

ROLE OF TEMPERAMENT, PARENTING STYLES, PARENTING STRESS IN SOCIAL COMPETENCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL BEING AMONG CHILDREN

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1.0 Introduction

Childhood involves spurt of growth and development in intricately intertwined biological, cognitive, social and emotional processes. Recent surge of interest has highlighted the role of various factors in social and emotional development of children. Among these numerous factors temperament, parenting style and parenting stress seem to attract avid interest of psychologists, as evidenced by convincing body of research that has been accrued on these constructs. However, not much research has been conducted on these constructs in India.

Discerning the importance of these constructs in the overall development of children and the paucity of such research in India, the present investigation was carried out. It endeavoured to assess the relationship of temperament, parenting style and parenting stress with social competence and subjective well being and also, attempted to determine their relative contribution in Social Competence and Subjective well being.

The following objectives were formulated :

1.1 Objectives

- * To assess the relationship of :
 - Temperament dimensions with social competence and subjective well being.
 - Parenting styles with social competence and subjective well being.
 - Parenting stress with social competence and subjective well being.
- * To assess whether any significant differences exists between the Easy and Difficult children on parenting style, parenting stress, social competence and subjective well being.

1.2 Hypotheses

- * Temperament dimensions of adaptability, approach/withdrawal, quality of mood and activity would be positively related; while intensity and distractibility would be inversely related with social competence.
- * Temperament dimensions of adaptability, approach/withdrawal and quality of mood would be positively related with positive affect and satisfaction with life; whereas intensity and distractibility would be positively related with negative affect and inversely related with satisfaction with life.
- * Authoritative parenting style would be positively related alternately authoritarian style would be negatively related with social competence.
- * Authoritative parenting style would be positively related with positive affect and satisfaction with life; conversely authoritarian parenting style would be positively related with negative affect and inversely related with satisfaction with life.
- * Parenting Stress would be inversely related with social competence.
- * Parenting Stress would be positively related with negative affect and inversely related with positive affect and satisfaction with life.
- * Temperament, parenting styles and parenting stress would be significant predictors of social competence and subjective well being.

* There will be significant differences between the Easy and Difficult children on parenting style, parenting stress, social competence and subjective well being.

1.3 Design :

For the present investigation to assess the relationship to temperament, parenting styles and parenting stress with social competence and subjective well being, a correlational design was used and Pearson product moment coefficient was computed.

Further, to assess the relative contribution of the independent variables, viz., temperament, parenting styles and parenting stress, separately as well as conjointly, in explaining the variance of dependent variables of social competence and subjective well being, stepwise multiple regression analysis was applied.

To find out if differences between temperamentally easy children and difficult children on parenting styles, parenting stress, social competence and subjective well being, t-test was applied.

1.4 Sample

The present investigation comprised 360 children (Females = 180; Males = 180), randomly selected from various schools in Patiala. The children were in the age group 8-10 years and were from nuclear and intact families belonging to middle and upper middle class.

N = 360

Females	Males
180	180

The parents (mothers) of these children were administered the Malhotra Temperament Schedule (Malhotra & Malhotra, 1988), the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (Robinson et al., 2001), and the Parenting Stress Index - Short Form (Abidin, 1995).

The children were administered the Social Skills Rating System - Student Version (Gresham & Elliot, 1991), Multidimensional Student's Life Satisfaction Scale (Huebner, 2001), Satisfaction With Life Scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993) and the Positive and Negative Affect Scale For Children {PANAS-C} (Laurent et al., 1999).

On the basis of their scores on Malhotra Temperament Schedule (Malhotra & Malhotra, 1988), the sample was divided into 2 groups "Easy temperament profile" and "Difficult temperament profile".

N = 100

Easy	Difficult
50	50

2.0 Results

2.1 Correlation Analysis

2.1.1 Relationship of Temperament dimensions with Social Competence and Subjective Well Being

The correlational analysis revealed that adaptability, approach / withdrawal, quality of mood were positively correlated while intensity negatively correlated with social competence. The results portray that sociable, cheerful and adaptable children, who are able to regulate their emotions, generally, make friends easily, increase their chances of having positive social interactions and have better social competence.

Subjective well being was analyzed by viewing correlations for global life satisfaction, total domain specific life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect separately. Temperament dimensions of approach/withdrawal, adaptability and quality of mood were found to be positively correlated with the children's global life satisfaction, total domain specific life satisfaction including its sub-dimensions and positive affect, but showed negative correlations with negative affect.

Persistence was correlated positively with satisfaction with self. Rhythmicity was positively related to satisfaction with school and self, as well as positive affect but showed negative correlations with negative affect.

On the other hand, certain dimensions of temperament such as threshold of responsiveness negatively correlated to satisfaction with school and positive affect. Distractibility was also negatively correlated with satisfaction with school. The temperament dimension of intensity negatively correlated with children's global life satisfaction, total domain specific life satisfaction and its sub-dimensions as well as positive affect, but showed positive correlations with negative affect.

Overall these results conveyed that adaptable, sociable children, who are generally positive in mood depict better social competence and report better subjective well being. While children who show intense negative reactions often have poor peer relationships and report lower subjective well being.

2.1.2 Relationship of Parenting Style with Social Competence and Subjective Well Being

Overall the results revealed that authoritative parenting style correlated positively, while authoritarian parenting style correlated negatively with social competence. These findings suggest that warm, responsive and supportive parents, who also set explicit expectations and standards for children's socially competent and age-appropriate behaviors, tend to have children who are socially more adept. While, parents who interact with their children in cold and unresponsive ways, use harsh, hostile and punitive and/ or power assertive disciplinary techniques teach their children not only these very social interactions but also alienate their children from themselves.

For subjective well being, results illustrated that authoritative parenting style correlated positively with it; while, authoritarian parenting style correlated negatively. Findings indicate that a harsh, hostile, punitive parenting infuses fear, anger, and frustration in a child increasing the child's negative affect and decreasing subjective well being. Conversely, a warm, supportive, responsive parent who exerts parental control promotes autonomy, permeates confidence, cheer, happiness, satisfaction, self-believe, responsibility in a child, would certainly enhance their subjective well being as well.

2.1.3 Relationship of Parenting Stress with Social Competence and Subjective Well Being

Overall, parenting stress was found to be inversely related with social competence. Analyzing the results minutely parental distress was found to correlate negatively with co-operation and self-control; while. Difficult child was negatively correlated with co-operation and total social competence. Whereas, parent-child dysfunctional interaction was positively correlated with assertion. Thus, indicating that parenting stress negatively impacts the development of socially competent behaviours among the child.

For subjective well being, results reveal that parental distress was correlated positively with negative affect and inversely with satisfaction with school, positive affect and total domain specific life satisfaction. Difficult child was positively correlated with negative affect; conversely, it showed a negative correlation with satisfaction with friends, school, living environment, total domain specific life satisfaction and positive affect. Parent-child dysfunctional interaction was positively correlated with negative affect and inversely correlated with positive affect. Parenting stress total was positively related to negative affect; while it negatively correlated to satisfaction with school, living environment, total domain specific life satisfaction and positive affect.

Hence, parenting stress not only impacts parent's psychological health but also has an inverse impact on the child's emotional functioning, thus reducing the child's subjective well being.

2.2 Regression analysis

It was hypothesized that temperament, parenting styles and parenting stress would be significant predictors of social competence and subjective well being.

2.2.1 Social Competence

Results indicate that social competence is highly affected by approach / withdrawal, parent-child dysfunctional interaction and total parenting stress. This delineates that an outgoing, cheerful sociable child who is willing to meet new people, initiate interaction with children of his age is more likely to be more popular and socially adept. Moreover with positive directive guidance and support from parents, he is liable to be more prosocial, enhancing his behavioural repertoire. Conversely, parental distress hampers parent-child relationship, disrupts in effective guidance and invokes aversive exchanges between parent and child. This invariably paves the way for the child to learn and adapt aggressive, undesirable social tendencies, thus, lowering his social competence.

2.2.2 Subjective Well Being

It comprised four components, viz., global life satisfaction, domain specific life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect.

Global and Domain Specific Life Satisfaction

Results demonstrate that quality of mood, parent-child dysfunctional interaction, approach / withdrawal, rhythmicity and connection incur a significant impact on Global Life Satisfaction. Almost similar trends were observed for domain specific life satisfaction i.e., quality of mood, physical coercion, intensity and adaptability were found to be the significant predictors. Thus, portraying that a happy, cheerful child who is able to regulate his or her responses and who adapts easily to circumstances and life challenges will be more satisfied with the various domains of life. A child who receives harsh, punitive parenting by care givers will not only be frustrated, hurt but will also be dissatisfied with his or her life.

Positive and Negative Affect

Results reveal that quality of mood, intensity, connection, and total authoritative parenting have a significant impact on positive affect. While, quality of mood, difficult child, physical coercion, and intensity elevate negative affect. Hence, exhibiting that children who are dispositionally cheerful, happy and are able to regulate and control their responses, will report more positive affect. Parental warmth, love, support and firm guidance too paves way for several positive developmental outcomes, adding to a child's positive affect. Conversely, children who dispositionally show negative mood and high intensity reactions are susceptible to negative cues in the environment; thus, increasing the negative affect. Moreover, parent's perception of the child as troublesome and difficult as well as parent's use of physically coercive and punitive parenting also adds to a child's report of negative affect.

t-test Analysis

Results revealed significant differences between Easy and Difficult children on Parenting styles, Parenting Stress, Social Competence and Subjective well being.

Temperamentally easy children are usually cheerful, outgoing, sociable and are able to adapt more readily to changes in their environments. They tend to be more responsive to parental demands and receive more warm and responsive parenting. In opposition, temperamentally difficult children display higher levels of withdrawal, negative emotionality and irregular daily routines, tend to react negatively and intensely to stimuli, are slow to accept new experiences, and unable to regulate their reactions to changes. They negatively influence the parent-child relationship and tend to elicit less sensitive and responsive parenting.

Thus, overall, the results of the present investigation reveals the role of temperament dimensions (approach / withdrawal, adaptability, quality of mood, intensity etc.), parenting styles (authoritative and authoritarian) and parenting stress in the development of social competence and subjective well being among children.

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