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Influence of family environment on self-concept of late childhood children

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Abstract

The main aim of the study is to understand the role of family environment in child's life and the parents who play an important part in the forming and development of their children's self-concept. The objective of the topic is to find out the influence of family environment on self-concept of late childhood children. The sample size was 280 boys and 279 girls in the age group 9-12 years of age selected randomly from 6th, 7th, and 8th grades of eight private and five government schools in Sattenapalli town of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, India. Family environment inventory by the Bhatia and Chadha and self-concept scale developed by Vasundara Devi (1980) [17] were used for this study. The obtained data was analyzed by employing analysis of variance and t- test. It is found that there is a significant effect in the dimensions of cohesion, expressiveness, independence, active recreational orientation, organization, control of family environment on self-concept of late childhood children. Further findings indicate that grade and gender are significant influence on children's self-concept.

Keywords: Family environment, self-concept, late childhood children

1. Introduction

Mental health association of Northern, Kentucky referred to, the family environment as the primary agent of socialization. The family environment involves the circumstances and social climatic conditions within families. Since each family is made up of different individuals in a different setting, each family environment is unique. The environment can differ in many ways. The family environment is influenced by several factors like family type; family size; number of children; parent child relationship; sibling relationship; parental employment; socio economic and religious background of the family. Family environment is important for the all-round development of the child and healthy adjustment. The family environment is a crucial factor for the development of the self (Harter, 2015) [6]. The right environment can drive the needs and capabilities of a child in the right direction since their personal needs are intimately linked with events taking place outside of the individual.

The family is the single most significant unit and family members particularly the parents are the chief architects in shaping the child's healthy personality. There is considerable evidence that parents play an important role in socialization of their children's emotions. A child's self-concept is affected by those directly surrounding him like family members, school mates, neighbors, and peers. The multiple features of the family environment shape the development of self-esteem during late childhood and adolescence (Krauss, Orth, & Robins 2020) [8]. Family influences are critical in fostering the child's growth and development and catering to his achievement in day-to-day life. Through family life situations and external environment, the child gains his primary knowledge of the world and learns to explore the situations. Attitudes and ideas expressed in the family day after day leave their mark on the child's life, as the parents are the closest people in the child's environment.

Most theorists believe that the quality of parent child relation is linked to differences in self descriptive and self-evaluative behavior among children. Family atmosphere is likely to be the place of respect, appreciation, warmth and acceptance. When children enjoy warm positive parenting, parental encouragement for good performance it fosters achievement which promotes self-esteem in children. Perceived parental warmth has a strong relationship with psychological adjustment and personality traits such as hostility and aggression, independence, positive self-esteem, positive self-adequacy (Khaleque, 2012) [7].

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Self-esteem correlates with young children's mental health and overall success and maternal warmth has the strongest relationship with self-esteem in both male and female children (Mary, Chen and Chiu, 2019) ^[11].

Parental attitudes have a strong impact on children's self-development. When the parents are very indulgent, the child tends to become selfish and demanding. He expects constant attention, affection and service from others. Over-indulgent or over-controlling parenting leads to children developing unrealistic self-concepts and self-esteem, which lead to adjustment problems (Berk 2008) ^[11]. Overprotection decreases the other interests of the child. It makes the child lose confidence in himself. Parental over protection is significantly related to defensive and provoking behaviors in children, and to low self-concept (Oh, Susany and others 1990) ^[14]. The parenting behaviors and support predicted residual increases in self-esteem (Harris 2017) ^[5]. Individuals with better peer and family social support tended to have higher levels of self-esteem (Magro 2019) ^[16]. Family life can better support positive outcomes for youths (Eccles, 1999) ^[4]. Parenting behaviors impact self-esteem development.

Parent child attachment is one factor in the psychological wellbeing of an individual (Love and Murdock. 2004) ^[10]. Children with poor attachments to their parents, have adjustment problems, are aggressive in nature, and have poor social skills. The role of parental attachment and peer influence on psychological health is primarily mediated by self-esteem (Wilkinson, 2004) ^[18]. Strong parent-child attachment results in high independence among children. (McCormick & Kennedy 1994) ^[12]. Cynthia (2007) ^[3] reviewed that the impact of family dynamics on other aspects of life developed, specifically in the context of self-concept. Self-concept is a critical factor in helping us solve problems and become fully functioning members of society. Most of the studies indicate that the family plays an important factor in establishing self-esteem. Parents can influence their children not only by what they are and what they believe, but also by what they do in the growing stages of development. A child's sense of positive self-worth contributes to the child's well-being. The protection of self-esteem is one of the central developmental tasks in childhood.

1.1 Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to:

1. Study the influence of the family environment on the self-concept of late childhood children.
2. Investigate to impact of individual family environment dimensions on late childhood children's self-concept.
3. Study the effects of the family environment of low and high self-concept children belonging to different grades.
4. Study the effects of the family environment based on the gender of low and high self-concept children.
5. Study the effects of the family environment on low and high self-concept children based on the type of school they attended.

1.2 Hypothesis of the study

The hypotheses formulated for the present study are as follows.

1. There will be no significant effect of the family environment on the self-concept of late childhood children.
2. There will be no significant effect of individual family environment dimensions on the self-concept of late childhood children.

3. There will be no significant effects on the family environment of low and high self-concept children by grade.
4. There will be no significant effect of family environment of low and high self-concept children by gender.
5. There will be no significant effects on the family environment of low and high self-concept children by type of school.

2. Methodology

The major objective of this research study is to find out the influence of family environment on self-concept of late childhood children studying in classes 6-8 with an age between 9-12 years.

In the first stage, a pilot study was conducted on a sample of 120 children in their late childhood to test the suitability of the tools.

In the second stage, tools were administered on a final sample of 560 children in the 9-12 years age group. They were selected randomly from classes 6-8th of eight private and five government schools of Sattenapalli town of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, India. The sample consisted of 281 boys and 279 girls.

2.1 Tools of the study

1. The family Environment Scale (FES) developed by Bhatia and Chadha (1993) ^[2], was used to collect information about the family environment.
2. A self-concept scale developed by Vasundhara Devi (1980) ^[17], was used to measure the self-concept.

2.2 Variables

The independent variables included in the present study were Family environment, Grade, Gender, Type of school and dependent variable is Self-concept.

2.3 Statistical techniques

The scores obtained were subject to statistical treatment using proper statistical techniques. For this purpose, Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, f-test were used. The result obtained were interpreted and discussed in the light of problem factors to make the result meaningful.

3. Results and Discussion

In this chapter, the results of the statistical analysis of data were presented and discussed systematically based on the objectives and hypothesis.

Table 1: the low and high self-concept children (n= 560).

Self-concept	N	Percentage
Low	282	50.35
High	278	49.64

Low<192; High>192

Table 1 gives the information regarding the sample children with low and high self-concept. A median cut was used to categorize the low and high self-concept children. The score above the median was designated as high, and below the median as low. The children with higher scores were interpreted as having a higher self-concept.

Table 2: Mean, SD and ‘t’ value of family environment score of Low and High self-concept children.

Sl. No	Level of self-concept	Family Environment		
		Mean	SD	‘t’ value
1	Low	232.08	16.63	4.85**
2	High	239.34	18.66	

** : Significant at 0.01 level

Table 2 gives the information about family environment score of children with low and high self-concept. The results show that high self-concept children have better family environment when compared to the children with low self-concept. So, it leads the rejection of the first hypothesis. The ‘t’ value was found to be significant at 0.01 level. A supporting study by Krass, Orth & Robins (2020)^[8] states that the family environment has a substantial impact on late childhood children’s self-esteem.

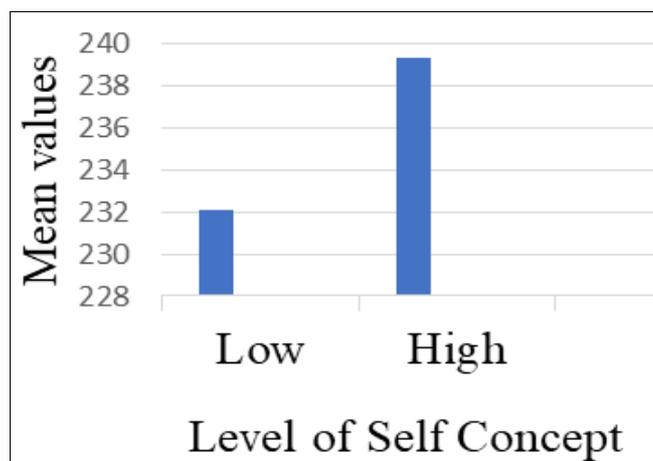


Fig 1: Family environment score of low and high self-concept children.

Table 3: Mean, SD and ‘t’ values of various dimensions of Family environment score by Low and High self-concept.

Sl. No	Dimensions	Level of Self concept	Mean	SD	t-test
1	Cohesion	Low	49.67	6.06	3.05**
		High	51.13	5.26	
2	Expressiveness	Low	29.63	4.34	4.19**
		High	30.93	5.22	
3	Conflict	Low	38.11	5.85	0.56 ^{NS}
		High	38.39	5.87	
4	Acceptance and caring	Low	40.93	5.97	1.09 ^{NS}
		High	40.39	5.80	
5	Independence	Low	28.80	4.77	3.49**
		High	30.29	5.30	
6	Active recreational Orientation	Low	25.95	5.24	2.15*
		High	26.87	4.92	
7	Organization	Low	6.58	1.91	3.88**
		High	7.19	1.81	
8	Control	Low	13.84	2.79	3.46**
		High	13.04	2.64	

NS: Not Significant; *: Significant at 0.05 level; **: Significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 shows that mean, SD and ‘t’ values of various dimensions of family environment score by low and high self-concept. Family environment had a significant influence on the self-concept of late childhood children in six dimensions-cohesion, expressiveness, independence, active recreational orientation, organization, and control. Family cohesion was positively associated with self-esteem (warner, 2015). It is

observed from the results that the family environment plays an important role in establishing self-concept. Orth, (2018)^[15] indicated that the family environment in early childhood significantly predicted self-esteem as the children grew up. The home environment is a key factor in early childhood that influences the long-term development of self-esteem. Hence, it leads to rejection of the hypothesis in the six dimensions namely- cohesion, expressiveness, independence, active recreational orientation, organization and control. However, the hypothesis in the areas of conflict and acceptance and caring dimensions were accepted.

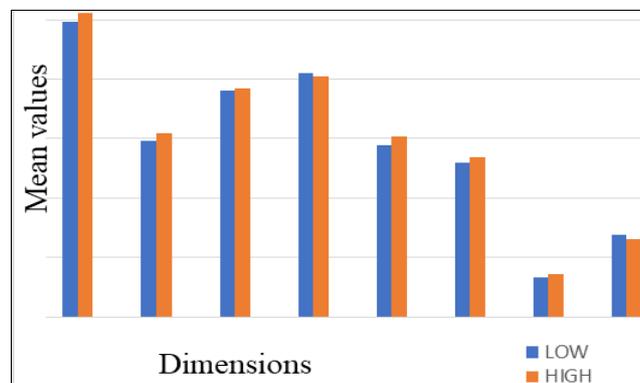


Fig 2: Various dimensions of family environment score of low and high self-concept children

Table 4: Mean, SD and ‘t’ values of family environment of low and high self-concept children by grade.

Level of self-concept	Grade	N	Mean	SD	‘F’ value
High	6 th	79	237.60	20.49	6.30**
	7 th	116	229.97	14.14	
	8 th	83	229.79	14.60	
Low	6 th	109	239.82	20.51	2.11 ^{NS}
	7 th	71	242.47	18.53	
	8 th	102	236.65	16.32	

** : Significant at 0.01 level NS: Not Significant.

In the above table shows the family environment of low and high self-concept children by grade. Children with high self-concept had significant associations compared to the low self-concept children. As reported by Lau and Pun (1999)^[9] across sex and grade, academic self-concept was the domain in which parental evaluation impact would be the greatest. There was a significant relationship between parent’s agreement and children’s self-concept. This result leads to rejection of the 3rd hypothesis, at $P < 0.01$ level.

Table 5: Mean, SD and ‘t’ values of family environment of low and high self-concept children by gender.

Level of self-concept	Gender	N	Mean	SD	‘t’ value
High	Boys	142	233.76	17.89	5.29**
	Girls	140	245.00	17.75	
Low	Boys	139	228.24	17.93	3.95**
	Girls	139	235.93	14.27	

** : Significant at 0.01 level

The information on family environment total score of low and high self-concept boys and girls were presented in table 5. It is found from the results that the girls got high mean values than the boys on family environment. There was a significant difference in low and high self-concept boys and girls at $P < 0.01$ level. This may be because girls generally mature earlier and have more intimate social relationships. Girls do tend to emphasize care related concerns more than boys.

However, boys do not listen to their parental views and morals. Girls listen to their parental views, develop positive self-concept among them and have more self-confidence when compared to boys. So, it leads to the rejection of the 4th hypothesis.

Table 6: Mean, SD and 't' values of family environment of low and high self-concept children by type of school.

Level of self-concept	Type of school	Number	Mean	SD	't' value
High	Government	168	231.43	16.03	0.81 ^{NS}
	Private	110	233.09	17.52	
Low	Government	106	237.79	16.44	1.08 ^{NS}
	Private	176	240.28	19.86	

NS: Not Significant.

Table 6 shows that there will be no significant effect of family environment of low and high self-concept children by type of school. The results lead to accept the 5th hypothesis.

4. Findings

1. The effect of the family environment on the self-concept of late childhood children was proven.
2. The findings clearly indicate that family environment had a significant influence on late childhood children's self-concept in six dimensions; cohesion, expressiveness, independence, active recreational orientation, organization and control.
3. The effect of family environment by grade on the self-concept of late childhood children was true.
4. The effect of family environment by gender on both the low and high self-concept of late childhood children was also proven.
5. The effect of family environment by type of school on the self-concept of late childhood children was disapproved.

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