



The Contribution of Home Economics to the Formation and Upbringing of Healthy Children

Hakim Khan Haqyar^{1*} & Zubair Ahmad Watanyar¹

¹ Department of Psychology and Pedagogy, Faculty of Education, Nangarhar University

*Corresponding author email address: hakimhaqyar@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study highlights the impact of household economics on the process of proper childcare and upbringing. The aim of this study was to examine the contribution of home economics to the formation and upbringing of healthy children such as: education, health, psychological stability, and social life. The research is descriptive in nature; the data was collected quantitatively through a questionnaire. The information was gathered from 200 fourth-year students of the Faculty of Education at Nangarhar University, using purposive sampling, from the 10th to the 13rd of December. For statistical analysis, the data were processed using SPSS version 24, employing descriptive and multivariate statistical methods. The findings of the study revealed that home economics significantly affect children's education and health but showed no noticeable impact on indicators of psychological stability and social life. Families with better economic conditions can provide their children with superior educational opportunities and healthcare, whereas poor economic conditions pose challenges to educational progress, nutrition, and health. Overall, the results support the idea that a family's economic status is vital for proper childcare and upbringing and suggest that families and governmental organizations should prioritize children's health, education, and social development.

1.INTRODUCTION

The role of household economics in proper childcare and upbringing is critically important. Household economics encompasses a broad scope of knowledge and services that address various aspects of family life (Turner et al., 2021). It refers to a family's financial status and resources that support children's health, education, psychological-emotional stability, and social life. These economic resources have a direct impact, as a strong economic status contributes to effective childcare and upbringing. The influence of household economics on children's physical and mental development is both direct and significant (Alabi, 2015).

In terms of health, household economics facilitates physical development by providing children with proper nutrition, a healthy environment, and medical services. Families with financial stability can ensure their children are protected from illnesses and can enhance their physical growth. Economically stable families can fully address the healthcare needs of their members and provide the necessary resources for their children's physical development (Ehumadu, 2020).

Regarding education, household economics broadens opportunities for children's learning. Families with better financial standing can afford quality educational opportunities, books, school-related facilities, and essential technological tools (Rothwell & Prescott, 2022). Such support is crucial for children's academic advancement. Economic support contributes to the expansion of educational opportunities and facilitates improved learning outcomes for children (Granberg, 2018).

Beyond economic resources, parental psychological engagement significantly affects child outcomes. For example, Haqyar et al. (2024) found that a mother's sense of calling in child-rearing positively predicts children's psychological well-being. Their study in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, with 250 mother-child pairs, demonstrated that maternal satisfaction and purpose in parenting enhance both the mother's and the child's mental health.

In terms of psychological-emotional stability, household economics has a direct impact. Families experiencing financial stress often expose their children to psychological pressures and emotional challenges. Conversely, financially stable families can provide

their children with a calm, happy, and supportive environment, which is vital for their psychological and emotional development. A stable economic situation paves the way for children's mental peace and emotional stability (Andreasen, 2022).

Household economics also influences children's social development and interactions. Financially capable families can offer opportunities for their children to participate actively in social activities and build connections with their peers. These opportunities help children develop social skills, which contribute positively to their social life (Kostanjevec, 2021). Financial stability enables children to form social connections and participate in social events, while also fulfilling their psychological, physical, and social needs appropriately. Adequate financial resources significantly impact children's future lives and their ability to build social relationships. Families without financial pressures are better positioned to ensure their children's comprehensive social, psychological, and physical development (IFHE, 2015).

Despite numerous studies on the relationship between household economic status and child development (Yeung, 2002; Cojocaru, 2024; Currie, 2020), little attention has been given to how these dynamics play out in conflict-affected, developing countries like Afghanistan. Research in other contexts has demonstrated that economically stable families provide better education and healthcare for their children (Granberg, 2018; Douglas, 2023), but these findings may not fully apply to Afghan society, where cultural and religious values play a significant role in upbringing. Therefore, there is a pressing need for region-specific studies that consider the unique socio-economic challenges faced by Afghan families. This research aims to address that gap by examining the impact of home economics on the upbringing of healthy children in Afghanistan.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to (Yeung, 2002), the economic status of a household profoundly influences the quality and outcomes of children's upbringing. A stable economic status provides favorable conditions for children's educational, moral, and psychological development, while economic challenges create obstacles and difficulties in their upbringing.

(Cojocaru, 2024) found that families with better economic conditions are more likely to provide their children with access to schools, educational materials, and specialized

educational support. In contrast, low-income families often fail to provide adequate support for their children's basic education.

(Currie, 2020) highlights the direct impact of household economic status on the quality of children's nutrition and health. Proper nutrition is essential for children's physical and mental growth. Low-income families are often unable to provide nutritious food, leading to physical developmental issues and slower mental growth in children.

(Guryan, 2008) states that economically stable families invest more time and energy in raising and caring for their children. Families facing economic hardships often have parents preoccupied with earning a livelihood, dedicating less time to their children's upbringing, which adversely affects their psychological and emotional growth.

Amato (2005) concludes that children raised in economically stable families have better opportunities to learn social skills and build positive social relationships. In contrast, financial difficulties limit children's access to these opportunities.

(Rebouças, 2022) shows that in societies with high income inequality, children face stress, deprivation, and restrictions, creating challenges to their proper upbringing.

(Douglas, 2023) highlights that economically stable families can afford to send their children to schools, pay tuition fees, and purchase educational materials. Conversely, low-income families often have to send their children to work to earn an income, which negatively impacts their education and overall development.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design, with data gathered quantitatively through a researcher-developed questionnaire. The total population for the study comprised all male students of the Faculty of Education at Nangarhar University, totaling 880 students in 2024. A purposive sample of 200 final-year students from the eight departments of the Faculty of Education was selected. These students were chosen for their maturity and academic knowledge, which enabled them to provide informed and insightful responses to the questionnaire.

Data collection was conducted over three days, from December 11th to December 13th,

2024, using the researcher-developed questionnaire. The Faculty of Education was selected for this study due to several key reasons that align with the research objectives.

First, the Faculty of Education plays a pivotal role in shaping future educators who will directly influence the upbringing and development of children. As this research focuses on the contribution of home economics to the formation and upbringing of healthy children, it was vital to gather insights from individuals with a strong foundation in child development, psychology, and educational practices. Students of the Faculty of Education possess a deeper understanding of educational theories and family dynamics, making their perspectives particularly relevant and valuable for this study.

Second, due to time constraints and resource limitations, it was practical and efficient to focus on a single faculty that is directly related to the research topic. Expanding the study to include all 13 faculties would have required significantly more time, resources, and logistical planning. However, focusing on the Faculty of Education provided meaningful and focused insights that accurately represent the relationship between home economics and child upbringing.

3.2. Instruments

To gather data, the researcher-developed questionnaire based on previous literature in four main sections (Children's Education, Health, Psychological Stability and Social Life). Each section includes five questions based on Likert scale (Strongly Disagree =1 - Strongly Agree =5). The reliability of the questionnaire were tested using Cronbach's alpha, with a calculated value of $\alpha = 0.92$, indicating high reliability and strong internal consistency.

3.3. Statistical Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 24. Descriptive, comparative, and multivariate statistical methods were applied to thoroughly evaluate the data, ensuring accurate and meaningful insights into the influence of household economic status on various aspects of childcare and upbringing.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Findings

The table, 1: shows the count, mean, and standard deviation related to three types of economic status for the study variables.

Variables	Good Economic Status			Average Economic Status			Weak Economic Status		
	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation	Count	Mean	Standard Deviation
Children Education	23	17.69	7.00	132	16.28	5.16	45	13.13	3.86
Children Health	23	20.5	6.21	132	18.7	5.42	45	17.0	5.19
Psychological Stability	23	20.7	6.70	132	18.8	6.26	45	19.20	5.70
Social Life	23	21.4	5.40	132	21.0	5.57	45	20.8	5.16
Total	23	80.4	22.79	132	74.94	18.95	45	70.24	15.68

In Table 1, the number, mean, and standard deviation of families with three different economic statuses (good, average, and poor) are highlighted. It is evident from the table that the mean score for the families with a good economic status in the proper upbringing and care of children is 80.43, which shows a significant difference compared to families with an average economic status (74.94) and families with a poor economic status (70.24).

Table 2: The Wilks' Lambda test highlights the contribution of home economics to the formation and upbringing of healthy children.

Multivariate Test	Test	Value	F	Df (Hypothesis)	Df (Error)	Significance
	Wilks' Lambda	0.918	546.169	4.00	194.00	0.001

The Wilks' Lambda result ($p < 0.001$, $f = 546.169$) indicates that there is a significant difference in the formation and upbringing of healthy children (such as education, health, psychological stability, and social life) among families with varying economic statuses (good, average, and poor). To understand the differences across the various indicators to (education, health, psychological stability, and social life), a multivariate analysis is employed.

Table 3: The results of the multivariate analysis for the indicators of proper upbringing and care of children among families with good, average, and poor economic statuses.

Related Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Significance
Education	433.350	2	216.675	8.150	0.001
Health	195.179	2	97.589	3.265	0.04
Psychological Stability	71.993	2	35.996	0.937	0.3
Social Life	5.779	2	2.889	0.097	0.9
General Childrens Healthy Care	1651.328	2	825.664	2.346	0.09

As observed in Table 3, the results of the analysis reveal significant differences among families with varying economic statuses in their attention to children's education ($p < 0.001$ / $f = 8.150$) and health care ($p < 0.001$ / $f = 3.265$). However, the indicators of psychological stability and social life to the formation and upbringing of healthy children do not show significant differences across families with different economic statuses. This implies that the economic condition of families has a notable impact on children's

educational development and healthcare, but it does not significantly affect their psychological stability and social life.

4.2. Discussion

The central aim of this research was to determine was to examine the contribution of home economics to the formation and upbringing of healthy children such as: education, health, psychological stability, and social life. The findings align with most previous studies but also highlight some differences that can be logically attributed to regional and cultural factors. This study reveals that a good economic status significantly impacts the quality of children's education and health. These findings are consistent with the research of Cojocaru (2024) and Currie (2020). A plausible reason for this similarity is that families with better economic conditions provide their children with supplementary educational materials, such as computers, and nutritious food that fosters mental development. The quality of nutrition and health is closely linked to household income. Similarly, the findings of this study indicate that families with poor economic status face challenges in supporting their children's education and health, this result supported by Douglas (2023). This may be because such families unable to pay money for private schools and courses alongside meeting their basic needs. Furthermore, they might be unable to provide appropriate clothing for their children during winter, which can adversely affect their physical health. Another contributing factor could be that families with low income often need their children to work instead of attending school.

The study's results show no significant differences in the psychological stability of children across families with different economic statuses. This finding contrasts somewhat with Guryan's (2008) research, which links low economic status to parental time constraints and increased psychological stress for children. A plausible explanation is the strong influence of religious and cultural values in Afghan culture. For instance, families, regardless of economic status, prioritize providing religious and moral education to their children. Thus, economic status is not the sole determinant of child-rearing practices in Afghanistan; shared cultural and social structures also play a significant role. Similarly, the findings indicate that differences in economic status do not significantly affect children's social skills and relationships. This contrasts with Amato's (2005) research, which suggests that better economic conditions offer greater

opportunities for developing children's social skills. In Afghan culture, children's social skills and relationships are less influenced by family economic status than in Western societies. Strong religious, cultural, and social support systems mitigate the impact of economic constraints. Consequently, children's social skills in Afghanistan largely develop based on cultural and social values rather than economic status alone. Overall, this research demonstrates that good economic status plays a crucial role in children's education and health, while its effects on psychological stability and social life are limited by regional characteristics. These findings provide policymakers with insights to prioritize economic growth and address local needs when developing strategies for child care and upbringing.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate that home economic status has a significant impact on certain indicators of formation and upbringing healthy children, such as education and health, but shows no meaningful effect on indicators like psychological stability and social life. Families with better economic conditions can provide their children with superior educational opportunities, adequate healthcare, and essential resources for growth. Conversely, low economic status creates barriers to children's educational progress, nutrition, and health.

Limitations

The study focused solely on 200 fourth-year students from the Faculty of Education at Nangarhar University. As a result, the findings may not fully represent the perspectives of students from other faculties or the broader university population. Expanding the sample to include students from other faculties could provide more generalized and diverse insights. Additionally, the research tools used were questionnaires, which come with inherent limitations. Despite the emphasis and necessary clarifications provided by the researchers, some participants may not have provided their true responses.

Recommendations

- ✓ To increase access to education, the government should expand free or low-cost educational programs, especially in rural areas and for families with low economic conditions.
- ✓ The Ministry of Public Health should provide free healthcare services for children, with particular emphasis on vaccinations, nutrition, and mental health care.
- ✓ The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs should create vocational training programs and job opportunities for parents to ensure family economic stability.
- ✓ The Ministry of Finance should allocate a specific budget for children's education and healthcare.
- ✓ Develop special economic support programs for families, such as cash assistance or the provision of educational materials.

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