

Temperament of Students Living in Single and Dual Earning Families

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ABSTRACT The present study was aimed to find out difference, if any, in temperament of students belonging to single and dual earning families. The sample comprised of randomly selected 100 students, with 50 students each from single and dual earning families, studying in five different Government Models Schools of Chandigarh. The findings highlighted that as far as positive temperament traits like sociability, placidness, vigorousness, cooperativeness, persistence, tolerance, and tough mindedness are concerned, students belonging to single earning families were found to have higher mean scores as compared to those from dual earning families. While the students from dual earning families were found to have higher mean scores than those of their counterparts from single earning families in negative temperament traits like secretiveness, impulsivity and aggressiveness.

INTRODUCTION

Temperament is typically defined as an individual's manner of responding to the environment and is widely conceptualized as biologically based. It is primary building block of personality (Moore et al. 2005). It is an individual's innate style of responding to the environment in both behavioural and emotional ways (Griggs et al. 2009). According to Rothbart and Rueda (2005), "It refers to individual differences in behaving, feeling and thinking which are relatively stable across time and situation and which reflect relatively enduring biological makeup of the organism, influenced over the time by heredity, maturation and experience."

According to Chadha and Chandana (1984), there are fifteen main dimensions of temperament –sociability, ascendancy, secretiveness, reflectivity, impulsivity, placidness, acceptance, responsibility, vigorousness, cooperativeness, persistence, warmth, aggressiveness, tolerance, and tough-mindedness. According to Palisin (1986), temperament has been hypothesized to be a mediating factor in the learning environment and therefore a predictor of intellectual development. Many of the researchers examining temperament

in young children have examined relations between temperament and adjustment in various structured environments as schools. The child who is better to adjust to his/her environment is more likely to work his/her potential in academic achievement (Klein 1982). Children with level of temperament that allow them to easily adjust to their environment are likely to experience academic success.

Temperament is also associated with the academic achievement through the way teacher's respond to certain dimensions. Teachers' estimation of children, their expectations and behaviours may indirectly affect academic achievement. Pullis and Cadwell (1985) in a study found that temperament appeared to influence the educational decisions made by teachers. In a study of the appraisal of teachers with respect to their students' intelligence, Lerner and Galambos (1985) attempted to test the "goodness of fit model" between temperament and academic achievement. He found that teachers expected successful students to have low activity level, reactivity, and distractibility as well as high adaptability, approach and rhythmicity.

In India, the process of industrialization, modernization and wide spread of education have brought socio-psychological changes in the people of the country, especially the urban population. Over the last few decades, Indian society has witnessed the split of joint family system into nuclear family system as well as entry of a large chunk of women into workforce. Women want to realise their potentials, achieve their identity

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and get security and satisfaction besides supplementing their family income.

The ambiguity and uncertainty of the spouses in this newly emerging "Dual earning family" together with the complexities of modern life and exaggerated emphasis on individuality and individual gratification make it more difficult for both husband and wife to perform their duties for children effectively (Spanier 1996). In this dual earning family, woman is supposed to play multiple roles as wife, mother, daughter-in-law besides as employee who is subjected to several pressures and stresses in the workplace. The multifarious responsibility of a woman in dual earning family may sometimes lead to difficulty in performing her various roles especially as effective mother with her children due to her tight work schedule.

Only a handful of researches are available related to the present study. Findings of research work done by Panda and Samal (1995) highlight that girls of dual earning families tend to be more frustrated, aggressive and anxious than girls of single earning families due to less time spent by working mothers with them. Some studies suggest that children from dual working families may involve in risky behaviours and activities like drugs and gangs in the absence of their parents. They are more achievement oriented than those from single earning families due to parental academic involvement and high educational qualification (Hill et al. 2004). They are low in adaptability and security and high in impulsivity and reactivity than their counterparts from single earning families (Hurlock 2001; Singh and Chauhan 2007).

Temperament that is characterised by intense negative affect, low adaptability, impulsivity, reactivity and irritability, is predictive of externalising problems, whereas shy, inhibited temperamental characteristics have been associated with internalising disorders (Prior et al. 2001). Adaptability and sociability have been associated with resilience in children (Werner and Smith 2001). A child's temperamental characteristics are also thought to impact on the parent, demonstrating bidirectional interactive processes between parents and their children in the socialisation process (Putnam et al. 2002). Several studies have found direct associations between temperament and parenting.

Objectives

The present study was based on the following objectives:

- To identify the level of different dimensions of temperament in students studying in 9th and 10th standard.
- To compare temperament of students living in single and dual earning families.

METHOD

Sample

A list of all Government Model Schools of Chandigarh was obtained from District Education office, Chandigarh. From this list, 5 Government Model Schools were selected randomly. From each selected school, two comprehensive lists of students studying in class IX and X were prepared who belonged to single and dual earning families, respectively. From these lists, 20 students (10 from single earning and 10 from dual earning families) were selected randomly irrespective of their caste, creed, economic status and ordinal position. Same procedure was carried out in the other selected Government Model Schools for the selection of respondents. Thus, the final sample size comprised of 100 students.

Tools Used

Dimensions of Temperament Scale (Chadha and Chandna 1984)

It is simply a measure the way one behaves. The scale consists of 152 items measuring 15 dimensions of temperament. The reported test-retest reliability of all dimensions of this scale are in acceptable range varying from 0.86 for sociability, 0.84 for ascendance, 0.94 for secretiveness, 0.90 for reflectivity, 0.84 for impulsivity, 0.82 for placidness, 0.85 for acceptance, 0.88 for responsibility, 0.92 for vigorousness, 0.84 for cooperativeness, 0.86 for persistence, 0.83 for warmth, 0.95 for aggressiveness, 0.88 for tolerance and 0.94 for tough mindedness. For the whole scale, the reported test-retest reliability is found to be 0.94. It is also reported to be a valid tool.

Statistical Analysis

For analyzing the data, frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and t- test were used to process various variables of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data related to percentage distribution of students from single and dual earning families with regard to their temperament have been furnished in Table 1.

The findings in Table 1 highlight that majority of the subjects both from single and dual earning families had moderate reflectivity (78% and 48%, respectively), low level of impulsivity (75%

and 82%, respectively) and responsibility (36% and 46%, respectively).

The difference was found between students of single and dual earning families with regard to rest of the dimensions of temperament.

In case of single earning families, majority of the subjects belonging to single earning families had low level of ascendance (44%), secretive-ness (68%), responsibility (36%) and aggressive-ness (62%), moderate level of placidness (60%),

Table 1: Level of Different dimensions of temperament among students from single and dual earning families (N=100: 50 Students from SEF, 50 Students from DEF)

Variable	Dimensions	Categories	Students from SEF(%)	Students from DEF(%)	Total sample (%)
Temperament	Sociability	Low	10.0	36.0	23.0
		Moderate	38.0	44.0	41.0
		High	52.0	20.0	36.0
	Ascendance	Low	44.0	24.0	34.0
		Moderate	32.0	34.0	33.0
		High	24.0	42.0	33.0
	Secretiveness	Low	68.0	28.0	48.0
		Moderate	12.0	38.0	25.0
		High	20.0	34.0	27.0
	Reflectiveness	Low	14.0	38.0	26.0
		Moderate	78.0	48.0	63.0
		High	8.0	14.0	11.0
	Impulsivity	Low	75.0	82.0	78.0
		Moderate	12.0	8.0	10.0
		High	8.2	2.0	5.1
	Placidness	Low	12.0	62.0	37.0
		Moderate	60.0	28.0	44.0
		High	28.0	10.0	19.0
	Acceptance	Low	24.0	26.0	25.0
		Moderate	44.0	34.0	39.0
		High	32.0	40.0	36.0
	Responsibility	Low	36.0	46.0	41.0
		Moderate	32.0	36.0	34.0
		High	32.0	18.0	25.0
	Vigorousness	Low	28.0	72.0	50.0
		Moderate	30.0	14.0	22.0
		High	42.0	14.0	28.0
	Cooperativeness	Low	20.0	70.0	45.0
		Moderate	30.0	16.0	23.0
		High	50.0	14.0	32.0
	Persistence	Low	20.0	80.0	50.0
		Moderate	36.0	14.0	25.0
		High	44.0	6.0	25.0
	Warmth	Low	30.0	70.0	50.0
		Moderate	40.0	16.0	28.0
		High	30.0	14.0	22.0
	Aggressiveness	Low	62.0	14.0	38.0
		Moderate	30.0	12.0	21.0
		High	8.0	74.0	41.0
	Tolerance	Low	24.0	56.0	40.0
		Moderate	10.0	18.0	14.0
		High	66.0	26.0	46.0
	Tough-mindedness	Low	30.0	40.0	35.0
		Moderate	16.0	34.0	25.0
		High	54.0	26.0	40.0

Note: SEF= Single Earning Families DEF= Dual Earning Families

Table 2: Significance of difference in mean scores of different dimensions of temperament between students of single and dual earning families (N=100: 50 Students from SEF, 50 Students from DEF)

Variable	Components	Students from SEF		Students from DEF		t value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Temperament	Sociability	7.58	1.727	6.74	1.426	2.652**
	Ascendence	6.56	1.343	6.90	1.313	1.280
	Secretiveness	6.42	2.061	7.74	1.893	3.335**
	Reflectiveness	6.74	1.614	6.46	1.764	.828
	Impulsivity	5.10	2.270	7.10	2.332	4.345**
	Placidness	7.94	1.504	6.84	1.742	3.380**
	Acceptance	3.98	1.186	4.02	1.363	.157
	Responsibility	6.66	1.437	6.12	1.710	1.709
	Vigorousness	10.06	2.683	8.66	2.379	2.761**
	Cooperativeness	11.06	2.045	9.14	2.286	4.427**
	Persistence	6.10	1.843	4.38	1.308	5.381**
	Warmth	9.78	2.493	10.16	2.216	.805
	Aggressiveness	6.44	1.897	8.66	1.757	6.072**
	Tolerance	9.24	2.181	7.74	2.732	3.292**
	Tough-mindedness	5.22	1.282	4.54	1.656	2.295**

Note: **p<.01

acceptance (44%) and warmth (40%) and high level of sociability (52%), vigorousness (42%), tolerance (66%) tough mindedness (54%) and cooperativeness (50%).

On the contrary, in case of dual earning families, majority of the subjects had low placidness (62%), vigorousness (72%), persistence (80%), warmth (70%), tolerance (56%) and tough mindedness (40%). They were moderate in traits of sociability (44%) and secretiveness (38%), and high in ascendence (42%) and acceptance (40%).

To sum up, it can be said that majority of the subjects from dual earning families as compared to those from single earning families have low level of a large number of positive temperament traits.

Table 2 incorporates data related to mean, standard deviation and t values of different dimensions of temperament of students belonging to single and dual earning families.

Results in Table 2 reveal highly significant difference in the mean scores of sociability ($t=2.652$, $p<.01$), secretiveness ($t=3.335$, $p<.01$), impulsivity ($t=4.345$, $p<.01$), placidness ($t=3.380$, $p<.01$), vigorousness ($t=2.761$, $p<.01$), cooperativeness ($t=4.427$, $p<.01$), persistence ($t=5.381$, $p<.01$), aggressiveness ($t=6.072$, $p<.01$), tolerance ($t=3.292$, $p<.01$), and tough mindedness ($t=2.295$, $p<.01$).

As far as components of sociability, placidness, vigorousness, cooperativeness, persistence, tolerance, and tough mindedness are concerned, students belonging to single earning families were found to have higher mean scores as compared to those from dual earning families. While

the students from dual earning families were found to have higher mean scores than those of their counterparts from single earning families in traits like secretiveness, impulsivity and aggressiveness.

In short, it can be said that students from single earning families have more of positive and less of negative temperament traits as compared to their counterparts from dual earning families.

The present results get the support of a number of findings (Malik and Katyal 1993; Panda and Samal 1995; Hurlock 2001; Hill et al. 2004; Singh and Chauhan 2007). The possible justification for the present result could be given in the light of the fact that parents in dual earning families are not in a position to provide full time guidance, supervision and monitoring of their children. Even they find themselves unable to interact and share sufficiently with their children. This may lead to development of negative temperament traits which are further linked or connected to more of social problems and risk taking behavior in these children particularly when they reach adolescence stage. The link or relationship between negative and difficult temperament traits and social and personal problems has been endorsed by a number of research findings (Ahadi et al. 1994; McClowry et al. 1994; Wills et al. 2000; Bijttebier et al. 2003; Moore et al. 2005; Feldstein and Miller 2006).

CONCLUSION

In the light of above results and discussion, it can be concluded that different type of family

(single or dual earning) has important bearing on temperament of children. Absence of mother due to maternal employment sets the stage for development of negative temperament traits in children. So the findings of the present study have important implications for educationists, counsellors and parents of students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Parents should place special efforts to spend quality time with their children to compensate for quantity of time. Father involvement in life of children would definitely help to yield positive outcomes in personality development of children.

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