

Family Income and Home Learning Environment as Conditions for SDL among Advanced-Level Students in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

SDL has become increasingly important in advanced-level education. However, students' engagement in SDL depends strongly on home learning conditions, including access to resources and parental support. In Sri Lanka, disparities in family income may lead to unequal access to such conditions. This study examined the relationship between family income and Home Learning Environment (HLE) in supporting SDL among advanced-level students in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 377 advanced-level students from a population of 19,896. The HLE scale was used to measure the availability of learning resources and the presence of a supportive home environment. Family income was treated as a continuous variable. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation coefficients. Students reported high availability of home learning resources ($M = 3.90$, $SD = 0.95$) and very high levels of supportive home environment ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.70$). Family income was positively correlated with the availability of learning resources ($r = .483$, $p < .001$), the supportive home environment ($r = .311$, $p < .001$), and the overall HLE ($r = .468$, $p < .001$). The study did not measure students' actual SDL engagement; therefore, no direct relationship between home environment and SDL scores is reported. Significant income-based disparities exist in HLEs. Students from higher-income families reported better home learning conditions. Policymakers should consider targeted interventions for lower-income families, including providing devices, subsidizing internet connectivity, and implementing parent education programmes.

Keywords

Advanced-level students, Family income, Home learning environment, Self-directed learning, Sri Lanka