

HOME STUDY FACILITIES AND STUDY HABITS RELATED
TO SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SELECTED
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF ELDORADO,
KANSAS

By

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PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to see if there is any relationship between a student's having a place to study at home and his scholastic achievement in school. Because of increased emphasis on higher education and the corresponding need for high scholastic achievement in high school, it is hoped that the data obtained in this study will be helpful to school officials and parents in guiding the child to be a better student.

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Special appreciation is extended to my husband, Merle for his patience and cooperation while the study was in progress.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"In Abraham Lincoln's time there were no libraries, and but few books, in the "back settlement" in which he lived. He read everything he could lay his hands on".¹ "If by chance he heard of a book that he had not read he would walk miles to borrow it. He loved to study".²

Students today do not have to go to this extreme for an education but many must tolerate adverse conditions in order to study at home.

Many high school students will be good students in spite of the fact that they must study at home with conditions that contribute nothing to their being good students. On the other hand, for some students, the fact that the conditions at home are good, may be a contributing factor to their being better students.

A clear conception of what constitutes good study conditions at home may help one recognize and analyze why it is desirable that a student have at least some of these conditions. According to Agan³ home study facilities should include a desk, chair and study lamp with nearby bookshelves for storing books and creative hobbies.

¹Arnold, Isaac N. The Life of Abraham Lincoln. Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1901, 20-21.

²Browne, Francis F. The Every-Day Life of Abraham Lincoln. Santa Barbara, California: 1913, 14.

³Agan, Tessie. The House. Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1956, 198.

The adolescent of today has more study needs than he did several years ago. Not only does he have more studies to do at home but also more stress is being put on his doing well at home and in school. He has a need for formal studying and he also has a need for pursuing hobbies and other interests.

A popular belief is that a specific time and place should be provided for homework. It is believed that study is done best in a quiet area. Teen-agers of today, however, seem to want study accompanied by music or chatter from a radio or record player. Strange as it may seem, commotion of this type does not appear to interfere with their studies.⁴

It has been established beyond any reasonable doubt that community and family background play a large role in determining scholastic aptitude and school achievement, but this study will deal only indirectly with community and family background, since the primary concern is study facilities not attitudes.

Because of limitations of time and money, this study is confined to selected high school students of Eldorado, Kansas.

Statement of the Problem

The central problem of this study is the relationship between the adequacy of home study conditions and the scholastic average of senior high school students. Where the student studies and what conditions he has for studying may have some bearing on his grades. That is, how academically successful a student is may be partially dependent upon whether or not he studies at home, the type of room in which he studies,

⁴Ibid

storage facilities available for books and study supplies, the type of lighting present, noises and other activities present in and around the study area.

Purpose

The purposes of this study are to discover: (1) if study facilities are related to grade averages; (2) if the socio-economic status of the family, number in the family and the educational attainment of the parents are related to whether or not the child has good home study facilities, and (3) if study habits are related to available study facilities.

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis is thus set forth: the scholastic average attained by high school students is related significantly to the adequacy of study conditions in their home.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature relating to home study facilities and how they affect the study habits of high school students is minimal. Most of the literature that is available refers to study facilities but not in relation to the student.

It has been established in other studies that community and family background play a large role in determining scholastic aptitude and school achievement. According to Conant "Homework has little relevance in a situation where home is a filthy, noisy tenement."¹

An indication that study facilities at home do have an influence on a student is reported in a sociology study done in slum areas and reported by Jackson:

One child of public housing felt that overcrowding had formerly disturbed his study routine because he had no place away from other family members to study. The slum housing student believed he could do better work in school if he had a room of his own. Another student was quoted as having said, "The lights in my apartment are bad so I don't like to stay in the house."²

The income of the family seems to have some influence on the scholastic achievement of a student. Hunter says, "School achievement, as

¹James B. Conant, Slums and Suburbs: (New York, 1961) p. 22.

²William S. Jackson, "Housing and Pupil Growth and Development", Education Sociology, Vol. 28, May, 1955 370-380.

measured by the standardized national tests, goes up with income."³

This is not always true. There are also good students from low income families in spite of the adverse conditions under which they have to study at home. Adolescents have more study needs today than formerly both in formal study and in hobby interest, according to Agan. She states that the adolescent "requires solitude. He wants to be alone to think, to read, or just do nothing."⁴ This may be one reason for scholastic achievement going up with income, the student has less crowded home conditions and in many cases a room of his own.

The popular belief is that studying is done best in a quiet area. Teenagers of today, however, seem to want study accompanied by music or chatter from a radio or record player. Strange as it may seem, commotion of this type does not appear to interfere with their studies. Some can even concentrate on their studies sitting in front of the television or with family commotion going on around them.

Some of this is explained in the publication of the American Public Health Association Committee on the Hygiene of Housing:

The reaction of people to noise and their powers of adaptation to it vary greatly. Psychological studies of "motivation level" indicate that persons can, with sufficient desire, maintain efficiency, dexterity and concentration under conditions which would be intolerably annoying without adequate motivation.

Because of this ability of man to adapt himself to his environment mental activity can be carried on, if necessary, in a thunderstorm or on a battlefield. The mind will work if there is sufficient motivation, however it takes a corresponding

³David Hunter, The Slums: Challenge and Response, (London 1964)

⁴T. Agan, The House (Chicago, 1956), p. 198.

increase in "effort" to get the thinking done.⁵

This is probably why most teenagers prefer to study with "background" music. Background noise is useful in masking intruding noises or unwanted sound, in fact, the complete absence of sound is unnatural and annoying.

Poor posture, eye strain, nervous fatigue, as well as poor grades may result from a poorly planned, poorly lighted study center. The main functions of lighting are described by Ball:

The first functional specification for light is quantitative. There should be enough light to perform a task. The second functional specification for light is qualitative. Light must be of the right quality for comfort while seeing. Such comfort enables one to work with the minimum of nervous fatigue and thus with the least physical exhaustion. Comfortable light is light without glare.

There is a very close relation between light and mood. Extremes of light and sound are disconcerting. We shrink from an excessive brightness as from a blast of noise.⁶

Ennenkranz and Inman are more specific in their description of lighting for a study center:

The top surface of the desk should not face a window, it is better to place it at right angles to the window against a wall. The wall should have a mat finish in a light color. There should be no reflected glare and the wall should be light enough in color so that useful light is not absorbed by a dark surface.

If the wall is finished with a highly patterned paper, it is wise to cover this with a mat-finished wallboard approximately 36" high and as long as the desk. Book and papers should be propped up at an angle, as this makes seeing easier. The chair should be comfortable and so designed that the eyes are at least 14 inches above the desk top. Forty foot candles of light over the central portion

⁵Standards for Healthful Housing. Construction and Equipment of the Home, By the American Public Health Association Committee on the Hygiene of Housing: Public Administrative Service. 1951, 16-40.

⁶Victoria Ball, The Art of Interior Design (Chicago, 1901) p. 20-21.

of the desk is recommended, (the illuminating engineering society recommends a minimum⁷ of seventy). There should be no dark shadows on the desk.

Leslie Larson doesn't feel that lighting recommendations need to be so specific. He says "low levels of illumination will not damage the eye." He does agree however that there are critical levels of light below which the efficiency of performance of a specific activity might be impaired and visual fatigue might set in with prolonged seeing. Some persons may feel uncomfortable under low levels of illumination. Other persons of a different eye make up might find high levels of illumination uncomfortable. Personal preference, however cannot be employed as a satisfactory measure for adequate and effective illumination. Glare is responsible for eye strain to a much greater degree than is inadequate intensity.⁸

Research on study facilities reveals that there is some discrepancy in the specific things that authorities think should be included in a home study center. However, the review of literature revealed that no research has been done on the relationship between home study facilities and the scholastic achievement of a student.

⁷Florence Ennenkranz and Lydia Inman, Equipment in the Home, (New York, 1958) p. 26-41.

⁸Leslie Larson, Lighting and its Design (New York, 1964) p. 15-27.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Development of the Instrument

A review of the literature in related fields of research established the interview and systematic observation procedures as the best means to obtain information regarding home study conditions of teen-age students and relevant information about family situations. It was found that an interview would yield information of greater depth than a mailed questionnaire, particularly because of different socio-economic levels of the respondents. The choice of the interview procedure for this study was further influenced by limitations of time and money, as well as the nature of the study.

The development of the personal interview schedule began with a study of methods for developing such an instrument. While reviewing other studies, a list of statements was compiled. In preparing the instrument, the investigator talked with educators in Elementary and High School (as well as Home Economics) to establish which facilities might have some influence on how a student studied.

For each question on home study facilities, a list was compiled and notation of each facility was made on a separate card. These were given to a panel of experts consisting of seven Home Economists and Teachers in the field of Education who were asked to rank the facilities in order starting with those which they thought would be the most

conducive to good study habits and proceeding to those they thought least conducive. These home study facilities were listed on the instrument in the order ranked by the panel.

A pre-test of the interview schedule was made by interviewing five mothers of high school students in Eldorado, Kansas. Revisions were then made, and the interview schedule finalized. The schedule consisted of twenty-two questions, five of which were placed on cards so that the respondent could read the choices and make selections which applied to her son or daughter.

The instrument also included questions designed to obtain information regarding the education of the respondent, the composition of the family, the occupation of the household head, the approximate income level of the family, and whether or not the mother worked away from home. Each of forty-five respondents was interviewed individually in her own home.

Selection of the Sample

As the study is directed toward how home study facilities affect study habits of high school students, the investigator selected fifteen students from the Sophomore, Junior and Senior classes at Eldorado High School in Eldorado, Kansas. In obtaining the sample the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior classes were divided into three groups according to their scholastic averages. The three groups were: high, top one-third of class; middle, the middle one-third of class; and low, bottom one-third of class. A random sample of five students from each of these groups in each grade was selected to be a part of the study. A table of random numbers was used to select the respondents. This made up a

total of forty-five subjects. If the person did not qualify within the limitations set up by the investigator the name immediately adjacent to the disqualified individual was selected.

Two limitations guided selection of the individual subject: one, the student had to do at least a part of his/her studying at home and two, in order to ensure greater homogeneity of the family setting; only students living with both parents or male and female guardians were included in the sample.

The interviewer called at the home of each of those selected for the sample and interviewed the mother of the student. If the mother was not at home the interviewer made an appointment for another time.

Collection of Data

All data were collected by the investigator through the personal interview method. Prior to the direct questioning, the investigator introduced herself and briefly explained the purpose and the limitations of the study.

Treatment of the Data

Upon completion of the interviews, each schedule was edited. responses were coded, recorded and tabulated. Findings are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The findings describe the kinds of home study facilities available to Eldorado High School students, some of their study habits, the socio-economic status of the family, and the academic rank of the student.

Data in Table I show whether or not the mother is employed outside the home, the educational level, and the socio-economic status of the parents or guardian of the high school students involved in the study.

Data regarding the employment of the mother revealed that eight mothers of the high and middle scholastic group did not work for income outside the home and ten mothers of the low scholastic achievers did not. Five mothers of the high achievers, four of the middle, and two of the low achievers worked outside the home full time. This difference is not significant enough to indicate that the fact that the mother works outside the home has anything to do with the scholastic achievement of the student. In fact fewer mothers of the low achievers worked outside the home than did those of the high and middle achievers.

Two-thirds of the mothers and more than four-fifths of the fathers of the high scholastic achievers finished high school and more than one-half of the mothers and fathers had more than high school education.

In the middle scholastic group four-fifths of the mothers and more than three-fourths of the fathers completed high school but none of the mothers and only four of the fathers finished college. More than

TABLE I
CHARACTERISTICS DESCRIBING FAMILY AND HOME SITUATION

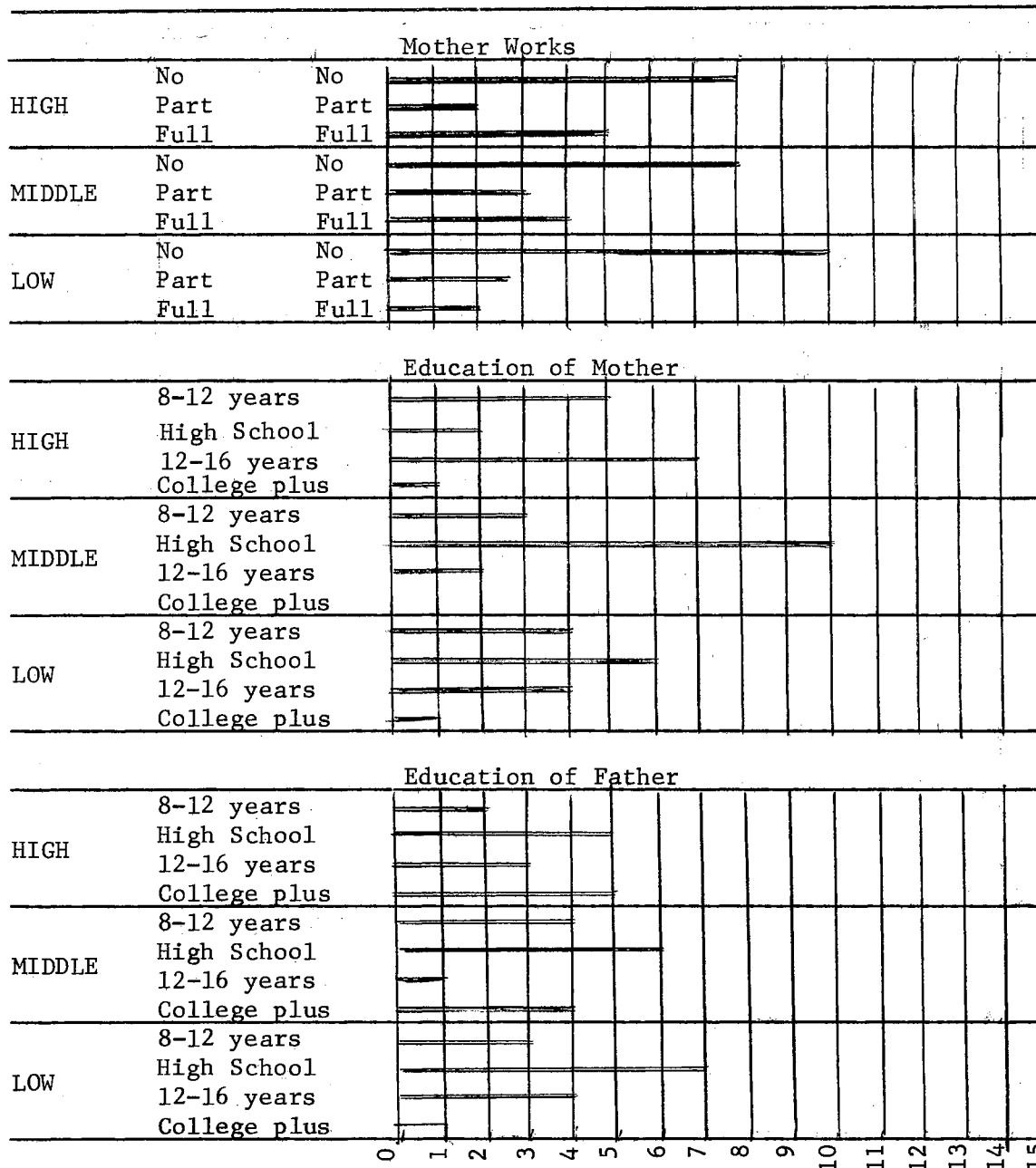
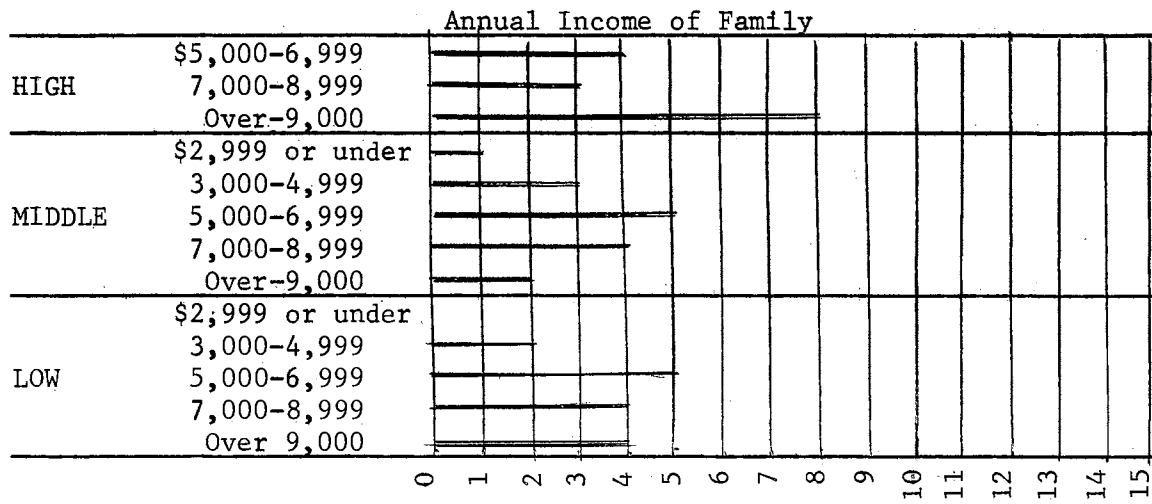


TABLE I (Continued)



three-fourths of the mothers of the low scholastic achievers finished high school; one finished college. Four-fifths of the fathers finished high school and one finished college.

As was to be expected, education was found to be related to occupation and income of the father. The income for all of the families of the high achievers was over \$5,000 a year with more than one-half being over \$9,000. Less than three-fourths of the middle and low achievers came from homes with income over \$5,000 a year and only six of the two groups came from homes where the father made more than \$9,000 a year.

Possibly the reason that more high scholastic achievers came from families with higher incomes is that the fathers had more education and therefore better paying jobs. It appears that higher educated people tend to put more emphasis on education and better grades and encourage their children to do better school work.

Occupations of the fathers varied so much that they could not be listed categorically as having any influence on the scholastic standing of a student.

Generally speaking study facilities make no significant difference in the scholastic achievement of the high school students in this study.

Data in Table II show study facilities available to students in all groups studied. The same facilities appear in all three groups. In fact, more of the students in the lower scholastic group had more ideal study facilities than did those in the other two groups. Perhaps this is due to the parents of the lower scholastic achievers trying to inspire their child to do better work in school by providing good study facilities.

Less than one-fourth of all students had a lamp that had been

TABLE II
HOME STUDY FACILITIES

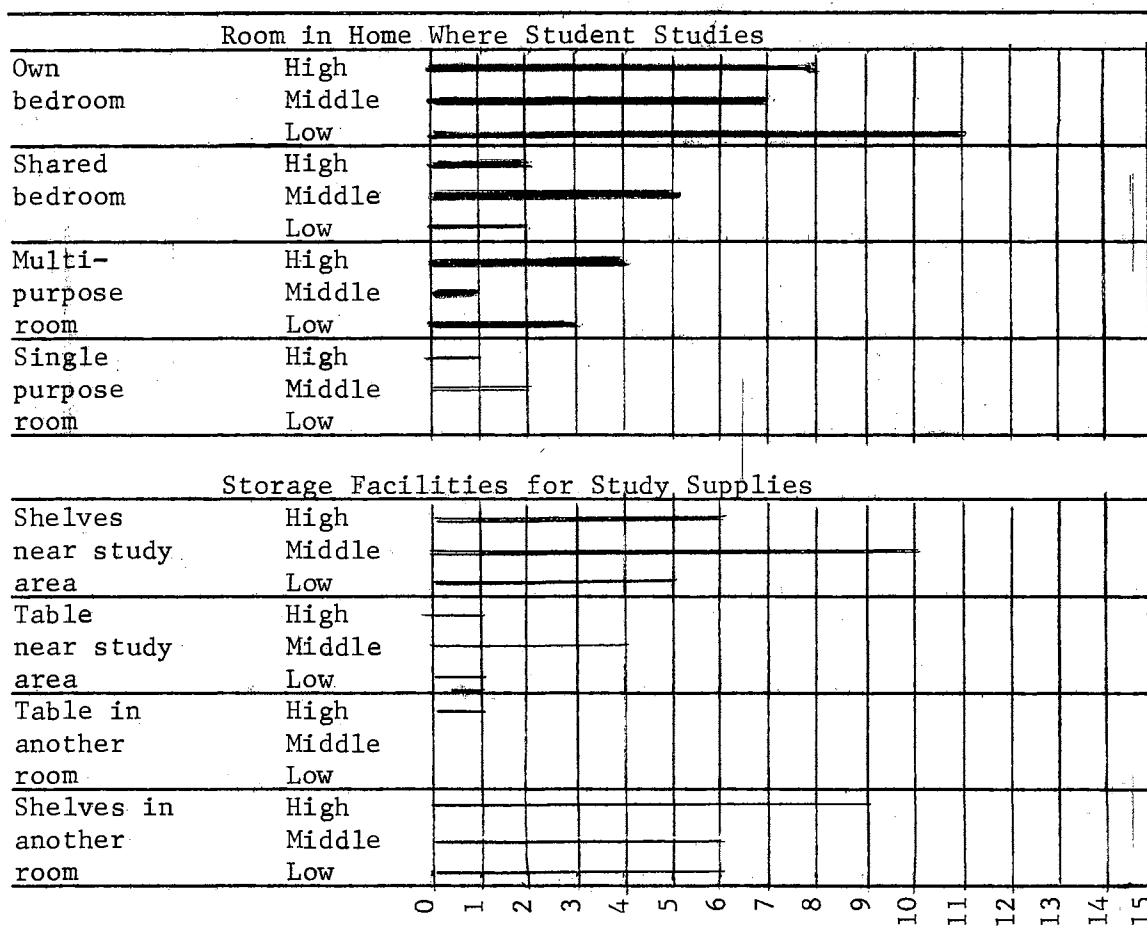
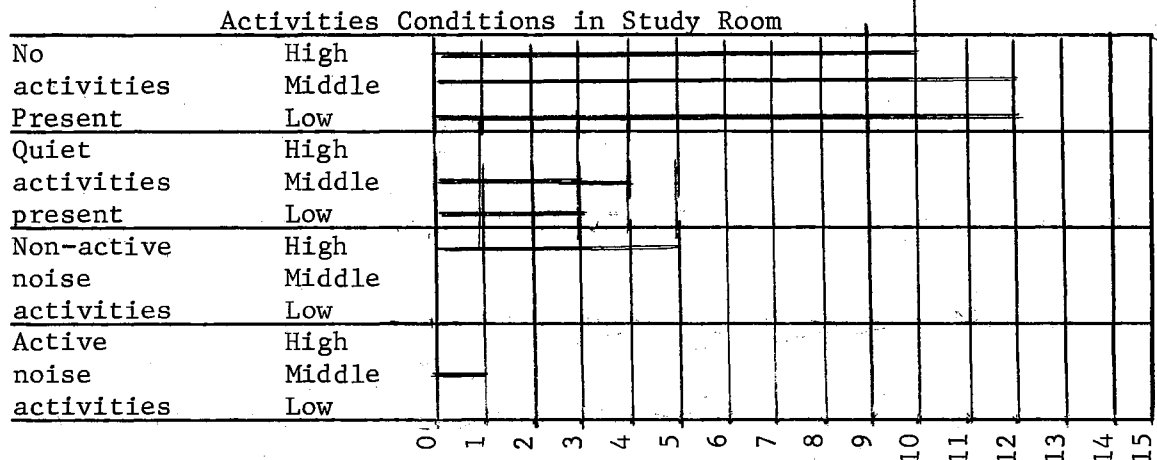
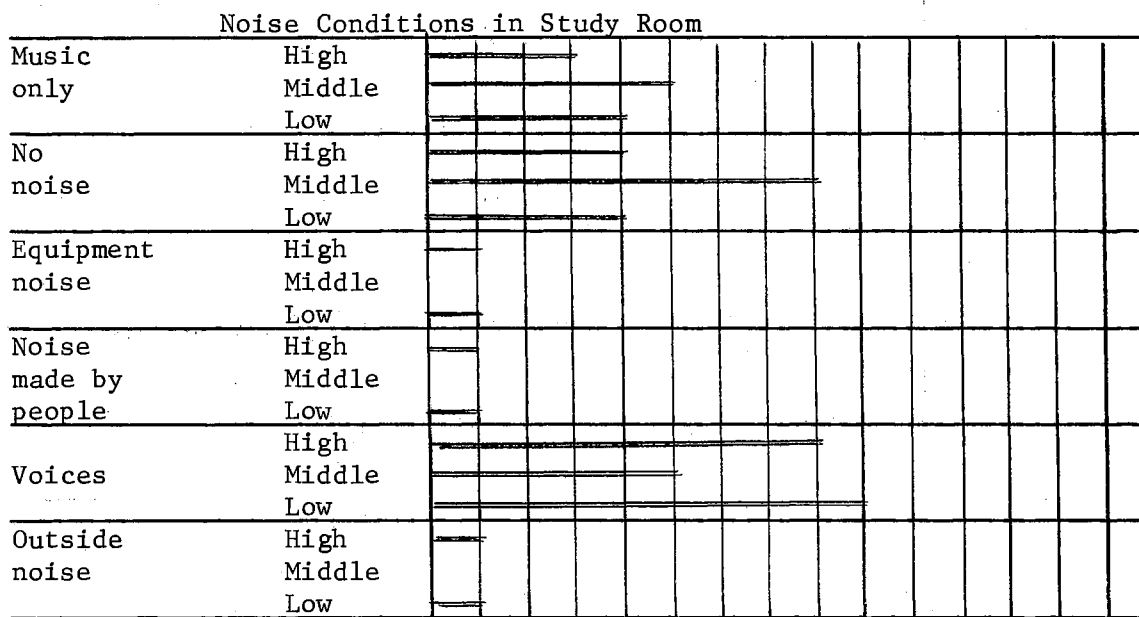
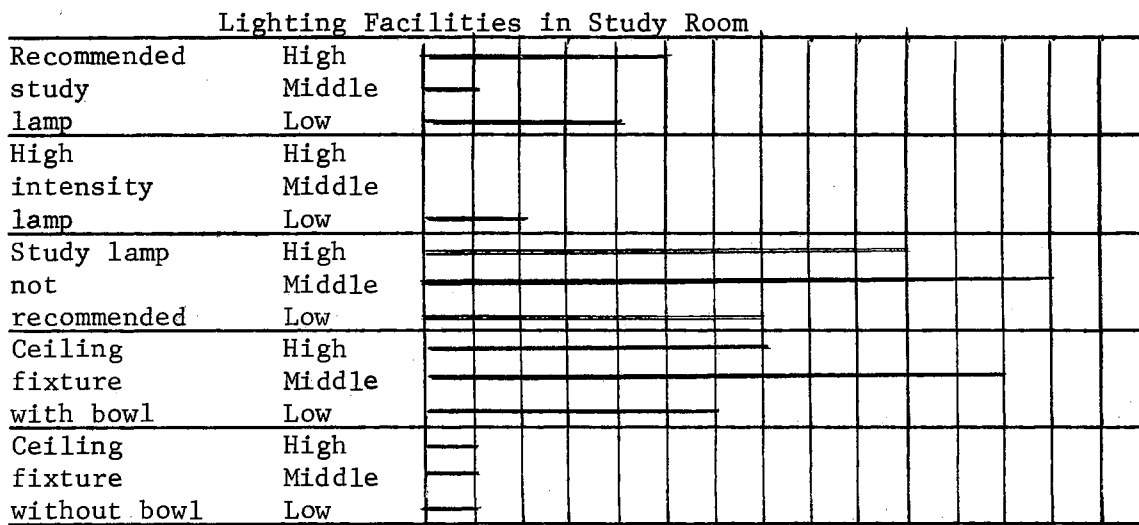


TABLE II (Continued)



especially recommended for studying, however two-thirds of the respondents did have a lamp not recommended especially for study plus other lighting in the room in which they study. The high intensity lamp which has been highly advertised the last few years showed up only twice in the homes of the respondents.

More than twenty-six per cent of the students from the three groups studied with "no noise". Although more than seventy per cent of the students from all three groups studied with "noise of some kind", usually the radio or record player, there was no significant difference in whether or not a student was in the high, medium or low one-third of the class.

The same was true with "other activities" present in the room where the student was studying. Thirty-four respondents reported that their child studied with "no other activities" present but there was no significant difference in the high, middle or low one-third of the class when "other activities" were or were not present.

In Table III the data show the study habits of the respondent's son or daughter.

Of the fifteen students who were in the top third of their class thirteen of their mothers thought they studied "a lot" and two thought they studied "some". In comparison, mothers of those in the middle third, thought six of them studied "a lot" and nine studied "some". In the lower third, eleven studied "some", two "a lot" and two "very little". This was the most significant difference in the various scholastic groups found in the study. Those who made the best grades spent the most time studying.

All of those in the top third scholastic group did most of their

TABLE III
STUDY HABITS OF STUDENTS

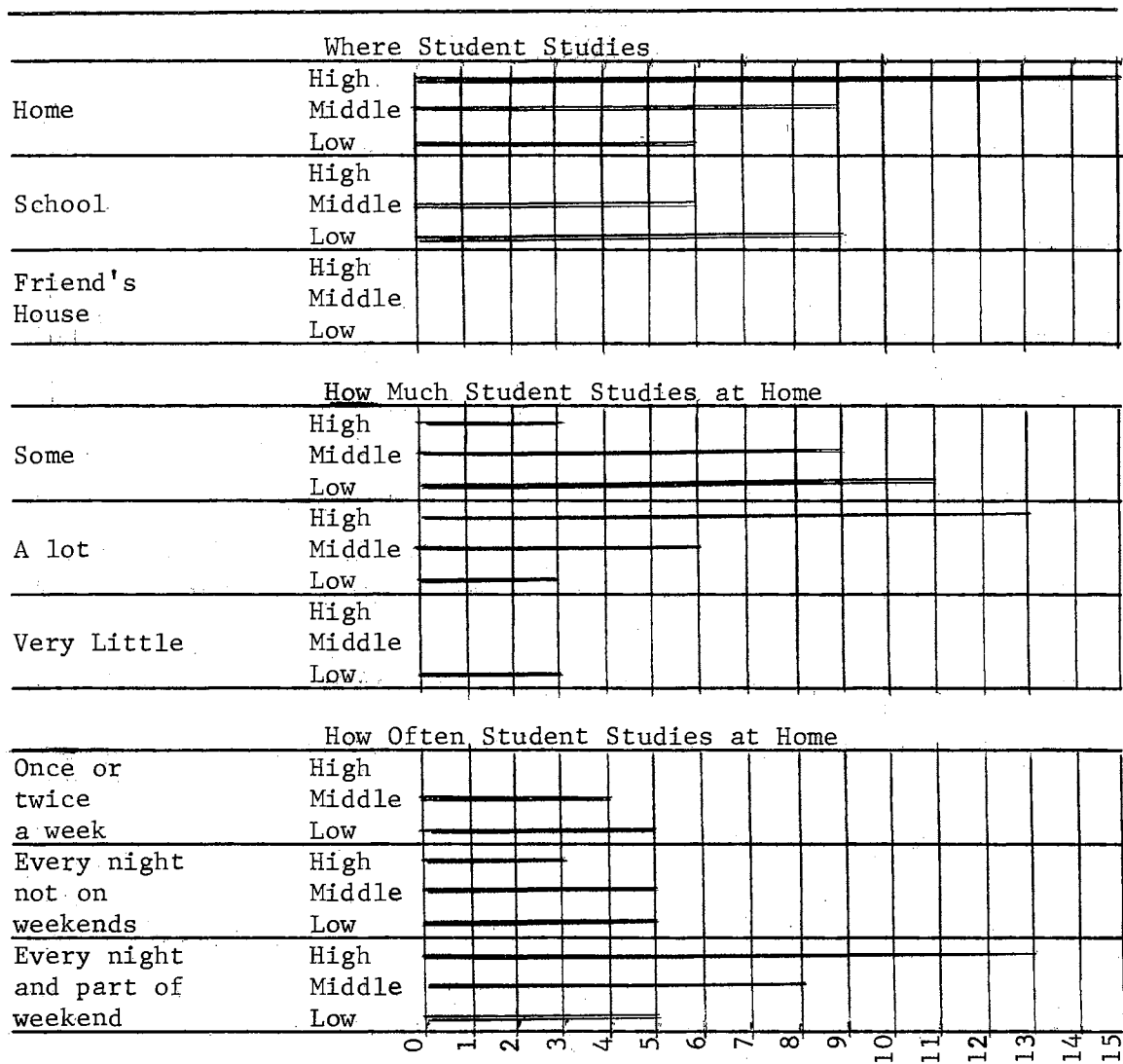
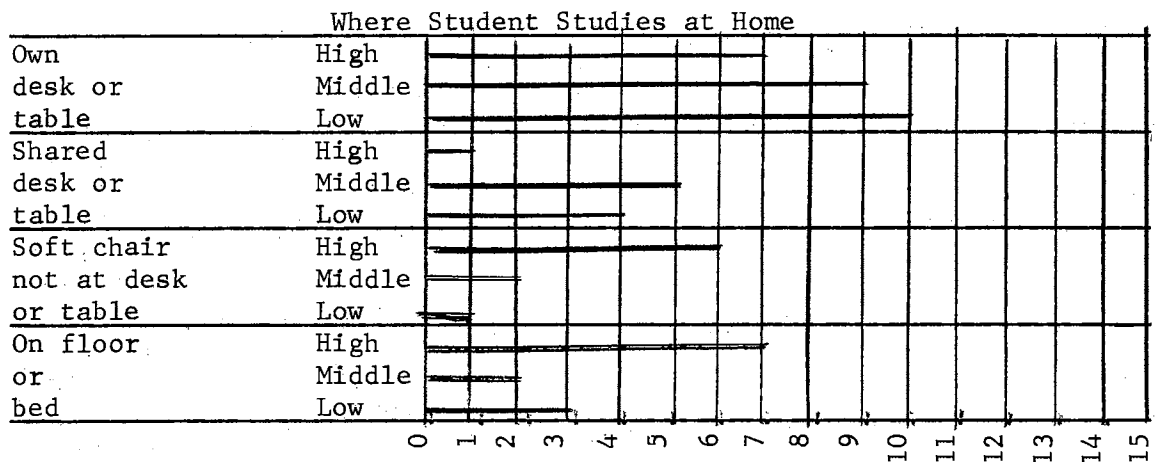
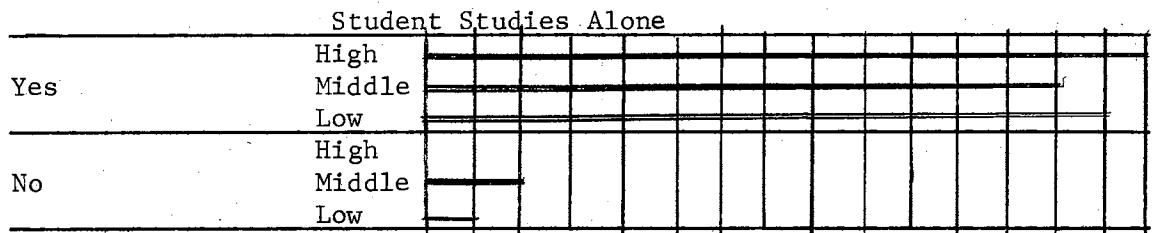
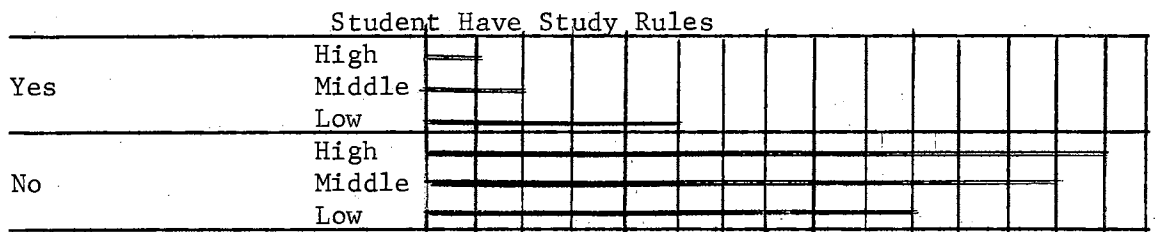
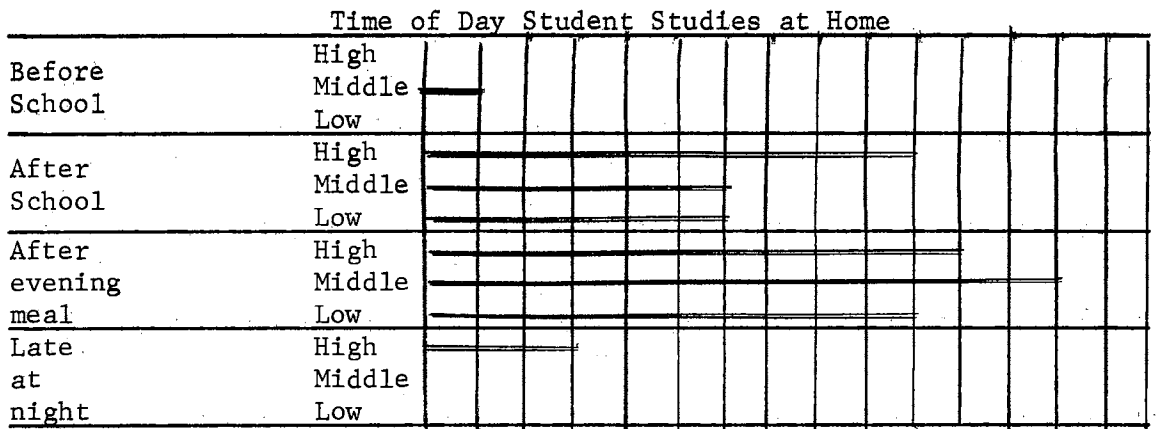


TABLE III (Continued)



studying at home, but only nine of the middle group and six in the lower group studied most of the time at home. The others in the two lower groups did most of their studying at school. None of the respondents indicated that their child did most of his/her studying at a friend's house.

All but two of the respondents in the top one-third of their class studied every night plus weekends, while only eight of those in the middle third and only five in the lower third of the class studied weekends as well as every night of the week.

The time of day students studied did not make any significant difference in the three groups. After school and after evening meals were the most popular times to study. Many of the students used both times plus three in the top third who studied late at night as well.

Only seven of the forty-five respondents had study rules for their child. These included no television until after studying was completed, the student must spend at least two hours a day studying, the student must stay with homework until finished, and one mother checked her child's homework assignment.

All but three of the respondents said their child studied alone.

Although more than one-half of the students from all three groups sat at a desk while studying, whether or not they did had no significant difference on their grades.

Some of the students had desks but didn't use them because "they were always cluttered with other things", or "a soft chair was more comfortable", or "they wanted to be where the rest of the family was".

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

In order to gain further insight and understanding of what influences high school students to study, this investigation was designed to ascertain if there is a relationship between home study facilities and high school student grade averages. Such information is considered useful in helping students to improve scholastically.

The purposes of this study are to discover: (1) if home study facilities are related to grade averages of high school students; (2) if the socio-economic status of the family, and the educational attainment of the parent are related to whether or not the child has good home study facilities, and (3) if study habits are related to available study facilities.

The hypothesis of this study is: the scholastic average attained by high school students is related significantly to the adequacy of study conditions in the home.

Forty-five students from Eldorado High School were chosen as the sample. The investigator selected fifteen students from the Sophomore, Junior and Senior classes. Five of these fifteen came from the top one-third, five from the middle one-third, and five from the bottom one-third of their respective classes.

Personal interviews were used to obtain the data. The instrument

used for the interviews consisted of twenty-five questions. The investigator interviewed the mothers of the selected students and tabulated the data.

Conclusions

From analyses of the data, the following conclusions are drawn.

1. The fact that the mother was employed outside the home made no significant difference in the scholastic achievement of the student. Socio-economic status of the family seems to have some influence on the scholastic rank of student participant. Possibly the reason that more high scholastic achievers came from families with higher income was that education was found to be related to occupation and income of the father.
2. No significant differences emerged among the respondents in regard to physical facilities for studying available to the student in the home.
3. The most significant differences found in the study was that high scholastic achievers spend more time studying, they do most of their studying at home, and study alone.

Recommendations

The writer submits the following recommendations relative to further studies directed toward finding out what makes a student a high scholastic achiever.

1. That a larger study be made, including younger age groups to establish when study patterns are set.
2. That a comparable study, using Junior High school students as

subjects, be conducted to see if the pattern of study indicated in this study will be substantiated.

3. That a study of psychological factors, including attitudes, goals, and values, influencing students be conducted to gain further insight regarding scholastic achievement of students.

4. That the results from studies suggested in the recommendations above and the present study be combined and used by parents and educators.

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APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENT

Entry has to be in terms of whether or not child studies at home.

Name _____

Address _____

1. Will you tell me how many children there are in your family? _____

ASK SEX AND AGE

Boys: Ages _____

Girls: Ages _____

2. Would you say _____ does most of his/her studying:

1. Home
2. School
3. A friend's house

3. Would you say he/she studies at home:

1. Some
2. A lot
3. Very little

4. How often does he/she study at home:

1. Once or twice a week
2. Every night but not on weekends
3. Every night and part or all of the weekend
4. Other (Specify) _____

5. In what type of room here in your home does he/she study:

1. His own bedroom, not shared with other family members
2. Bedroom shared with other family member(s)
3. Multi-purpose room (e.g., family room, living room)
4. A single-purpose room (e.g., dining room, den, sewing room, kitchen)
5. Other (Specify) _____

6. When he/she studies here at home, at what times of day does he/she study? (Circle as many as are appropriate)

1. Before school
2. After school
3. After evening meal
4. Late at night
5. Other (Specify) _____

ASK ONLY IN REGARD TO "YES"
RESPONSES TO QUESTION 7.

7. When he/she studies here at home does he/she study:

8. How often does he/she study while:

Yes	No		Always	Occasionally	Seldom
1	2	a. At a desk or table of his/her own which no one shares	1	2	3
1	2	b. At a desk or table which he/she sometimes or always shares	1	2	3
1	2	c. In a soft chair but not at a desk or table	1	2	3
1	2	d. On the floor or bed	1	2	3
1	2	e. Other (Specify) _____	1	2	3

ASK ONLY IF CHILD HAS OWN DESK OR TABLE AND USES IT "OCCASIONALLY" OR "SELDOM" OR DOES NOT USE IT.

9. If he/she doesn't use his/her own desk what do you think are the reasons?

10. When he/she studies here at home does he/she study:

- | Yes | No | |
|-----|----|--|
| 1 | 2 | a. Alone |
| 1 | 2 | b. With friends who come here or with other family members |
| 1 | 2 | c. With friends on the telephone |

11. Other than the space being used for study, what storage facilities does he/she have for books and other supplies required for studying:
 1. Shelves only near a study area
 2. Table only near study area
 3. Table only in room other than where study area is located
 4. Shelves only in room other than where study area is located
 5. Other (Specify) _____
 6. None

12. Which statement(s) on this card describe the kind of lighting facility in the room where he/she studies most frequently:
 1. A lamp recommended as having been especially designed for study purposes
 2. A high-intensity lamp plus an overhead ceiling fixture
 3. A lamp not recommended as having been especially designed for study purposes
 4. A ceiling fixture with a diffusion bowl
 5. A high-intensity lamp only, no overhead ceiling fixture
 6. A ceiling fixture without a diffusion bowl
 7. Other (Specify) _____
 8. None

13. Which statement(s) on this card describe the noise conditions in the room where he/she studies most frequently:
 1. Music only
 2. No noise
 3. Noises made by equipment (e.g., washer, dryer, heater, air-conditioner, refrigerator, etc.)
 4. Noises made by people moving about
 5. Voices (e.g., people, T.V., radio)
 6. Noises made outside (e.g., by children at play, cars, lawn mower, construction, etc.)
 7. Other (Specify) _____

14. Which statement(s) on this card describe the activity conditions in the room where he/she studies most frequently:

1. No other activities present
2. Quiet activities going on around study area (e.g., study, ironing, writing letters, etc.)
3. Non-active noise-producing activities (e.g., watching T.V., practicing piano or violin, etc.)
4. Active noise-producing activities going on around study area (e.g., children at play, repair work, housecleaning, etc.)
5. Other (Specify) _____

15. Do you have study rules and regulations for the child we are talking about:

1. Yes
2. No

Would you tell me what they are?

16. How many bedrooms are in your home? _____

17. Do you work for income outside the home?

1. No
2. Yes, part time
3. Yes, full time

18. How many years of schooling did you complete? _____

19. How many years of schooling did your husband complete? _____

20. What is your husband's occupation? (Specify) _____

21. On this card are some income classifications. Would you give me the number of classification within which your family income belongs?

1. 2. 3. 4. 5.

22. Are there any comments you would like to make about study facilities?

VITA

Mona Ruth Dreessen Crum

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: HOME STUDY FACILITIES AND STUDY HABITS RELATED TO SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SELECTED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF ELDORADO, KANSAS

Major Field: Housing and Interior Design

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Seward, Oklahoma, on August 19, 1929, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. N. Dreessen.

Education: Graduated from Guthrie High School, Guthrie, Oklahoma, in May, 1947; attended Oklahoma State University 1947-1951; received the B.S. degree in May, 1951; completed requirements for the Master of Science Degree in January, 1968.

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