables independently has found varying results.

The relationship between the socioeconomic status of the parents in the home and academic achievement has been significant in past research (Baharudin & Luster, 1998). Possible rationales explaining the relationship, included the notion that parents with higher SES, have higher expectations and therefore are more involved in their children's academic development. This may be a reflection of parental involvement (Seginer, 1983). It is also plausible that parents with lower SES do not have the means to provide a more stimulating environment (computers, books, trips) which would be a truer reflection of SES. Past research has often defined SES as the parent(s) occupation and/or educational level. The present study will continue to use this definition and measure SES by the parents' educational level and their occupation.

A large influence in today's society is television viewing. The effects of television viewing, in the home environment and its relation to academic achievement, have been studied with controversial results (Williams, Haertel, & Haertel, 1982). Effects on academic achievement range from largely significant to insignificant and further research in this area is warranted to support past findings. Children spend many hours every day watching television. In past research, the measurement of television viewing has included asking subjects to estimate the number of hours they watched per day. Others have been asked to list their favourite T.V. shows or check the shows that they
have watched on a daily basis. Most elementary students are less likely to be concerned
with time, therefore, the present study uses both methods to aid in controlling the over or
under reporting of scores.

Past research on parental involvement has also yielded inconsistent results. Part
of this problem could stem from the definition of parental involvement. Differentiation is
made between school based versus home based parental involvement. As the present
study is examining the home environment, home-based parental involvement will be
assessed as opposed to school-based involvement. Research has found that, within the
home environment, parental involvement has had the most significant impact on
academic achievement (Poirot & Robinson, 1994). On the contrary, parental involvement
has also been found as an insignificant predictor of academic achievement (Keith,
Reimers, Fehrman, Pottebaum, & Aubey, 1986).

Neither self-concept nor home environment has been conclusively supported as
the primary predictor of academic achievement in past research. There has been limited
research that has compared the effects of these variables in the same study. The present
study attempts to clarify the relationship between the home environment, academic
achievement, and self-concept. By examining all three factors together, instead of in
isolation, and having a subject base of elementary school students, the present study aims
to extend past research.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A review of literature reveals that the effects of self-concept and the home environment on academic achievement have been studied with varying results. With differing samples and inclusion or exclusion of pertinent variables, an examination of these differences in past research led to the premise for the present study.

Self-Concept

Maruyama, Rubin, and Kingsbury (1981) studied the relationship between academic achievement and self-esteem. The term self-esteem was used but it was pointed out that this should be looked at as an "umbrella term" to encompass other terms such as self-concept. Self-esteem was measured by the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory and the general self-concept score was the prime focus. There were four hypotheses presented to the reader on the relationship of academic achievement and self-esteem. The first was that self-concept did have a causal influence on academic achievement. The second stated that self-concept was based on past achievement. The third hypothesis maintained that the two variables were reciprocally related. The final view was that the relationship between the two variables was the result of an additional variable or variables. To provide support for one hypothesis, longitudinal data were collected from 1613 subjects who were in an Educational Follow-Up Study. Academic achievement was measured by two tests, the Stanford Achievement Test and the Wide Range Achievement Test, which were given at two separate times. Ability was measured by the Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children. The social class of the subjects was also collected which was
determined by the occupation and education level of the head of the household and the family income. Results revealed that academic achievement was a very stable measure. Path analysis indicated that self-esteem and academic achievement were not causally related. Most important, both academic achievement and self-concept were related to the background variables of social class and ability.

In a study to determine causality between self-concept and academic achievement Pottebaum, Keith and Ehly (1986) found that an unidentified third variable was causally predominant. Longitudinal data from the National Center for Education Statistics High School and Beyond Study (HSB) with a sample of 23,280 high school students was used. The HSB study had students evaluated in 1980 and 1982. In addition to testing academic achievement with standardized tests, students responded to a questionnaire that dealt with areas of background, extracurricular activities, attitudes, post high school plans, and aspirations. The definition of self-concept for this study was derived from the answers to four questions: “I take a positive attitude toward myself”; “I am able to do things as well as most people”; “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”; and “I feel I am a person of worth, on an equal plane with others”. This operational definition of self-concept was found reliable with coefficients of .82 to .97 in the two years. Although statistically reliable this was an introduction of another definition of self-concept. In this study, the large sample and the statistical design of cross-lagged panel correlation aimed for conclusions of directional causality to determine if self-concept was the significant predictor of academic achievement. No significant correlation was found between self-concept and academic achievement (1980 \( r = .115 \); 1982 \( r = .107 \)). Results suggested a
third unknown variable was the predominant predictor for academic achievement in high school students. Alternative explanations were examined including the possibility of reciprocal causation. Although the unknown variable may have been found within the “background” variables on the questionnaire, no possibilities were given. The size of the effect for the relationship was also discussed in that the effect might not have been statistically detectable, yet, given the sample size other shortcomings in the study may have been at fault.

Chapman, Lambourne, and Silva (1990) in a longitudinal study aimed to identify antecedents of academic self-concept. A sample of 453 elementary students from a Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study were measured at ages 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11. Academic self-concept was measured with the Perception of Ability Scale for Students (PASS). SES was determined according to the father’s occupational level. Academic achievement was measured using a combination of 7 intelligence and comprehension tests. Due to age constraints, no single measure was used at all testings, but some were used twice (at ages 7 and 9). Final scores from the battery of tests were derived through factor analysis. No information on this factor analysis was given. The reader was referred to another study. Results revealed that academic self-concept was based on previous achievement. Home environment variables, such as SES, directly influenced academic achievement. Academic achievement was not influenced by self-concept.

A more recent study (Helmke & van Aken, 1995) that attempted to determine a casual relationship between academic achievement and self-concept utilized longitudinal
data from 697 German elementary school students. Academic achievement was measured with the combination of basic arithmetic tasks and word problems. Academic self-concept in mathematics was measured by obtaining self-evaluations of: paper and pencil arithmetics tasks, ability to solve word problems, and competence in math. The students were asked to evaluate themselves in comparison to their classmates.

Two models were used for the framework in this investigation of how self-concept and academic achievement influenced each other. The skill development model proposed that past achievement was the basis for self-concept and that self-concept was not a factor in further achievement. The opposing self enhancement model maintained that both prior self-concept and prior achievement contributed to the formation of self-concept and that self-concept did contribute to further achievement. Results supported the skill development model.

A second question asked by the researchers was whether a difference would be found if academic achievement was measured by marks or by tests or by a combination of both. When test scores and grades were combined as one construct for academic achievement, results indicated that achievement depended almost completely on prior achievement and not on prior self-concept (skill development model). When the measures of tests and marks were separated the results still supported the skill development model but the relationship was not as strong. Results did not support the hypothesis that self-concept and academic achievement were causally related.

Hay, Ashman, and Kraayenoord (1997) investigated the relationship between academic achievement and self-concept using the Perception of Ability Scale (PASS) and
the Self-Description Questionnaire (SDQ-1) as tests of self-concept. The subjects were 479 grade five school children from Australia. Results demonstrated a significant relationship (p.<.001) between individual academic scores and levels of self-concept. Self-concept was the dependent measure and it fluctuated according to the child’s perceived level of academic achievement. Academic achievement was measured by a battery of tests: teacher ratings, Tests of Reading Comprehension (TORCH), The Test of Whole Number Computation (TWNC), and the South Australian Spelling Test. The child’s perception of their academic achievement was based on how they saw themselves according to the class average. Regression analysis indicated that self-concept reports increased and decreased as the child’s academic scores respectively rose or fell compared with the class mean. An important observation here was that self-concept was not actually predicting or influencing academic achievement but rising and falling according to the level of academic achievement.

A secondary aim of this study was to compare the two measures of self-concept. The PASS was a test of only academic self-concept containing six subscales. Subjects responded to 70 “yes or no” statements related to school. The SDQ-1 was a broader measure of self-concept that looked at four non-academic areas, three academic areas and provided a general measure of self-concept. The tests had a moderate level of concurrent validity with coefficients that ranged from .3 to .6.

Results of these studies, which examined the relationship of self-concept and academic achievement, did not support a significant relationship between the two variables. A possible reason for the insignificant results may have stemmed from the
multiple measures of self-concept used. In addition, some studies used only academic self-concept scores while others employed a global self-concept score. There was evidence to support the possibility that variables other than self-concept may have indirectly or directly affected academic achievement. These additional variables may have been equally influential as self-concept on academic achievement, biasing results, or more influential explaining the nonsignificant relationships found. The possibility of a reciprocal relationship was also suggested by several studies.

In accounting for additional variables that influenced academic achievement, the past literature has pointed to the home environment as a large contributor in child development. Some larger influences found in the home were time spent watching television, parental involvement, and socioeconomic status. In past research these home environment variables have been studied independently, and a few studies have included all three.

**Television Viewing**

Based on past research and public consensus that television viewing had negative influences on the educational performance of children, Anderson and Maguire (1978) designed a study to test this assumption. The 300 subjects were from grades three to six in a Western Canadian Province. Data on the students' educational performance, socioeconomic status, sex, behavioural impulsivity and T.V. viewing was gathered and assessed. Socioeconomic status was determined by level of education held by the parent with the highest occupational status. Educational performance, was measured by 3 variables: the verbal and nonverbal scales of the Lorge-Thorndike Test of Mental Ability,
a standardized math test, and the Stanford Reading Test. Television viewing was measured by having students state what shows they had watched and listing their favourite shows. Television shows were placed into the categories of Kidvid, Serious, Violent, or Sitcom. The final score reflected the total number of programs watched per week (low <27, medium 27-34, high >34). The students were placed into two groups of grades 3/4 or grades 5/6.

T.V. viewing for the two groups was significantly different with the older group being heavier viewers. Students in grades 5/6 were watching 34, or more, hours per week. Results of a two-way ANOVA indicated that there were no significant effects for T.V. viewing on educational performance. Results did not support the hypothesized negative relationship between television viewing and academic achievement. A possible limitation in this study was sample selection. The students studied were on the high end of the IQ scale, or as stated they were “markedly superior”. This could have biased the results and led to restrictions in generalizability. If the students were more intelligent to begin with then T.V. viewing may not have had as much as an effect than with a more average student. These limitations warrant further research.

In a review of literature, Williams, Haertel, and Haertel (1982), found there was a negative relationship between television viewing and academic achievement but that the correlation was small (-.05). For this research synthesis, 23 empirical studies spanning 23 years were used. Viewing per week did reveal one unexpected effect. Up to ten hours a week had a positive influence on academic achievement but beyond ten hours a week led to the expected negative effect.
Fetler (1984), in a study of television viewing and academic achievement, also measured the occupational level of the parents. Five categories of occupation were included: unknown, unskilled, skilled\semi-skilled, semiprofessionals, and professionals. The limited measure for socioeconomic status was addressed but researchers were restricted by law. The subject base of 10,000 elementary school children had all been part of the California Assessment Program that assessed public schools to determine the factors that influenced academic achievement. The study included a questionnaire measuring television viewing. Students were asked to indicate amount of viewing per weekday, whether homework was done in front of T.V., whether they watched the same programs as parents, when they watched (before school, late at night), if they watched what they preferred, and whether they watched any public or educational programs. Academic achievement was defined by measuring mathematical ability and written expression.

Results indicated that viewing television for more than four hours a day was associated with lower achievement for all students. When grouped according to social class, other differences were highlighted. Children from professional families showed a consistent trend of lower achievement scores as television viewing increased. Children from semiprofessional, skilled, and unskilled families actually improved in academic achievement within the mid range of television viewing, but only when television viewing was moderate(1-2 hours). Overall, there was support for the relationship that increased television viewing was related to lower academic achievement.

In a recent study, Bowen and Bowen(1998) also studied the influence of
television viewing as part of the home academic culture. Data was collected for 538 middle and high school students through the School Success Profile in which schools voluntarily participated. The study was based on social-cognitive-behavioural theory that stated that environmental factors, interpersonal relations, and behaviour, were in a relationship of triadic reciprocal causation.

The assumption tested whether these variables would influence academic performance through the value or meaning that students placed on the educational process. The home environment was what determined the level of educational meaning that a child has. Parents, that promoted school values by showing interest in their child’s school activities and long term goals, would have theoretically fostered a more positive home academic culture and in turn fostered a higher degree of educational meaning in their children. (Looking at this as a form of parental involvement is possible.) The level of educational meaning was measured by having students answer 3 questions on the degree to which: they enjoyed going to school and learning new things, if they looked forward to going to school, and whether school was fun and exciting. Television viewing was measured by self-report where students indicated the average number of hours watched on a weekday night. The scale ranged from “0-2” to “4 or more”. Academic achievement was measured by combining grades with the students perceived performance level.

Results indicated that the path from home environment to academic performance was indirect. The significant mediators of this path were educational meaning and time spent on homework. Television viewing had a small negative direct effect on educational
performance (-0.12). While the general belief was that television viewing had a negative
effect on academic achievement the results from this study did not provide compelling
support. It did offer possibilities that other variables, such as parental involvement via
educational meaning, were more directly influential on academic achievement.

**Parental Involvement**

Epstein (1987) presented an editorial review of literature aimed at educational
administrators. There were four forms of parental involvement identified. The first was
the “basic obligation of parents” which included things such as food, shelter, supplies,
etc. The second was “school-to-home communication” which parents should be involved
in to learn about important school events and about the progress of their child. The third
was “parent involvement at school” which described how parents should be helping
teachers and school staff and attending school events. The fourth form of parental
involvement outlined was “learning activities at home” which indicated that parents
should be promoting social and personal skills with basic and advanced education. It was
indicated that successful parent involvement in as many forms as possible was more
likely to influence their child’s achievements, attitudes and aspirations. While this review
of literature did not provide statistical information, it provided a good theoretical analysis
of the available literature.

Poirot and Robinson (1994), also in an editorial review of research, highlighted 5
forms of successful parental involvement similar to those identified by Epstein (1987).
These included basic parenting, school and home communication, parents at school,
parents helping children at home, and parents involved in decision making. The research
attributed “successful” parental involvement to increased student achievement and self-esteem. The effects of parental involvement were found to be long term, stretching from kindergarten to high school. This article focused on “at-risk” students, stating that past research had shown that those students who have the most to gain show the greatest improvement when parents became involved.

Keith and Lichtman (1994) studied the influence of parental involvement on the academic achievement of Mexican-American students. The data for 1714 grade 8 students came from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988. In this data pool academic achievement was measured by four cognitive tests (reading, math, science, and social studies). To determine parental involvement, students were asked to indicate whether they had discussions with their parents about school activities, programs, high school plans, and things studied. Students were also asked to report their parent’s educational aspirations. These questions aimed to identify home-based parental involvement versus school based parental involvement. Results revealed that previous achievement actually had the strongest effect on academic achievement (.361, p<.05). Parental involvement did have a “moderate” positive effect on academic achievement (.124, p<.05).

Hickman, Greenwood, and Miller (1995) studied parental involvement with a subject base of 47 high school students and their parents. Gender, SES, and grade level were also included. Whether students paid for lunch or received financial support from the county was the determinant for their SES level. The Parent Participation Interview (PPI) was used to determine the level of parental involvement. This 20 minute
questionnaire/interview had 51 items that divided parental involvement into categories of school-based (communicator, supporter, learner, advocate, decision maker, volunteer/para-professional) or home-based activities. Examples for the categories were given: as a communicator, parents talked to the teacher; as a supporter, parents provided supplies or transportation; as a learner, parents sought knowledge on child development; as an advocate parents attended school board meetings, as a decision maker, parents were involved in school committees; as a volunteer, parents chaperoned or worked in the school; with home based activities parents helped with homework. The PPI was a relatively new measure of parental involvement but proved a reliable indicator with an internal consistency coefficient of .90. Results indicated a significant relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement with only the home-based involvement (F=8.26, p<.05). These results supported the importance of parental involvement.

Looking at predictors of parental involvement, Watkins (1997), included the variables of: performance orientation, mastery orientation, child achievement, parental education level, parent efficacy and amount of teacher communication. Parents of children in grades 2 -5 were surveyed resulting in a sample of 183 parents. Parental involvement was measured with a scale modified for the study. The original version was by Ames (1993). The internal consistency coefficient was .86 indicating that it was a reliable measure. Results indicated four patterns of parental involvement. Parents became involved in their child’s academic development due to the communications received from the teacher. A second pattern illustrated that parents became involved
because their child's level of achievement was low. Parents also became involved because they wanted to improve their child's academic performance regardless of their current level. Finally, parents also became involved because they felt they were more effective, as compared with other parents, in helping their child. Of particular interest were the results that indicated when parents were clustered according to education level, comparisons showed that parental involvement was higher with parents that had a high school degree than parents who had a college degree. When comparisons of child achievement were made, children with parents who had college degrees had higher grades than those with parents having high school degrees. All parents felt that they were successful in helping their child. The rationale offered to explain these results stated that parents who had higher educational levels may have higher achieving students and therefore not have felt that helping their child was necessary. This rationale offered the possibility that child achievement influenced parental involvement instead of the opposite.

**Self-Concept and Home Environment Variables**

While many studies have looked at either home environment variables or self-concept independently, fewer studies have looked at the effects on academic achievement with more than one or all of these variables within an individual sample.

In a study of the home environment, self-concept, and academic achievement, Song and Hattie (1984) found that academic self-concept, as opposed to a global measure of self-concept, had the strongest effect on academic achievement. Academic achievement was measured by averaging GPA scores from a 2 month period. A scale was
developed to measure 11 facets of self-concept: classroom, achievement, ability, peers, family, presentation of self, physical, and specific subjects of Math, English, Social Studies, Science. The Home Environment Scale was used to determine: birth order, number of siblings, parents’ education and occupation, educational activities, parental interest and expectations, and the reward and punishment system used in the home.

Structural equation modelling was used to determine causal relationships. Results showed that the home environment did not have a direct effect on academic achievement. Self-concept was the mediating factor between the two variables, with academic self-concept having the most influence on academic achievement (.91). Other facets of self-concept had indirect effects on academic achievement, but all were through academic self-concept. This study suggested that self-concept was a significant influencing factor in children’s lives. Although a pilot study was conducted, a possible limitation may have been the reliability of the self-concept and Home Environment scales developed for this study. The large sample consisted of Korean adolescents. This cross-cultural sample could be a possible limitation in the generalizability of this study.

With a sample of high school students, the effects of three variables on academic achievement were examined (Keith, Reimers, Fehrmann, Pottebaum, and Aubey; 1986). The variables studied were: parental involvement, homework, and T.V. viewing time. Subjects and data on ability came from the High School and Beyond longitudinal study conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics. Parental involvement was measured with a questionnaire developed and standardized for the study. To gather the perceived level of parental involvement in the student’s academic and social life, students
were asked to answer "my parents almost always know where I am and what I am doing" (true/false), "my mother/father keeps close track of how well I am doing in school" (true/false), and "how much has each of the following persons (mother/father) influenced your plans for after high school" (not at all - a great deal). Television viewing was measured by asking the subjects to estimate how many hours per day they watched during weekdays. Available answers ranged from "don't watch" to "Five hours or more".

Path analysis indicated that, besides intellectual ability, time spent on homework had the strongest direct effect on achievement. Parental involvement had little direct effect on achievement but more indirect effects by influencing the amount of time spent on homework. T.V. viewing had a small direct negative effect on achievement. In elementary school, generally less homework is assigned which could reduce that avenue of influence, therefore with a subject base of elementary students, parental involvement may have indicated direct effects on achievement. Further study with an elementary student subject base was warranted.

In a similar study, Ferhmann, Keith, and Reimers (1987) examined the influence of the home environment on academic performance. The primary variables studied for the home environment were parental involvement, time on homework, and T.V. viewing. Parental involvement was measured with a questionnaire previously developed (see Keith, Reimers, Ferhmann, Pottebaum, & Aubey; 1986). Time on homework and T.V. viewing were measured by self-report questionnaires. For T.V. viewing, students were asked how many hours they thought they had watched per day, on weekdays only. Possible answers included: "don't watch" to "5 hours or more". Background variables
included; gender, intellectual ability, family background (education, occupation, income), and ethnicity.

Family background had little direct influence on grades, but had a significant indirect effect. According to the results of the path analysis it was suggested that this indirect effect was actually through intellectual ability. Results indicated a significant positive relationship between parental involvement and grades (.129). Parental involvement significantly influenced the amount of time spent on homework and in turn increased the level of academic achievement. Television viewing did not have a significant effect on grades nor did parental involvement influence the amount of t.v. viewing.

The subject base for this study was senior high school students. This may explain the insignificant effects of parental involvement on T.V. viewing. High school students were more likely to be up after their parents retire at night, or watching T.V. at a friend's house. Therefore parents would not have known nor controlled how much T.V. was being watched. Results from this study may not be generalizable to elementary school students. Results did support the importance and effectiveness of parental involvement.

Wiggins (1987) examined the relationship between academic achievement, amount of television viewing in the home environment, and self-esteem. The sample of 483 students ranged from grade 4 to 12. Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory was used to measure self-esteem. Television viewing was recorded by having students check the shows they had watched on weekdays. This was translated into total minutes viewed. Academic achievement was an average of reported grades from a 6 week period.
Results of the correlational analysis showed that television viewing was not significantly related to earned grades. The only significant relationship was between self-esteem and earned grades. These results supported that a positive self-esteem was a key variable in a higher level of academic achievement. A limitation noted in the study was the exclusion of other family variables. This leaves room for the possibility that another variable, such as parental involvement, influenced the positive correlation between self-esteem and academic achievement. If parents were involved in their child’s activities they may have been more likely to monitor their T.V. viewing, be involved in their school life, in turn leading to a more positive self-esteem level and higher level of academic achievement, given that the child had the ability.

Fantuzzo, Davis, and Ginsburg (1995) examined the effect of parental involvement on self-concept and mathematics achievement. This study was unique in its experimental design. Elementary school students were assigned to one of 3 conditions: parental involvement and peer tutoring, parental involvement, and control. For a sample of 72 students, only those who were showing problems in math were selected and mathematics achievement was measured as opposed to general academic achievement. These restrictions could be viewed as a limitation in generalizability. Self-concept was measured with the Self Perception Profile for Children (SPPC). Math achievement was measured with the Stanford Diagnostics Mathematics Test. Parents with children in the parental involvement condition were asked to participate in a school campaign to strengthen the home-school partnership. They were asked to generate ideas and construct methods to allow parental involvement to continue and grow. There was more personal
contact between parents and the teachers. Parents were also asked to praise their child’s academic efforts. The combination of parental involvement and peer tutoring resulted in higher self-concept reports and higher achievement scores. The parental involvement group also reported higher levels of self-concept.

Baharudin and Luster (1998) studied the factors in the home environment that affected achievement. It was hypothesized that a home with a higher quality environment would promote higher academic achievement. The Home Observation for Measurement of the Environment (HOME) examined the physical and social environment in the home. Subjects came from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NSLY) a large database of mothers and daughters that were interviewed annually since 1979. By examining the maternal characteristics that were significantly related to the higher HOME scores mothers who were more highly educated, had higher IQ and self-esteem levels, and were older at the time of their first births, had homes with higher quality ratings. Results indicated that children with higher academic achievement had mothers with higher education, intelligence and income.

A review of literature looking at the predictors of academic achievement has revealed that when self-concept and at least one other home environment variable were examined in the same study, self-concept has been marked as the more significant variable. When only self-concept is examined the results revealed an insignificant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement. In explaining the insignificant findings, the possibility of a third variable influencing academic achievement was not ruled out.
Studies did show that the home environment has had significant effects on academic achievement yet out of television viewing, parental involvement, and socioeconomic status, there was no dominant factor identified. When considering academic achievement, if the home environment is a third and predominant variable over self-concept then the key variables within the home need to be defined. Past research has found significant indirect and direct effects for the home environment variables of parental involvement, television viewing, and socioeconomic status.

Within the research base examined, there have been limitations in sample selection, instrumentation and generalizability. The present study attempts to address these issues in several ways. By not limiting subjects to “markedly superior students” or “students struggling in math” the generalizability of the results will increase. Using a well established measure of self-concept increases validity. By examining the variables of academic achievement, self-concept, television viewing, parental involvement, and socioeconomic status within one sample, the present study aims to support past findings and further define the relationships between these variables. Providing further clarification of this relationship can lead to avenues for future research and offer many applications to parents and teachers.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The present study examined the relationship between self-concept, home environment and academic achievement of elementary school children. The home environment variables measured included: television viewing, parental involvement, and socioeconomic status. The research question to be answered is: what are the significant
predictors of academic achievement in elementary school children?

Based on the dependent variable being academic achievement, and the
independent variables being: self-concept, and the home environment (parental
involvement, socioeconomic status, and television viewing), the following hypotheses
were developed.

**Hypothesis 1**

It is hypothesized that there will be a significant positive relationship between
levels of self-concept and levels of academic achievement.

**Hypothesis 2**

It is hypothesized that there will be a significant negative relationship between
television viewing and academic achievement.

**Hypothesis 3**

It is hypothesized that there will be a significant positive relationship between
socioeconomic status and academic achievement.

**Hypothesis 4**

It is hypothesized that there will be a significant positive relationship between
parental involvement and academic achievement.
CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Subjects

Seventy-eight elementary school children and 131 parents voluntarily participated in this study. There is a greater number of parents as some families involved both parents. The students, 31 male and 45 female, were enrolled in grades four to grade seven within a public school board of Southwestern Ontario. Schools were selected in both urban and rural areas. Two subjects were dropped from the study due to absence from school. Therefore, data from 76 students and 129 parents were analysed. Of the 76 students involved 7 students were from grade four, 34 from grade five, 13 from grade six, and 22 from grade seven. The mean age for this sample was 10.68 years with a standard deviation of 1.08.

Instrumentation

For the present study academic achievement referred to the child's level of ability as defined with two measures: teacher ratings and student self-ratings. Parents, principals and students make their decisions of school success or failure based on the ratings they receive from their teachers. This was the rationale for using these measures to indicate academic achievement. All ratings were based on the outline in the provincial curriculum from the Ministry of Education and Training which states that students are to be assessed according to levels of performance. At level 1, “the student is below the provincial standard”, at level 2, the “student performance is approaching the provincial standard.” Level 3 is considered the provincial standard and level 4 indicates that the “student
performance exceeds the provincial standard but working on grade level expectations". Teachers were asked to indicate the students current academic performance based on these levels.

The child’s academic self-evaluation included four questions to record the child’s current level of performance. Students were asked to rate their own academic performance based on the levels 1-4. They were also asked if they were happy with their current marks; if they thought they could do better; and if they thought their teacher gave fair marks (see Appendix A).

Self-concept was measured using the Piers-Harris Children’s Self-Concept Scale (1984). This instrument has 80 items that children respond to with a yes or no answer. It refers to self-concept as a child’s conscious attitude about their behaviour and attributes. The Piers-Harris includes subscales of: Behaviour, Intellectual and School Status, Physical Appearance and Attributes, Anxiety, Popularity, and Happiness and Satisfaction. The Piers-Harris is a reliable index of self-concept with test-retest reliability coefficients ranging from .42 to .96 and internal consistency from .88 to .93. The first subscale, Behaviour, “reflects the extent to which the child admits or denies problematic behaviour.” This subscale consists of 16 items and the reliability coefficient is .82. The second subscale, Intellectual and School Status, consists of 17 items and “reflects the child’s self-assessment of his or her abilities with respect to intellectual and academic tasks, including general satisfaction with school and future expectations.” Reliability for coefficient for this scale is .82. The third subscale, Physical Appearance and Attributes, has 13 items with a reliability coefficient of .83. It considers “the child’s attitude
concerning his or her physical characteristics, as well as attributes such as leadership and the ability to express ideas." The fourth subscale, Anxiety, "reflects general emotional disturbance and dysphoric mood". It has 14 items and a reliability coefficient of .81. The fifth subscale, Popularity has 12 items and a reliability coefficient of .77. It "reflects the child's evaluation of his or her popularity with classmates, being chosen for games, and ability to make friends." Happiness and Satisfaction is the sixth subscale. It reflects the child's "general feeling of being a happy person and easy to get along with, and feeling generally satisfied with life." This subscale has 10 items and a reliability coefficient of .76.

Television viewing was measured with a self-report questionnaire (see Appendix B). The final scores reflected the total hours of television viewed in the current week, looking only at Monday to Friday 3:30pm to 11:00pm. Students were asked to indicate which shows were watched in the past week by either naming the show or simply putting a check mark in the time slot if they were watching t.v. They were also asked to estimate the number of hours watched on a daily basis during that week.

For the present study, parental involvement referred to the extent to which parents included themselves in their child's academic development within the home environment. The questionnaire was based on Watkins (1997). It was presented to parents as a "parental information scale". The scale has seven questions rated on a 5 point likert scale that parents were asked to answer. Higher values indicated higher levels of involvement (see Appendix C). An example; "How often do you talk to your child about what he or she is learning in school?" The coefficient alpha obtained for the Parental
Involvement Scale was .86 (Watkins, 1997). A child’s version of this scale was given to the students to complete, allowing for comparisons of child versus parent perceptions of involvement (see Appendix D).

Socioeconomic status was measured by the educational level of the parents and their occupation. These items were included as questions on the Parental Information Scale. Parents were asked to circle the level of education that they had completed. This included below high school; high school; college/university; post graduate. Parents were also asked to state their occupation.

Procedure

After permission was granted from the Ethics Committee, Board of Education, Principals, and teachers (see Appendix E, F,G), sample selection began. From three schools within the region, ten classrooms were selected, from grades 4 - 7, with a total of 245 students. A time was arranged for the researcher to talk to the students about the research and ask for their participation. At that time, packages were sent home to parents with the students. Each package contained: an information letter (see Appendix H); a consent form (see Appendix I); two Parental Information Scales; and a self addressed, postage paid envelope. If they agreed to participate in the study, parents were asked to return the consent form and completed questionnaire(s) to this researcher in the postage paid envelope.

Once written parental consent was obtained, arrangements for testing were made through the teachers and principals. Students were tested in groups in a quiet area in their school (library or extra classroom). The administration time of all measures was
approximately one hour, with most students finishing before one hour.

All scales were administered by this researcher and instructions to the students were standardized. Before beginning, confidentiality of responses was assured and students were informed that their grades would not be affected. All measures were introduced as questionnaires, not “tests”, with no right or wrong answers. Students were asked to answer as honestly as possible. Students were asked to indicate their age and grade but not their name. The order of administration for the questionnaires for all groups was: Parental Information Scale (child’s version); Piers-Harris Self-Concept Scale; Academic Self-Evaluation; and then the Television Viewing Scale. After completing each scale students were asked to stop. When the majority of the students had completed the questionnaire, the instructions for the next item were given. Subjects who had difficulty understanding instructions, or had questions, were assisted through further explanation using synonyms. Due to the personal nature of some questionnaires, it was possible that children could have become upset by answering questions about themselves. As a precautionary measure, on the day of testing, a note was distributed to teachers requesting that they be aware of any unexpected changes in the students behaviour. If unexpected behaviours were observed they were instructed to contact myself or the school principal. No concerns were reported.

Once all students were tested, teachers were asked to report their student’s overall academic achievement based on level of performance (1 through 4). Again confidentiality was assured.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Data were scored and recorded for self-concept, parental involvement, television viewing, socioeconomic status, and academic achievement. Correlational analysis indicated that the only hypothesized significant relationship was between academic achievement and self-concept.

Teacher reports of academic achievement.

The overall self-concept score and all subscales of the Piers Harris Self-Concept Scale were significantly related to academic achievement (See Table 1). Of the six subscales, “Intellectual and School Status” had the strongest relationship. The results did not support the hypotheses of predicted significant relationships between television viewing, parental involvement, SES, and academic achievement, according to teacher reports. (see Table 2).

Forty-six percent of teacher reports on student academic achievement fell between levels 3 and 4, with 25% at level 3 “at the standard,” and 21% between level 3 and level 4 “above the level of others”. See Table 3 for full grade distribution. Results of the true/false question on the child’s academic self-evaluation indicated that 92.1% of the students felt that their teachers gave fair marks.

Student self-reports of academic achievement.

Students’ self-report of grades and self-concept scores were significantly related (see Table 4). Again, the strongest relationship was found between the subscale of “Intellectual and School Status” and academic achievement. No other significant
Table 1

Correlations Between Teacher Report of Academic Achievement and Self-Concept Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
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<td>1. Teacher Report</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Intellectual/School Status</td>
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<td>.640**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Physical Appearance</td>
<td>.407**</td>
<td>.808**</td>
<td>.474**</td>
<td>.702**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Anxiety</td>
<td>.437**</td>
<td>.698**</td>
<td>.365**</td>
<td>.595**</td>
<td>.430**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Popularity</td>
<td>.408**</td>
<td>.789**</td>
<td>.420**</td>
<td>.604**</td>
<td>.700**</td>
<td>.634**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Happiness/ Satisfaction</td>
<td>.348**</td>
<td>.802**</td>
<td>.634**</td>
<td>.643**</td>
<td>.719**</td>
<td>.611**</td>
<td>.627**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01.
Table 2

**Correlations Among Teacher Report of Academic Achievement and Home Environment Variables.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
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<td>2. Television Viewing</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Dad Occupation</td>
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<td>-.101</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Dad Education</td>
<td>.217</td>
<td>-.082</td>
<td>.901**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>5. Mom Occupation</td>
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<td>-.077</td>
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<td>6. Mom Education</td>
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<td>.044</td>
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<td>7. Mother Involvement</td>
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<td>.018</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>.063</td>
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<td>8. Father Involvement</td>
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<td>.047</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>-.107</td>
<td>.390**</td>
<td>.360**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.  **p < .01.
Table 3

Distribution of Academic Achievement Scores from Teacher Reports and Student Self-Reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Frequency Teacher report</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Frequency Self report</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 below others</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 almost at the level of others</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 at the standard</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>57.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 above the level of others</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100.00</td>
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</table>
Table 4

Correlations Between Student Self-Report of Academic Achievement and Self-Concept Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tr>
<td>3. Behaviour</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4. Intellectual/School Status</td>
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<td>5. Physical Appearance</td>
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<td>.643**</td>
<td>.719**</td>
<td>.611**</td>
<td>.627**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.  **p < .01.
relationships with student self-report of academic achievement were found (see Table 5).

Reports of academic achievement from students were similar to their teachers' report with 57% at level 3. See Table 3 for grade distribution. The student's academic self-evaluation also indicated that most students, on a scale of 1-4, were satisfied with their grades \((M = 3.31, SD = 0.75)\). However, on a true/false question 76.31% of the students felt that they could do better in school.

Students were asked to indicate time spent watching TV. The average number of hours watched, Monday - Friday, for the present sample was 2.57 hours per day. While television viewing was not significantly related to academic achievement, further analysis using analysis of variance indicated significant differences between grades, \(F(1,74) = 6.99, p < .01\). Students in grades 4 and 5 watched more TV than students in grades 6 and 7 (see Table 6).

Serendipitous findings.

Examining relationships between variables other than academic achievement revealed unanticipated correlations (see Table 7). Several variables were significantly related to self-concept but not to academic achievement.

Father's occupation and education (socioeconomic status) were significantly and positively correlated with general self-concept scores. As socioeconomic status increased, general self-concept became more positive. Father's education and occupation were significantly and positively related to the subscale of "Intellectual and School Status". As the father's socioeconomic status increased so did the child's positive feelings about their abilities in school. Father's education was also significantly and
Table 5

**Correlations Among Student Self-Report of Academic Achievement and Home Environment Variables.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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*p < .05.  **p < .01.*
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Mean Levels of Reported Television Viewing in Hours Per Day According to Grade

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Correlations among Self-Concept Scores and Home Environment Variables.

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*p < .05.  **p < .01.
positively related to the subscale of “Anxiety”. As the father’s education level increased children showed more positive emotional adjustment.

Another factor significantly related to self-concept was parental involvement. Father involvement was negatively correlated with general self-concept. Thus as father involvement increased, self-concept became less favourable. Father involvement was also negatively related to the subscale “Behaviour”. As father involvement increased behaviour scores decreased, suggesting behavioural problems either at home or school. Father involvement was also negatively related to “Intellectual and School Status”. As father involvement increased, children’s positive feelings, about their abilities in school, decreased.

The Parental Involvement Scale allowed for a maximum score of 35 with higher scores reflecting more involvement. Levels of parental involvement were relatively similar for mothers (M = 26.95, SD = 6.17) and fathers (M = 23.40, SD = 4.69). Father involvement was significantly and positively related to mother involvement. Students completed the same questionnaire, indicating their perception of the amount of parental involvement in the home. Again, the levels were relatively similar (M = 23.06, SD = 5.55) and the child’s perception of involvement was significantly related to reported levels of mother and father involvement.

Factor analysis was completed on the 7 items of the parental involvement scale. Principal components analysis with varimax rotation was used with an eigenvalue of 1 and factor loading of .5 with selection criteria that at least two items loaded on a factor. Results indicated two factors. The first, with 4 items, referred to specific or “hands-on”
tasks of parental involvement. These items included: helping with math, time spent on homework, time spent checking homework, and talking about tests or work brought home. This factor accounted for 39.45% of the variance. The second factor involved a more general form of parental involvement in that it involved more abstract discussion and only one work related item. The three items were talking about school, talking about homework expectations, and helping with reading. This factor accounted for 23.30% of the variance. Correlations of these two factors with other variables provided a more detailed picture of parental involvement.

The first or "specific" parental involvement scale was related to the self-concept subscale "Intellectual and School Status" ($r = .25, p < .05$). In effect, as children perceived more specific parental involvement, scores on the "Intellectual and School Status" subscale increased. The specific involvement scale for father involvement was significantly and negatively correlated with the self-concept subscale of "Behaviour" ($r = -.34, p < .05$). As father involvement increased on specific tasks, scores on this scale decreased indicating problem behaviours. The general involvement scale for father involvement was also significantly and negatively correlated with the same subscale "Behaviour", ($r = -.34, p < .05$). Here, as father's involvement increased with discussion about school or helping with reading, scores on this scale decreased, again, suggesting problem behaviours.

The general involvement scale for father involvement was also negatively correlated with self-concept ($r = -.30, p < .05$). As father involvement increased through talking about school, general self-concept score became less favourable. Finally, father involvement was negatively correlated with the subscale "Intellectual and School Status"
(r = -.32, p < .05). As father involvement increased, children felt less satisfied with their abilities in school.

To support the validity of these unexpected findings, further analyses were conducted. Additional correlational analysis indicated gender differences in looking at the relationship between father involvement and self-concept. When the scores of male students were isolated, all of the negative relationships were supported. As fathers became more involved with their sons, scores of general self-concept, Behaviour, and Intellectual and School Status, became less favourable (see Table 8). When looking at female students, only the relationship between Behaviour and father involvement was supported. As father involvement with daughters increased, scores on the Behaviour subscale decreased indicating that females admitted problem behaviours (see Table 9). Again, this significant relationship was found with the specific parental involvement scale, indicating that the involvement was related to specific work tasks.

Another examination of the relationships between self-concept, SES, and parental involvement was carried out using analysis of variance. Looking at the two components of SES, statistically significant differences were supported between father's education level, occupation, and self-concept. Occupation was categorized into labour, administrative, and professional. Children with professionally employed fathers felt better about their abilities, shown by higher scores on the “Intellectual and School Status” subscale, F(2,71) = 3.28, p < .05. However, fathers employed in service or clerical occupations showed more parental involvement in talking about work brought home than fathers with other occupations such as labour or professional, F(2,73) = 5.70, p < .05. Children's perception of parental involvement on specific tasks was also significantly
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*p<.05. **p<.01.
Table 9
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<tr>
<td>6. Talking about work brought home</td>
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<td>.90**</td>
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<td>.73**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.39*</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Helping with reading</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.71**</td>
<td>.52**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.51**</td>
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<td>.56**</td>
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<td>-.25</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.33</td>
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<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.35*</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.38*</td>
<td>-.40*</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-.39*</td>
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<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>-.11</td>
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<td>-.33</td>
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<td>-.19</td>
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<td>.59**</td>
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<td>14. Anxiety</td>
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<td>-.06</td>
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<td>-.32</td>
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<td>-.33</td>
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<td>-.23</td>
<td>-.44*</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>-.26</td>
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<td>.50**</td>
<td>.77**</td>
<td>.48**</td>
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<td>-.15</td>
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<td>-.36*</td>
<td>-.37*</td>
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<td>.48**</td>
<td>.66**</td>
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<td>.70**</td>
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*p<.05. **p <.01.
related to father's occupation, \( F(2,73) = 3.41, p < .05 \). Children perceived more involvement with fathers employed in service or clerical occupations (see Table 10).

Statistically significant differences were also found between fathers' education and father involvement. Fathers who had completed high school, versus less than high school or post-secondary were more involved in talking to their children about work brought home and in talking about school (see Table 10). No significant differences were found between mothers' education, occupation, and self-concept.

Significant differences were found when students were grouped by grade. Students in grades 4 and 5, versus 6 and 7, felt they received more parental involvement, \( F(1,74) = 6.72, p < .05 \). These differences were found in several items of the Parental Involvement Scale: talking about school, helping with reading, talking about homework expectations, and time spent checking homework. Three of these items were found on the second or general factor of parental involvement. Students in grades 4 and 5 did perceive that they received more involvement of the general type than students in grade 6 and 7 (see Table 11).

Finally, through analysis of variance, statistically significant gender differences were found with perceived amounts of parental involvement (see Table 12). In receiving help with reading from parents, males received more than females. On the Behaviour subscale, males had lower scores than females indicating more problem behaviours at home, or school, for male students.
Table 10

Significant Differences as a Function of Paternal Socioeconomic Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father Occupation</th>
<th>Labour (n = 38)</th>
<th>Service (n = 19)</th>
<th>Professional (n = 19)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Talking about work brought home

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>.97</td>
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<td>1.06</td>
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<td>Professional</td>
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Perception of parental involvement

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<tr>
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<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Professional</td>
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Intellectual and school status subscale

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<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>53.62</td>
<td>10.63</td>
<td>58.10</td>
<td>10.30</td>
<td>60.55</td>
<td>7.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
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Father Education

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>&lt;High School (n = 5)</th>
<th>High School (n = 18)</th>
<th>College/University (n = 32)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talking about school</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>3.75</td>
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<td>SD</td>
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<td>1.04</td>
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<td>Talking about tests/work brought home</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.13</td>
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Table 11

**Significant Differences in Parental Involvement By Grade Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grades 4/5 (n = 41)</th>
<th>Grades 6/7 (n = 35)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of parental involvement</td>
<td>24.53</td>
<td>5.08</td>
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<td>Talking about school</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping with reading</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking about homework expectations</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>1.25</td>
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<td>Time spent checking homework</td>
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<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of general parental involvement</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.96</td>
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Table 12
Significant Differences in Parental Involvement Scores and Self-Concept By Student Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys (n = 31)</th>
<th>Girls (n = 45)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helping with reading</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Behaviour subscale</td>
<td>52.96</td>
<td>8.26</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

In answering the question of whether self-concept or home environment were significantly related to academic achievement, in elementary school children, results supported the hypothesis that self-concept was significantly related to academic achievement. Contrary to the hypotheses, home environment was not significantly related to academic achievement. That is, no significant relationships were found between parental involvement, television viewing, socioeconomic status, and academic achievement.

**Self-Concept**

The present study joined others in supporting a relationship between self-concept and academic achievement (Song & Hattie, 1984; Wiggins, 1987; Hay, Ashman, & van Kraayenoord, 1997). Wiggins (1987) found self-concept had the strongest effect on academic achievement with a sample of students in grades 4-12. The variable of parental involvement was not included. Past research was extended by including additional variables within the same sample, suggesting that self-concept is the stronger predictor of academic achievement in elementary school children. Thus, researchers looking at predictors of academic achievement should consider these findings when conducting further research. Several studies (Williams, Haertel, & Haertel, 1982; Fetler, 1984; Keith, Fehrman, Reimers, Pottebaum, & Aubey, 1986; Bowen & Bowen, 1998) found television viewing and/or parental involvement to be significantly related to academic achievement but these studies did not include self-concept as a variable in their research.
Including that variable may have altered the results.

The Piers-Harris Self-Concept has six subscales which offered a more comprehensive look at self-concept. That is, several differences were found between subscales which could have been overlooked if a measure of general self-concept had been used. In this study, the subscale of “Intellectual and School Status” had the strongest relationship with academic achievement. This subscale indicated how satisfied a child is with school, academic tasks and their future expectations. In other studies, a similar definition has been used for the term “academic self-concept”. Song and Hattie (1984) found that academic self-concept had the strongest effect on academic achievement in Korean adolescents. Academic self-concept was stronger than either presentation or social self-concept. Consistent with present findings, the home environment was included as a variable and no direct effects were found. While the measures of self-concept were not identical, the results from the present study supported these findings. Future research with a larger sample is warranted.

The potential link between a child’s feelings about their abilities in school and achievement is an important one. There are other questions to be considered in future research. Is the relationship between academic achievement and academic self-concept reciprocal? What is the best method to build self-concept levels related to feelings about school? General self-concept was also significantly related to academic achievement. Future research could also explore ways that children build a positive self-concept outside of the classroom. Key relationships to further explore between self-concept and the home environment were found via the unexpected results from the present study.
**Television Viewing**

Contrary to the original hypothesis, a negative relationship between television viewing and academic achievement was not supported. Past research and public consensus that TV is “bad for you” led to the prediction of a negative relationship. These findings may be explained by the amount of television viewing. The present sample watched approximately 11.35 hours per week (Monday-Friday). This is low in comparison to past research. Fetler (1984) found that a moderate amount of television viewing, 1 to 2 hours per day, did not have a negative effect and actually improved academic performance. A lack of a statistically significant relationship was also found in past research (Anderson & Macguire, 1978; Fehrman, Keith & Reimers, 1987; Wiggins, 1987). Perhaps television does not deserve its bad reputation, however, this is an argument beyond the scope of the present study. Future research might address this inconclusive relationship.

**Parental Involvement and Socioeconomic Status**

The home environment variables of parental involvement, and socioeconomic status were not significantly related to academic achievement. However, unexpected relationships suggest these variables had an indirect effect on academic achievement through their relationship with self-concept. Significant correlations were found between father’s education and occupation and student’s self-concept scores. These findings suggested an indirect relationship between socioeconomic status and academic achievement. While not as hypothesized, these findings were consistent with past research that has found relationships between self-concept and social class (Maryuma,

A surprising relationship was found between father involvement and self-concept. This was a negative relationship. There are several possible explanations for these findings. Parental involvement, from mothers or fathers, may not always be positive. More specifically, if fathers are more likely to be authoritarian and/or negative when involved in their child’s academic life then a negative effect on a child’s self-concept could be understood. Baumrind (1971) found that children with authoritarian parents were more withdrawn and discontent than with other types of parenting styles. Another possibility may stem from a pattern of predominant maternal involvement. If the mother is usually involved in discussions about school or with helping the child, and then the father becomes involved, the child may perceive this as a sign of trouble and therefore feel less confident about their abilities. Alternatively, a low self-concept may be the precursor to increased father involvement. If so, does this pattern remain consistent over time? Longitudinal research would be able to provide insight into this relationship. Does mother involvement differ from father involvement and in what ways? These are important questions to be addressed.

In this study, the negative relationship between Intellectual and School Status and father involvement is only significant between fathers and sons. The negative relationship between Behaviour and father involvement was found between both fathers and daughters and fathers and sons, yet, Intellectual and School Status was the subscale most strongly related to academic achievement. Further investigation into this relationship is warranted. Many studies have looked at parental involvement without
isolating differences between mother and father. Future research could further define differences in parental involvement, parenting styles, and their effects on self-concept and possible indirect effects on academic achievement.

**Limitations and Applications**

In addressing limitations in the present study the first item was sample size. Failure to find predicted significant relationships may have been due to a lack of power. Initially, a larger sample size was predicted due to a successful return rate in the early part of data collection and the fact that 245 participation requests were circulated. The return rate did drop significantly after the first few weeks and the sample size was not as desired. The low rate of return for the questionnaires did raise concern. It was possible that students did not take them home to their parents. To try and avoid this possibility this researcher requested that teachers give verbal reminders to their classes requesting that parents return the consent forms and questionnaires. It was also possible that parents did not feel comfortable participating in the study. Another speculation suggested that the low return rate was an initial indicator of a lack of parental involvement in the present sample. Finally, the present sample consisted of students from grades 4 - 7, caution should be taken in generalizing the results from this study to other populations.

As discussed, this study holds many applications for future research. There are many relationships found that warrant further investigation. Unexpected correlations between self-concept, parental involvement and socioeconomic status provide valuable information and allow the present study to be viewed as hypothesis producing research. In addition to exploring relationships between self-concept and home environment
variables, replication of this study with a larger sample size would strengthen results. The research design employed cannot provide information for causal relationships. Future research can also address the question of reciprocal relationships and causation.

This research has important implications for the home and school. To summarize, results revealed a significant relationship between self-concept and academic achievement in elementary school children. The findings were consistent with past research and support the acceptance of self-concept as a salient factor within a child’s overall academic profile. A low self-concept can play a part in hindering academic achievement and can have lasting effects into adult life. It is therefore imperative to identify children who are at risk. Most importantly, the results from the present study support the need to nourish a positive self-concept in all children.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

A. Child’s Academic Self-Evaluation

Please give your honest answer to the following questions.

1) On a scale of 1-4, how happy are you with the marks you have received in school.

   Not Happy                             Very Happy

   1                                  2  3  4

2) Please circle the level that you feel you are working at in school:

   Level 1 = below the level of most other students

   Level 2 = almost at the standard level that most students are working at

   Level 3 = you are at the standard (not really better or worse than most others)

   Level 4 = above the the level of most other students

3) I think that my teacher gives fair marks (please circle the answer).

   True    False

4) I think I could be doing better in school (please circle the answer).

   True    False
B. **Television Viewing Survey**

Please check (✓) the boxes if you were watching t.v. during that time. If you can remember please write down the name of the show you were watching.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Time</th>
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<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Please circle the number of hours a day you think you watch t.v. (It is alright to make a guess.)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10+
C. Parental Information Scale (Watkins, 1997)

For the following items, please respond according to what you typically say and do in helping your child learn at home, not what you necessarily believe is right. Please circle the number that shows how often you say or do the following things.

a. How often do you talk to your child about what he or she is learning in school?
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Often Very Often

b. In general, how much time do you (or someone in your home) spend working with your child on school subjects each day?
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Very Little Time A great deal of time

c. How often do you review and discuss with your child the graded assignments and work he or she brings home?
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Often Very Often

d. How often do you help your child with math?
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Often Very Often

e. How often do you help your child with reading?
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Often Very Often

f. How often do you talk with your child about your expectations regarding his or her homework?
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Not Often Very Often

g. How much time do you (or someone in your home) spend checking/correcting his or her homework?
   
   1 2 3 4 5
   Very Little Time A great deal of time

1) Please circle the highest level of education you have completed.
   
   Below High School High School College/University Post-Graduate

2) Please list your current occupation: ________________________

3) This questionnaire was completed by(please circle): male or female
D. Parental Information Scale (Child's Version based on Watkins, 1997)

For the following items, please circle the answer according to what you usually happen at home with your parents, not what you think is right. Please circle the number that shows how often you say or do the following things.

a. How often do you talk to your parent(s) about what you are learning in school?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Not Often       Very Often

b. In general, how much time do you spend working with your parent(s) on school subjects each day?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Little Time       A great deal of time

c. How often do you talk with your parents about the graded assignments and work that you bring home?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Not Often       Very Often

d. How often does your Mom or Dad help you with math?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Not Often       Very Often

e. How often does your Mom or Dad help you with reading?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Not Often       Very Often

f. How often does your Mom or Dad talk with you about their expectations for your homework?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Not Often       Very Often

g. How much time does your parent (or someone in your home) spend checking/correcting your homework?

   1  2  3  4  5
   Very Little Time       A great deal of time

1) What would you like to be when you “grow up”?

2) What does your Mom do?

3) What does your Dad do?
E. Letter to the Ethics Committee

Dr. L. Morton  
Chair of the Ethics Committee  
Faculty of Education  
University of Windsor  

September 13, 1999  

Dear Dr. Morton:  

Please accept this research proposal as application to the Faculty of Education, Ethics Committee for permission to begin research. The proposed study is in partial fulfilment for my Master of Education degree at the University of Windsor. The research will examine the relationship between academic achievement, self-concept, parental involvement, socioeconomic status and television viewing in elementary school students. Subjects will be asked to answer three self-report surveys that assess their level of weekday television viewing, academic achievement, level of parental involvement, and their self-concept. The inventory to be used for measuring self-concept is the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale. The other measures, based on past research, have been developed for this study.  

The inventory to assess parental involvement, the Parental Involvement Scale (Watkins, 1997) is a short self-report questionnaire. One parent will be asked to complete and return the questionnaire as well as indicate their education level and occupation. Students will be asked to complete the same questionnaire.  

The television viewing questionnaire asks children to indicate the shows they have watched within the current week. The children's self academic evaluation consists of 4 questions asking them to rate the level they feel they are currently working at.  

There are no known risks associated with this research. Self-report information will be obtained anonymously. All information will be strictly confidential. Permission will be obtained from the principals of the schools involved in this study. Written consent will be obtained from the parents for their own participation and their child's. Subjects will not receive renumeration and will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. The results of the study will be available on request.  

Thank-you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions I can be reached at 736-9613 during the evening or at 257-5288 (extension 74035) during the day. My advisor is Dr. L. Morton, and other committee members include: Dr. W. Innerd, Faculty of Education; and Dr. S Page, Department of Psychology. I look forward to hearing from you.  

Sincerely,  

Jacqueline T. Bissonnette
F. Letter to School Board

Greater Essex County District School Board
451 Park St. West
Windsor, Ontario
N9A 5V4

October 4, 1999

Dear Dr. Abrash;

As a graduate student from the University of Windsor, Faculty of Education, I am seeking permission to conduct research within the Greater Essex County District School Board. This research is in partial fulfilment for my Master of Education degree and has been approved by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee (please see attached). The purpose of this study is to examine some of the predictors of academic achievement. As educators, the results from this study will offer relevant information and a copy of the results will be available upon request.

The predictors of academic achievement being studied include: self-concept, parental involvement, socioeconomic status, and television viewing. Students will be asked to answer self-report surveys that assesses their level of weekday television viewing, their current academic performance, their self-concept, and the level of involvement from their parents. The estimated length of time to obtain this information should be 45 minutes.

Parents will also be asked to complete a questionnaire about their level of involvement with their child’s education. Teachers will be asked to give an estimated level of performance for those children involved.

There are no known risks associated with this research. Written consent will be obtained from parents prior to the research. Self-report information will be obtained anonymously and all answers will be kept strictly confidential. Participation will be voluntary and anyone will be free to withdraw from the study at any time. Any concerns of an ethical nature may be directed to the chair of the Ethics Committee at the Faculty of Education, 519-253-4232 ext. 3800.

Thank-you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions I can be reached at 257-5288 ext 74035 (day) or 736-9613 (evening). Any ethical concerns can be directed to Dr. L. Morton, Chair of the Ethics Committee, Faculty of Education, University of Windsor. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline T. Bissonnette, B.A., B.Ed.
G. Letter to the Principals

J. Bissonnette
366 Briar Ridge
Amherstburg, Ont.
N9V 3X1

November 4, 1999

XX
XX Public School
XX, Ontario

Dear XX;

As a graduate student from the University of Windsor, Faculty of Education, I am seeking permission to conduct research within your school. This research is in partial fulfilment for my Master of Education degree. Approval has been granted from the Greater Essex County District School Board and the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee. The purpose of this study is to examine some of the predictors of academic achievement. The results from this study will be relevant to your role as educators and a copy of the results will be available upon request.

The predictors of academic achievement being studied include: self-concept, parental involvement, socioeconomic status, and television viewing. Students will be asked to answer self-report surveys that assess their level of weekday television viewing, their current academic performance, their self-concept, and the level of involvement from their parents. Parents will also be asked to complete a questionnaire about their level of involvement with their child’s education. Teachers will be asked to give an estimated level of performance for those children involved.

There are no known risks associated with this research. Written consent will be obtained from parents prior to the research. Self-report information will be obtained anonymously and all answers will be kept strictly confidential. Participation will be voluntary and anyone will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Thank-you for your time and consideration. If you have any questions I can be reached at 257-5288 ext 74035 (daytime) and 736-9613(evening). Any ethical concerns can be directed to Dr. L. Morton, Chair of the Ethics Committee, Faculty of Education, University of Windsor. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline T. Bissonnette, B.A., B.Ed.
H. Letter to Parents

November 5, 1999

Dear Parent(s);

I am seeking your permission to include you and your child in a research study that will examine predictors of academic achievement. This research has been approved by the Greater Essex County District School Board, the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee, and by Mr. P. Bisson, the principal of Hugh Beaton Public School. I am conducting this research in partial fulfilment of my Master of Education degree and it is being supervised by Dr. L. Morton at the University of Windsor, Faculty of Education.

The predictors of academic achievement being studied include: self-concept, parental involvement, socioeconomic status, and television viewing. At school, your child will be asked to answer self-report surveys that ask about their weekday television viewing, their self-concept, self evaluations of their current academic performance, and involvement with their parents. The estimated length of time to obtain this information should not exceed 45 minutes. You will be asked to complete the attached questionnaire about your involvement in your child’s education.

Please be reassured that there are no known risks associated with this research. All information will be strictly confidential and the self-report information will be obtained anonymously. Upon return of the consent form, your family will be issued an identifying number. It will not be necessary for your child to put their name on any surveys. Any concerns of an ethical nature may be directed to the chair of the Ethics Committee, Faculty of Education, at 519-253-4232 ext. 3800. Participation is voluntary and you or your child will be free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Please feel free to ask me any questions about the study at any time. A prompt reply would be greatly appreciated. Thank-you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline T. Bissonnette, B.A., B.Ed.
(519) 736-9613
I. Parental Consent Form

**Parental Consent Form**

If you agree to participate in this research please return the consent form below and your completed questionnaire in the enclosed self-addressed and postage paid envelope.

__________________________________________________________

*PLEASE PRINT*

I, Mr./Mrs. ____________________________ agree to participate in this
(Parent/Legal Guardian)
study and give written consent for my child ____________________________
to participate in this study.

Signature ____________________________

Date ____________________________

__________________________________________________________

☐ Please check this box to indicate that you would like to be notified if scores present a low self-concept profile for your child.

Thank You.
VITA AUCTORIS

Name: Jacqueline Tyrer Bissonnette
Date of Birth: May 2, 1971
Place of Birth: Cambridge, Ontario

Education: Bachelor of Education
            University of Windsor
            Windsor, Ontario

            Bachelor of Arts (Honours Psychology with Thesis)
            University of Windsor
            Windsor Ontario