

Assignment # 02

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1 Exec System Calls

The `exec()` family of functions replaces the current process image with a new process image. The functions described in this manual page are layered on top of `execve(2)`. (See the manual page for `execve(2)` for further details about the replacement of the current process image.)

The initial argument for these functions is the name of a file that is to be executed.

The functions can be grouped based on the letters following the "exec" prefix.

1.1 execl

1.1.1 Purpose and Usage

Explanation as per manual of `execv()` The `const char *arg` and subsequent ellipses can be thought of as `arg0, arg1, ..., argn`. Together they describe a list of one or more pointers to null-terminated strings that represent the argument list available to the executed program. The first argument, by convention, should point to the filename associated with the file being executed. The list of arguments must be terminated by a null pointer, and, since these are variadic functions, this pointer must be cast `(char *) NULL`.

By contrast with the 'l' functions, the 'v' functions (below) specify the command-line arguments of the executed program as a vector

1.1.2 C Code Example

```
1 #include <unistd.h>
2 #include <stdio.h>
3 #include <stdlib.h>
4
5 int main() {
6     printf("Before execl: Listing directory contents\n");
7     pid_t pid;
8     pid=fork();
9     if(pid==0)
10 {
11
12     printf("Child with PID : %d , running execl: \n",getpid());
13     sleep(1);
14     if (execl("/bin/ls", "sudo ls", "-l", "/media/shafeenyousafzai/
15 OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2", (char *)
16 NULL) == -1) {
17         perror("execl failed");
18         exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
19     }
20 }
21 else{
22     sleep(2);
23     int x=0;
24     int y=1;
25     int sum=x+1;
26     printf("Parent with PID : %d is printing the sum of %d and %d with answer
27 : %d\n",getppid(),x,y,sum);
28
29     pid_t pid2;
30     pid2=fork();
31     if(pid2==0){
```

```
30 sleep(1);
31 printf("In the child code : " \n);
32 execl("
33     return 0;
34 }
35 }
```

Listing 1: Using execl to execute ls command

1.1.3 Explanation

In this code, `execl` is used to execute the `ls -l` command. The first argument is the path to the executable, followed by the argument list terminated by `NULL`. If `execl` fails, an error message is printed.

1.1.4 Practical Scenario

`execl` can be used in a program that needs to execute another program without creating a new process. For example, a shell might use `execl` to run user commands.

1.2 execlp

1.2.1 Purpose and Usage

Explanation as per manual of `execv()` The `const char *arg` and subsequent ellipses can be thought of as `arg0, arg1, ..., argn`. Together they describe a list of one or more pointers to null-terminated strings that represent the argument list available to the executed program. The first argument, by convention, should point to the filename associated with the file being executed. The list of arguments must be terminated by a null pointer, and, since these are variadic functions, this pointer must be cast `(char *) NULL`.

By contrast with the 'l' functions, the 'v' functions (below) specify the command-line arguments of the executed program as a vector

1.2.2 C Code Example

```
1 #include <unistd.h>
2 #include <stdio.h>
3 #include <stdlib.h>
4
5 int main() {
6     printf("Opening TeXstudio with a custom environment\n");
7
8     pid_t pid;
9     pid=fork();
10    if(pid==0){
11        printf("This is the parent process with pid : %d \n", getpid());
12        printf("Calculating division of two numbers : \n");
13        int x = 10;
14        float y = 2;
15        float div=x/2;
16        printf("Answer : %f \n",div);
17    }
18    else{
19        sleep(2);
20        printf("Running the command with display variable set to 1");
21    }
```

```

21     if (execlp("/usr/bin/texstudio", "texstudio", "USER=latex_user", "PATH=/
usr/bin:/bin", "CUSTOM_VAR=HelloTeX", "HOME=/home/latex_user", "DISPLAY=:1
", (char *)NULL) == -1) {
22         perror("execle failed");
23         exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
24     }
25
26     printf("If you see this, execle failed\n");
27     return 0;
28 }
29 }

```

Listing 2: Using execlp to execute ls command

1.2.3 Explanation

This C program demonstrates basic process creation and command execution using the `fork()` and `execlp()` system calls. When executed, the program first prints a message indicating it will open TeXstudio with a custom environment. It then creates a child process using `fork()`. In the child process (`pid == 0`), it incorrectly labels itself as the parent, performs a simple division of two numbers, and prints the result. Meanwhile, the parent process waits for two seconds, prints a message about running TeXstudio with specific environment variables, and attempts to launch the TeXstudio application with customized settings such as `USER`, `PATH`, `CUSTOM_VAR`, `HOME`, and `DISPLAY`. If the `execlp()` call fails, it prints an error message and exits. This program effectively illustrates how to manage child and parent processes and execute external applications with tailored environments.

1.2.4 Practical Scenario

`execlp` is useful when the exact location of the executable is not known, and you want the system to search for it in the directories listed in the `PATH` environment variable.

1.3 execl

1.3.1 Purpose and Usage

The `execle` system call is similar to `execl`, but it allows the caller to specify the environment for the new process.

1.3.2 C Code Example

```

1  #include <unistd.h>
2  #include <stdio.h>
3  #include <stdlib.h>
4
5  int main() {
6      printf("Opening TeXstudio with a custom environment\n");
7
8      pid_t pid;
9      char *custom_env[] = {
10         "USER=latex_user",          // another user for latex
11         "PATH=/usr/bin:/bin",       // the path where installed application
can be found
12         "CUSTOM_VAR=HelloTeX",     // custom variable
13         "HOME=/home/latex_user",   // Custom home directory

```

```

14     "DISPLAY=:0",           // Set the display to :1 so that the
    opened application is opened on the current screen
15 NULL
16 };
17     char *custom_env2[] = {
18         "USER=latex_user",   // another user for latex
19         "PATH=/usr/bin:/bin", // the path where installed application
    can be found
20         "CUSTOM_VAR=HelloTeX", // custom variable
21         "HOME=/home/latex_user", // Custom home directory
22         "DISPLAY=:1",        // Set the display to :1 so that the
    opened application is opened on the current screen
23 NULL
24 };
25     pid=fork();
26     if(pid==0){
27         // Replace the current process with the TeXstudio command
28         if (execle("/usr/bin/texstudio", "texstudio", (char *)NULL, custom_env
    ) == -1) {
29
30             perror("execle failed for display variable 0");
31             sleep(1);
32             exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
33         }
34     }
35     else{
36         sleep(2);
37         printf("Running the command with display variable set to 1");
38         if (execle("/usr/bin/texstudio", "texstudio", (char *)NULL,
    custom_env2) == -1) {
39             perror("execle failed");
40             exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
41         }
42
43         // This line will not be executed if execle is successful
44         printf("If you see this, execle failed\n");
45         return 0;
46     }
47 }

```

Listing 3: Using execle to execute printenv command with custom environment

1.3.3 Explanation

Using 'fork()' and 'execle()' to launch the TeXstudio application with custom environment variables. The program forks a new process. In the child process ('pid == 0'), it attempts to run TeXstudio with a custom environment ('custom_env') on display ':0'. In the **parent process**, it waits for two seconds and then attempts to launch TeXstudio with a different custom environment ('custom_env2') on display ':1'. If either 'execle()' call fails, it prints an error message. The line after 'execle()' won't execute if 'execle()' succeeds, as the process is replaced.

1.3.4 Practical Scenario

execle is useful when you need to set specific environment variables for the new process, such as customizing the PATH or other environment settings.

1.4 execv

1.4.1 Purpose and Usage

The `execv` system call replaces the current process image with a new process image specified by the given path. It takes an array of arguments instead of a variable number of arguments.

1.4.2 C Code Example

```
1 // execvp_example.c
2 // execv_example.c
3 #include <unistd.h>
4 #include <stdio.h>
5 #include <stdlib.h>
6
7 int main() {
8     printf("Running Execve to run texstudio app : ");
9
10    char *args[] = { "texstudio", (char *)NULL, "USER=latex_user", "PATH=/
    usr/bin:/bin", "CUSTOM_VAR=HelloTeX", "HOME=/home/latex_user", "DISPLAY=:1
    " };
11
12
13    pid_t pid;
14    pid=fork();
15    if(pid==0){
16        // Replace the current process with the TeXstudio command
17        if (execv("/usr/bin/texstudio", args) == -1) {
18            perror("execv failed");
19            exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
20        }
21    }
22    else{
23        sleep(3);
24        printf("Running the command with display variable set to 1");
25        if (execv("/usr/bin/texstudio", args) == -1) {
26            perror("execv failed");
27            exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
28        }
29
30        return 0;
31    }
32 }
```

Listing 4: Using `execv` to execute `ls` command

1.4.3 Explanation

Use of `fork()` and `execv()` to run the TeXstudio application in both the child and parent processes. After forking, the child process attempts to replace its process with TeXstudio using `execv()`, passing a set of arguments that includes environment variables like `USER`, `PATH`, and `DISPLAY`. If this execution fails, an error message is printed. In the parent process, after a brief sleep, it also attempts to run TeXstudio with the same arguments. If `execv()` fails in the parent process, an error message is printed, and the program exits.

1.4.4 Practical Scenario

`execv` is ideal when the arguments to the new program are already available in an array, such as when parsing command-line arguments or handling user input.

1.5 `execve`

1.5.1 Purpose and Usage

The `execve` system call is the underlying system call that all other `exec` functions eventually call. It allows the caller to specify both the argument list and the environment.

1.5.2 C Code Example

```
1 // execve_example.c
2 #include <unistd.h>
3 #include <stdio.h>
4 #include <stdlib.h>
5
6 int main() {
7     printf("Before execve: Displaying environment variables using '
8     printenv '\n");
9
10     char *args[] = { "texstudio", (char *)NULL, "USER=latex_user", "PATH=/
11     usr/bin:/bin", "CUSTOM_VAR=HelloTeX", "HOME=/home/latex_user", "DISPLAY=:1
12     " };
13     char *custom_env2[] = {
14         "USER=latex_user",
15         "PATH=/usr/bin:/bin",
16         "CUSTOM_VAR=HelloTeX",
17         "HOME=/home/latex_user",
18         "DISPLAY=:1",
19         NULL
20     };
21
22     pid_t pid;
23     pid=fork();
24     if(pid==0){
25         // Replace the current process with the TeXstudio command
26         if (execve("/usr/bin/texstudio", args, custom_env2) == -1) {
27             perror("execve failed");
28             exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
29         }
30     }
31     else{
32         sleep(3);
33         printf("Running the command with display variable set to 1");
34         if (execve("/usr/bin/texstudio", args, custom_env2) == -1) {
35             perror("execve failed");
36             exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
37         }
38     }
39     return 0;
40 }
```


40 }

Listing 5: Using `execve` to execute `env` command with custom environment

1.5.3 Explanation

use of `fork()` and `execve()` to launch the TeXstudio application with custom environment variables Before Fork: It prints a message indicating the display of environment variables using `printenv`. In the child process (`pid == 0`), `execve()` is used to replace the current process with the TeXstudio application, passing custom environment variables (`custom_env2`). If `execve()` fails, an error message is printed, and the child process exits.

In the parent process, after a 3-second delay, it also attempts to run TeXstudio with the same `execve()` call and environment variables. If it fails, an error message is printed, and the program exits.

1.5.4 Practical Scenario

`execve` is useful when you need complete control over both the arguments and the environment of the new process, such as in low-level process management or when implementing shells.

1.6 execvp

1.6.1 Purpose and Usage

The `execvp` system call is similar to `execv`, but it uses the `PATH` environment variable to search for the executable if the specified path does not contain a slash.

1.6.2 C Code Example

```

1 // execvp_example.c
2 #include <unistd.h>
3 #include <stdio.h>
4 #include <stdlib.h>
5
6 int main() {
7     printf("using grep to find texstudio and execute it\n");
8
9     // Argument list for 'grep main execvp_example.c'
10    char *args[] = { "texstudio", (char *)NULL, "USER=latex_user", "PATH=/
usr/bin:/bin", "CUSTOM_VAR=HelloTeX", "HOME=/home/latex_user", "DISPLAY=:1
"};
11
12
13    if (execvp("grep", args) == -1) {
14        perror("execvp failed");
15        exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
16    }
17    return 0;
18 }
```

Listing 6: Using `execvp` to execute `grep` command

2.1.2 execlp Execution

```

shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semeste...
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $ ./execvp
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $ ./execle
bash: ./execle: No such file or directory
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $ ./execle_run-TeXStudio
Opening TeXStudio with a custom environment
qt.qpa.xcb: could not connect to display :0
qt.qpa.plugin: Could not load the Qt platform plugin "xcb" in "" even though it was found.
This application failed to start because no Qt platform plugin could be initialized. Reinstalling the
application may fix this problem.

Available platform plugins are: eglfs, linuxfb, minimal, minimalegl, offscreen, vnc, xcb.

QStandardPaths: XDG_RUNTIME_DIR not set, defaulting to '/tmp/runtime-shafeenyousafzal'
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $ ./execvp
Opening TeXStudio with a custom environment
This is the parent process with pid : 73894
Calculating division of two numbers :
Answer : 5.000000
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $

```

Figure 2: Terminal Output for execlp

2.1.3 execl Execution

```

shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semeste...
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $ ./execvp
Before execvp: Displaying environment variables using 'printenv'
Creation of userTemplateDir failed: "/home/latex_user/.config/TeXStudio/templates/user/"
QStandardPaths: XDG_RUNTIME_DIR not set, defaulting to '/tmp/runtime-shafeenyousafzal'
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $ ./execle
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $ ./execvp
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $ ./execle
bash: ./execle: No such file or directory
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $ ./execle_run-TeXStudio
Opening TeXStudio with a custom environment
qt.qpa.xcb: could not connect to display :0
qt.qpa.plugin: Could not load the Qt platform plugin "xcb" in "" even though it was found.
This application failed to start because no Qt platform plugin could be initialized. Reinstalling the
application may fix this problem.

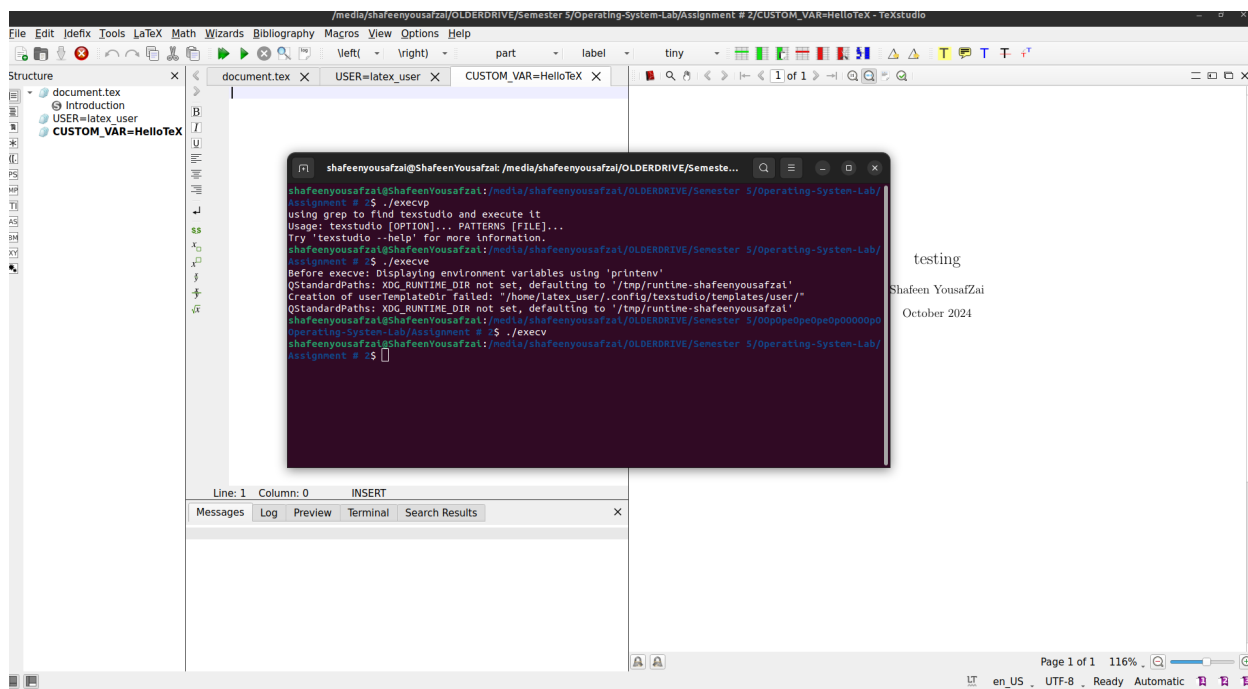
Available platform plugins are: eglfs, linuxfb, minimal, minimalegl, offscreen, vnc, xcb.

QStandardPaths: XDG_RUNTIME_DIR not set, defaulting to '/tmp/runtime-shafeenyousafzal'
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal: /media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2 $

```

Figure 3: Terminal Output for execl

2.1.4 execv Execution



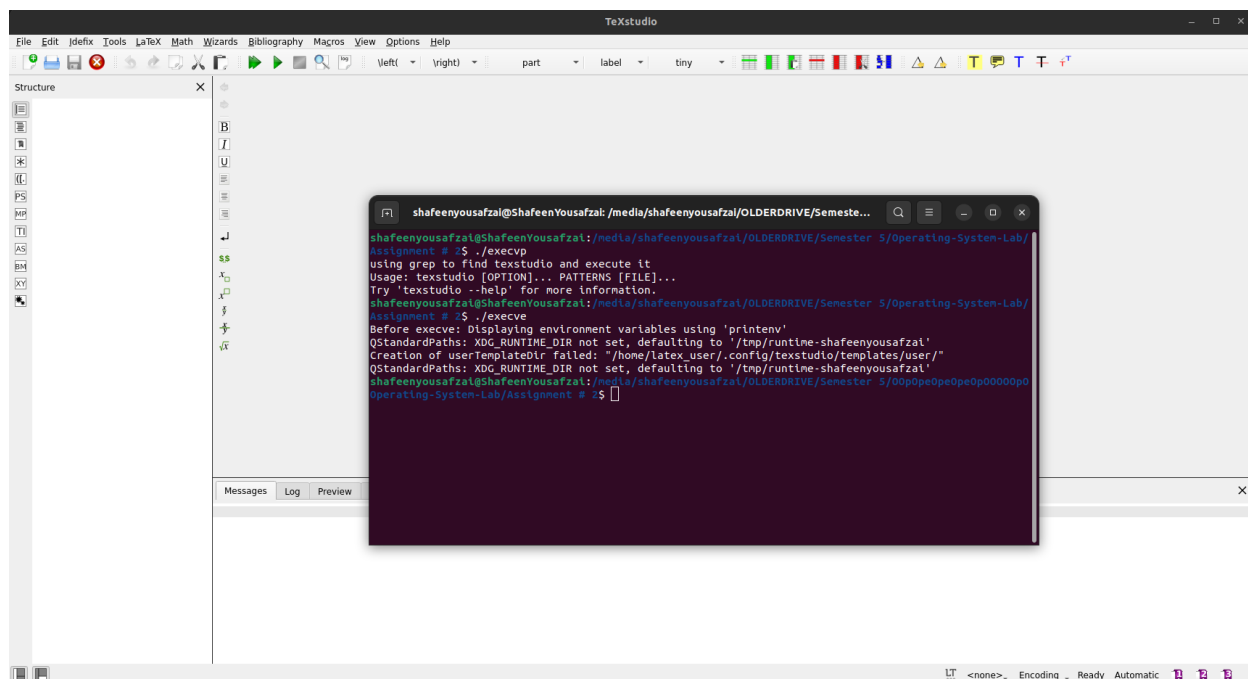
The screenshot shows the TeXstudio interface with a terminal window open. The terminal displays the following output:

```
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal:/media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # $ ./execvp
using grep to find textstudio and execute it
Usage: textstudio [OPTION]... PATTERNS [FILE]...
Try 'textstudio --help' for more information.
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal:/media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # $ ./execve
Before execve: Displaying environment variables using 'printenv'
QStandardPaths: XDG_RUNTIME_DIR not set, defaulting to '/tmp/runtime-shafeenyousafzal'
Creation of userTemplateDir failed: "/home/latex_user/.config/textstudio/templates/user/"
QStandardPaths: XDG_RUNTIME_DIR not set, defaulting to '/tmp/runtime-shafeenyousafzal'
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal:/media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # $ ./execv
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal:/media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # $
```

On the right side of the terminal window, the text "testing" is written, followed by "Shafeen Yousafzal" and "October 2024".

Figure 4: Terminal Output for execv

2.1.5 execve Execution

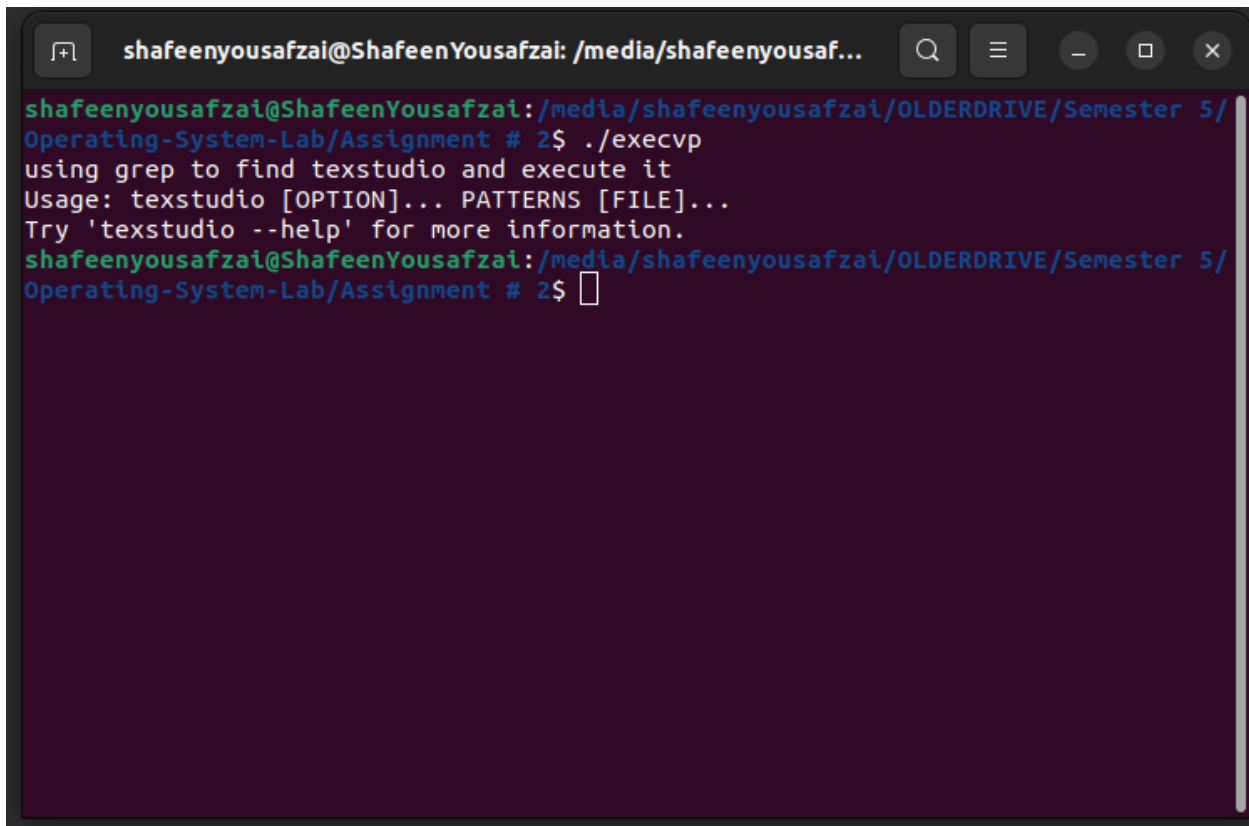


The screenshot shows the TeXstudio interface with a terminal window open. The terminal displays the following output:

```
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal:/media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # $ ./execvp
using grep to find textstudio and execute it
Usage: textstudio [OPTION]... PATTERNS [FILE]...
Try 'textstudio --help' for more information.
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal:/media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # $ ./execve
Before execve: Displaying environment variables using 'printenv'
QStandardPaths: XDG_RUNTIME_DIR not set, defaulting to '/tmp/runtime-shafeenyousafzal'
Creation of userTemplateDir failed: "/home/latex_user/.config/textstudio/templates/user/"
QStandardPaths: XDG_RUNTIME_DIR not set, defaulting to '/tmp/runtime-shafeenyousafzal'
shafeenyousafzal@ShafeenYousafzal:/media/shafeenyousafzal/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # $
```

Figure 5: Terminal Output for execve

2.1.6 execvp Execution



```
shafeenyousafzai@ShafeenYousafzai: /media/shafeenyousafzai/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2$ ./execvp
using grep to find textstudio and execute it
Usage: textstudio [OPTION]... PATTERNS [FILE]...
Try 'textstudio --help' for more information.
shafeenyousafzai@ShafeenYousafzai: /media/shafeenyousafzai/OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2$
```

Figure 6: Terminal Output for execvp

3 Bonus Task (Optional)

3.1 Mini-Shell Implementation

3.1.1 C Code

```
1 // simple_mini_shell.c
2 #include <stdio.h>
3 #include <stdlib.h>
4 #include <unistd.h>
5 #include <string.h>
6 #include <sys/wait.h>
7
8 #define MAX_INPUT_SIZE 1024 // Maximum length of the input line
9 #define MAX_ARG_COUNT 64 // Maximum number of arguments
10
11 int main() {
12     char input[MAX_INPUT_SIZE];
13     char *args[MAX_ARG_COUNT];
14     pid_t pid;
15     int status;
16     printf("1 ) Enter \"textstudio\" to open textstudio\n");
17     printf("2 ) Enter \"file\" to create a new file in current directory\n");
18     printf("3 ) Enter \"-ls\" to perform ls -i in the mini shell\n");
```

```

19  do{
20
21      // 1. Read: Display prompt and get user input ; using Sir.Muhammad
22      Nouman's given logic of read, eval , execute , loop.
23      printf("Shell > ");
24      fflush(stdout);
25
26      if (fgets(input, sizeof(input), stdin) == NULL) {
27          printf("\n");
28          break;
29      }
30
31      // Remove newline character from input
32      input[strcspn(input, "\n")] = '\0';
33
34      // Skip empty input
35      if (strlen(input) == 0) {
36          continue;
37      }
38
39      // 2. Eval: Parse the input into command and arguments
40      int arg_index = 0;
41      args[arg_index] = strtok(input, " ");
42      while (args[arg_index] != NULL && arg_index < MAX_ARG_COUNT - 1) {
43          args[++arg_index] = strtok(NULL, " ");
44      }
45      args[arg_index] = NULL;
46
47      // Handle built-in 'exit' command
48      if (strcmp(args[0], "exit") == 0) {
49          printf("Exiting mini-shell.\n");
50          break;
51      }
52      pid_t pid;
53      pid=fork();
54      if(pid==0){
55          if (strcmp(args[0], "texstudio") == 0) {
56              char *args[] = { "texstudio", (char *)NULL, "USER=latex_user", "
57              PATH=/usr/bin:/bin", "CUSTOM_VAR=HelloTeX", "HOME=/home/latex_user", "
58              DISPLAY=:1" };
59              execv("/usr/bin/texstudio", args);
60              break;
61          }
62      }
63      sleep(2);
64
65      pid_t pid2;
66      pid2=fork();
67      if(pid2==0){
68          if (strcmp(args[0], "-ls") == 0) {
69              execl("/bin/ls", "sudo ls", "-l", "/media/shafeenyousafzai/
70              OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2", (char *)
71              NULL);
72              break;
73          }
74      }
75      sleep(2);
76
77      pid_t pid3;
78      pid3=fork();

```

```

73         if(pid3==0){
74             if (strcmp(args[0], "file") == 0) {
75                 execl("/bin/touch", "touch", "/media/shafeenyousafzai/
OLDERDRIVE/Semester 5/Operating-System-Lab/Assignment # 2/file.txt", (
char *)NULL);
76                 break;
77             }
78         }
79         sleep(2);
80         // 3. Execute the command
81         pid = fork();
82
83         if (pid < 0) {
84             perror("fork failed");
85             continue;
86         }
87
88         if (pid == 0) {
89             // Execute the command
90             if (execvp(args[0], args) == -1) {
91                 perror("exec failed");
92             }
93             exit(EXIT_FAILURE);
94         } else {
95             // Wait for the child to finish
96             do {
97                 if (waitpid(pid, &status, WUNTRACED) == -1) {
98                     perror("waitpid failed");
99                     break;
100                 }
101             } while (!WIFEXITED(status) && !WIFSIGNALED(status));
102         }
103     }while(1);
104
105     return 0;
106 }

```

Listing 7: Mini-Shell using execvp

3.1.2 Explanation

Approach : Read , eval , print , loop . This mini-shell continuously prompts the user for input, parses the command and its arguments, and uses `execvp` , `execv` , `execl` to execute the command. The shell supports basic commands and allows the user to exit by typing `exit` . It also allows user to open a latex editor `texstudio` by typing `texstudio` and also find `ls -i` and create a `fileexit` .

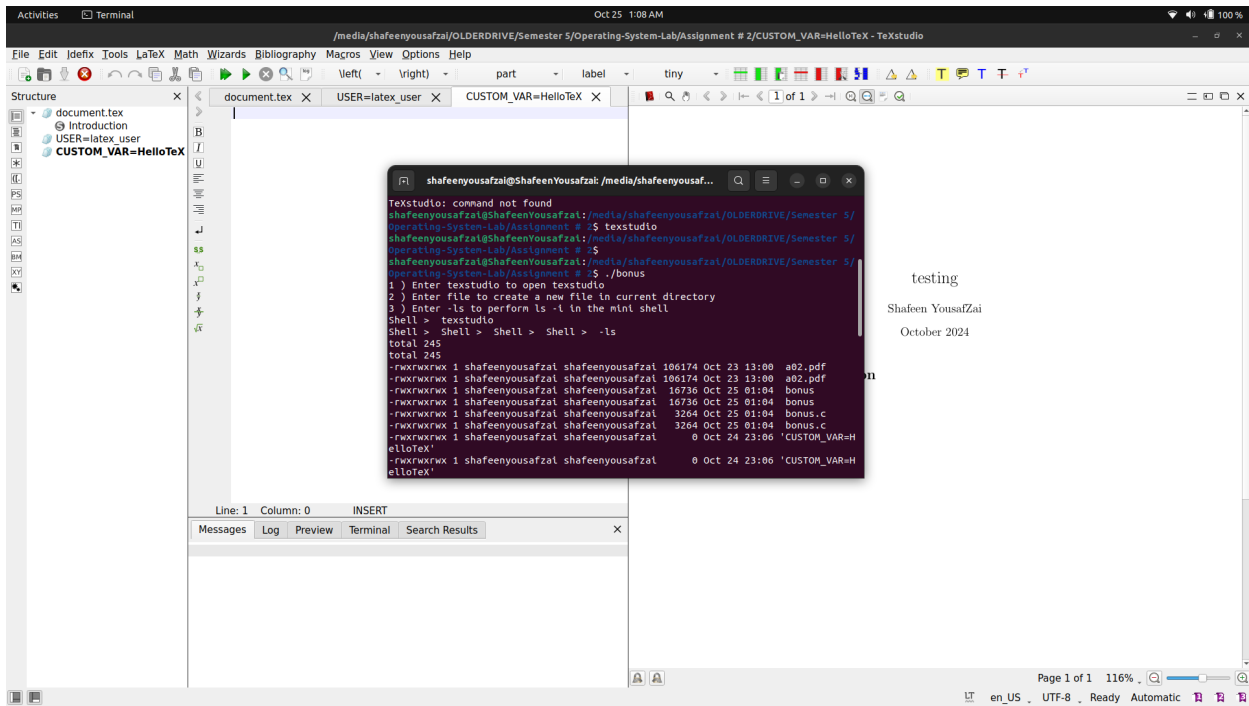


Figure 7: Mini-Shell Execution

3.1.3 Screenshot

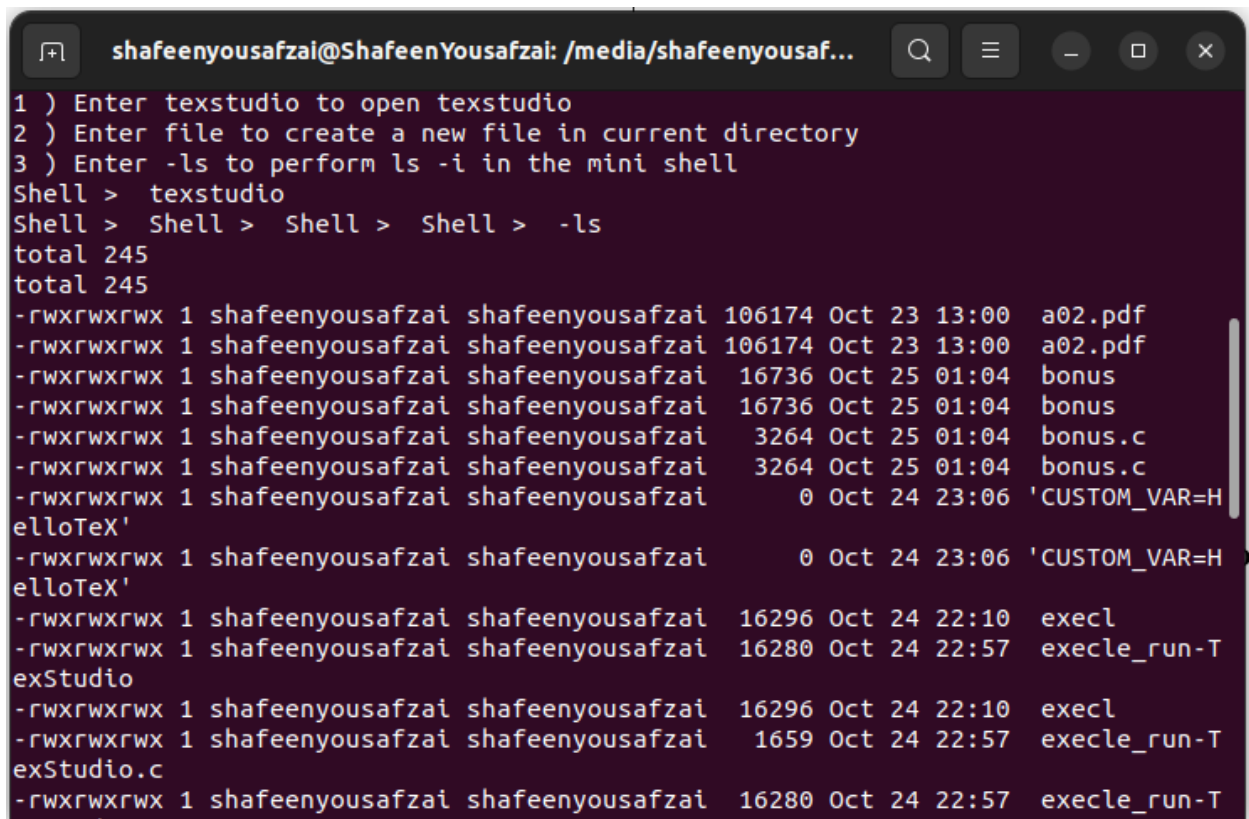


Figure 8: Mini-Shell Execution