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Influence of family environment, adjustment, achievement on self-concept of late childhood children

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Abstract

The influence of family environment, adjustment, achievement on self-concept of late childhood children was studied. Sample size considered was ~ 280 for both boys and girls in age group of 9-12 years in 6th to 8th grades from eight private and five government schools of Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh, India. Family environment inventory, Bell adjustment inventory and Self-concept scale were used for results analysis. This study revealed significant difference between family environment and adjustment on influencing self-concept of the children. Similarly, grade and type of school too influenced their self-concept; but neither academic achievement nor gender was found any influence.

Keywords: Family environment, adjustment, achievement and self-concept, late childhood

Introduction

Late childhood extends from the age of six years to the time the individual becomes sexually mature. The characteristic developments during this period have a significant impact on a child's personal and social development. It is during this time that children develop the core abilities necessary for adulthood. They go through the early phases of puberty, develop self-awareness and self-control and lay the foundation for social relationships with peers. Late-childhood children have a more realistic sense of self than younger children. They gradually become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. This can be attributed to greater experience in comparing their own performance with that of others and also greater cognitive flexibility. The reaction and appraisal of their parents, teachers, peers, culture, and media in a way, shapes their self-concept.

Purpose of the study

Late childhood has been overlooked, at least since Sigmund Freud assigned these years to the category of "latency". As parents and teachers, we also tend to lay less importance to this late childhood period because we believe it has fewer or less serious implications than early childhood or adolescent. Late childhood should be valued as a window of opportunity rather than as a period to "grow by" because children in this age have increased cognitive abilities and self-awareness without the strong pressures of adolescence. It may be a good time to maximize the potential for positive growth, provide a support system and opportunities to help children transition successfully to adulthood (Harter, 1999) [8].

According to Erikson, the fundamental developmental objective of late childhood is to achieve industry. This aids in the development of self-esteem and a self-evaluative attitude. As a result, self-esteem and confidence grow, laying the path for long-term social ties. This form of self-development is stimulated by encouraging and caring parents, teachers, and peer groups who make the youngsters feel good.

For children at various stages of development, self-concept originates from a variety of sources. The development of self-esteem in late childhood children is heavily influenced by parental attitudes and actions. When parents are overly indulgent, their children become self-centered and demanding. He expects others to provide him constant attention, affection, and service. Over-indulgent or over-controlling parenting leads to children developing unrealistic self-concepts and self-esteem, which lead to adjustment problems (Berk 2008) [3]. The most potent variables in the development of self-esteem in late childhood include supportive

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parental behavior, encouragement and praise for accomplishment, as well as the child's internalization of the parents' attitudes toward success and failure. Parental acceptance is closely associated with children's psychological adjustment (Khaleque, 2013) [10]. Outside the home, in school and with peers, children's experiences become increasingly significant in defining their self-esteem.

Peer relationships are also one of the significant and important relationships in a child's life. Social interaction with another child who is similar in age, skills and knowledge provokes the development of many social skills that are valuable for the rest of life (Bukowski, Buhmester & Underwood, 2011) [5]. From the peer group, children learn new things as well as how to initiate and maintain good social relations and interactions with other children. With regard to social functioning, research has demonstrated that children with low self esteem are usually less accepted by their peers (Donders & Verschueren, 2004) [6]. Actually socially accepted and having friends connected with good adjustment, personal well being, increased school performance, high self esteem and a positive and satisfying feeling within the peer group (Wentzel, 2003) [19]. At this age, a child's peer group approval plays a critical part in the development and maintenance of self-esteem.

Schools can have an impact on students' self-esteem. The motivation and encouragement directed at the students helps to establish a positive attitude. It helps the children develop a spirit of competition and diversity in academics and extracurricular activities. Late childhood friendships occupy central role in a child's life. With respect to academic achievement, various studies indicate that children with low self-esteem are less successful at school (Mann, Hosman, Schaalma, & De Vries, 2004) [15]. Self-esteem also plays a significant role in students' participation in schools and formal activities as those with high self esteem appear to be more active and enthusiastic than those with low self esteem (Zuffiano, *et al.* 2011 & Stupnisky *et al.* 2013) [20, 17]. School-aged children spend more time with their friends than they do with their homework, television, or playing alone. In addition, the amount of time in which they interact with their parents is greatly reduced from when they were younger.

Objectives of the study

The objective of the study is to

1. Investigate the influence of family environment, adjustment and academic achievement on self-concept of late childhood children.
2. Examine the impact of grade on late childhood children's self-concept.
3. Study the impact of gender on late-childhood children's self-concept.
4. Examine the influence of the type of school on children's self-concept.

Hypothesis of the study

The hypotheses formulated for the present study are as follows

1. There will be no significant effect of family environment, adjustment and academic achievement on the self-concept of late childhood children.
2. There will be no significant effect of grade on the self-concept of late childhood children.
3. There will be no significant effect of gender on the self-

concept of late childhood children.

4. There will be no significant effect of the type of school on self-concept of late childhood children.

Methodology

The major objective of this research study is to find out the influence of family environment, adjustment, achievement 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 over 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. Each individual second unit and quarterly, half-yearly examination marks were obtained from the office records to determine the academic achievement of courses.

Tools of the study

1. Family Environment Scale (FES) developed by Bhatia and Chadha (1993) [4], was used to collect information about the family environment.
2. Bell adjustment inventory revised (1962) Student form was used to assess the children's adjustment.
3. Self-concept scale developed by Vasundhara Devi (1980) [18] was used to measure the self-concept.

Variables

The independent variables included in the present study were family environment, adjustment, academic achievement, grade, gender, type of school and dependent variable is self-concept.

Statistical techniques

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

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. It appears that half of the whole sample has a high self-concept and the other half has a low self-concept.

Table 2: Mean and SD scores of various dimensions of self-concept

Sl. No	Dimension	Maximum Score	Mean	SD
1	Physical Self	50	22.13	4.44
2	Family self	50	19.73	5.46
3	Social Self	50	24.44	5.85
4	Personal Self	50	26.35	5.21
5	Identity	50	24.85	5.83
6	Behavior and self-satisfaction	50	27.85	6.23
7	Moral Self	50	21.36	4.92
8	Ethical self	50	22.80	4.68
	Total	400	189.57	26.20

Table 2 shows the mean and SD scores of various dimensions of self-concept and its total score. It is observed in all the dimensions, the obtained scores were average when compared with the maximum scores. The mean value of total self-

concept was 189.57 and SD was 26.20. From the table, it is seen that the maximum score possible on the scale was 400 and the score obtained was 189.57.

Table 3: Mean, SD and ‘t’ value of Family environment, Adjustment and Academic achievement scores of Low and High Self-concept children.

Factors	Self Concept			
	Level of Self-Concept	Mean	SD	‘t’ value
Family Environment (Data source: Gouthami, 2022) [7]	High	239.34	18.66	4.85**
	Low	232.08	16.63	
Adjustment	High	81.73	19.65	4.65**
	Low	89.10	17.69	
Academic Achievement	High	601.33	273.10	0.26 ^{NS}
	Low	595.23	261.45	

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

Table 3 gives the information about family environment, adjustment and academic achievement scores of low and high self-concept. In family environment, the ‘t’ value was significant at $P < 0.01$ level. When compared to low and high self-concept children, the results demonstrate that high self-concept children had a better family environment. A supporting study (Krauss, Orth & Robins 2020) [12] states that the multiple features of the family environment shape the development of self-esteem during late childhood and adolescence. In adjustment, the ‘t’ value was found to be significant at $P < 0.01$ level. The results indicate that high self-concept children perceived lower mean values when compared to low self-concept children. It means high self-concept children have better adjustment than the other group.

A supporting study (Soheila & Kalantarkousheh, 2015) [16] conclude that a significant relationship between self-concept and adjustment. A child with a low self-esteem is more worried, less well-adjusted, and less effective in school and in life than a child with a higher self-esteem. In academic achievement, the ‘t’ value was not found to be significant at $P < 0.05$ level. It means there is no difference between low and high self-concept in their academic achievement. The results of the present study are also supported by the findings (Aparajitha, Chethana Pati, 1998) reported no significant difference between the selected family variables and children’s social preference, academic achievement and self-concept.

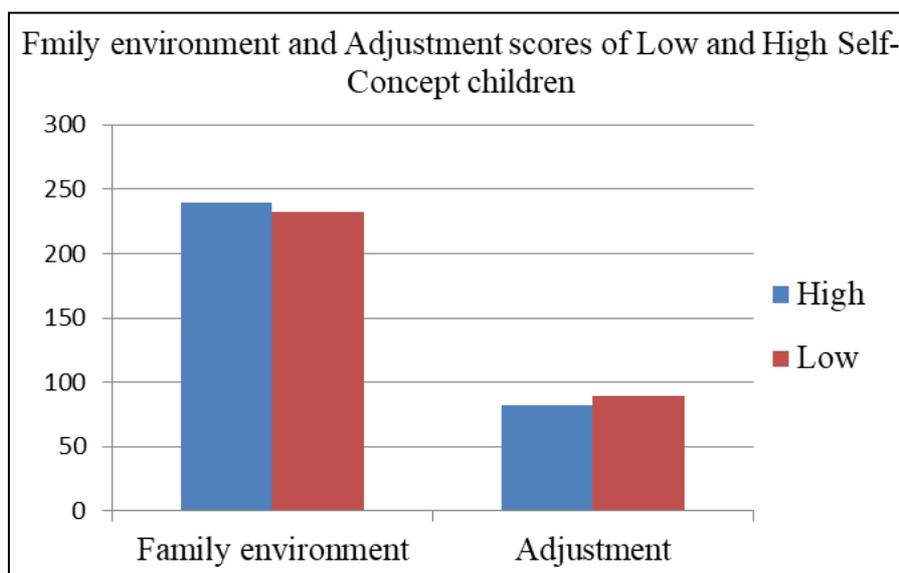


Fig 1: Family environment, adjustment and academic achievement scores of low and high self-concept children. (Note: Low adjustment scores means have better adjustment).

Table 4: Mean, SD and 'F' values of Self-Concept score by Grade

Sl. No	Grade	N	Mean	SD	'F' Value
1	6 th	188	184.98	25.68	10.72**
2	7 th	187	196.59	25.96	
3	8 th	185	187.12	25.70	

** : Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4 presents the mean, SD and 'F' value of self concept score of different grades of late childhood children. The 'F' value indicates the significant association between the grades. This could be due to the fact that as children go through the grades, they begin to experience early puberty, which causes them to become anxious about their physical changes, feel inferior, and lower their self-esteem. The age of children was found to be the most significant factor in the development of self-esteem needs and its effects impacted children more as their age grew (Mogeda, & Samak 2017) ^[15]. As a child passes through primary school, self-definition becomes more complex, comparative, less based on exterior features, and more centered on thoughts and ideas. The child's concrete self-concept transformed into a more abstract, comparative, and generalized self-concept as he grew older.

Table 5: Mean, SD and 't' value of self concept score by Gender

Sl. No	Gender	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
1	Boys	281	189.93	25.3	0.336 ^{NS}
2	Girls	279	189.20	27.1	

NS: Not Significant

Mean, SD and 't' value of self concept of both boys and girls are given in table 5. From the 't' value it is found that there was no significant difference between the boys and girls. Some studies have indicated that boys have a higher self-esteem than girls (Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999) ^[11], whereas other studies have found no gender differences (Major *et al.*, 1999; Robins *et al.*, 2002) ^[13].

Table 6: Mean, SD and 't' value of Self concept score by Type of School

Sl. No	Type of School	N	Mean	SD	't' Value
1	Government	274	197.46	21.85	7.29**
2	Private	286	182.00	27.83	

** Significant at 0.01 level

Table 6 shows that mean, SD and 't' value of self concept of both government, and private schools. The results indicate a significant difference between private and government school children. It is important to note that government school children had high self-concept than private schools children. This could be due to government teachers are focusing more on the overall development of children. Hence, these children perceived high scores.

Findings

The findings suggest that more or less of children have low and high self-concept. With regard to the family environment, the score was compared with the maximum score, half of the children perceived better family environment. Children with high self-concept had a better family environment when compared to the low self-concept children. Therefore, the hypothesis that the family environment has an influence on self concept was proven. In adjustment, the children perceived low scores; it means that children have better adjustment when compared to the low self-concept children. The hypothesis that adjustment has an influence on self concept

was proven. With regard to academic achievement, interestingly, there was no significant difference between two groups of achievers. Therefore, the hypothesis that academic achievement has an influence on self concept was disproven.

A significant association was found between the three grades. Hence, grade has its influence on self concept.

The results indicate that gender had no significant influence on the self-concept of late childhood children. Therefore the hypothesis that gender has an influence on self concept was disproven.

The results showed that children in private schools had a low self-concept while those in government schools had a high self-concept. Students in government schools have more freedom and time to think about themselves and they engage in more extracurricular activities. Students from private schools face more academic stress, have less time to think about themselves with both parents working they receive less parental attention. All of these factors contribute to low self concept. Hence type of school has its influence on self concept was proven.

Implications

A major impact could be changes in self-concept as a result of better child training methods and interactions with the environment. It's achievable by designing and executing some orientation programmes for parents and instructors of late-school children with poor self-esteem. Through these programmes, parents, teachers, education counselors and psychologist should be made aware of the importance of self concept for the development of the good personality, particularly during childhood. They should be encouraged to recognize their duties and consider methods to assist their children by changing their behavior and attitudes toward them and establishing a conducive environment at home for better adjustment and the development of a positive self-concept.

The teachers in schools should realize the importance of involving parents in activities and programmes at the school level. Teacher should be encouraged to discuss about their students problems with the parents. This would give teachers a better understanding the children at school level and also training is to be given to children to build self confidence, independence and self-esteem. It is the responsibility of teachers to assist students who have a low self-concept by using various intervention tactics to help them develop a better self-concept. Educationalists, planners, psychologists, and child development specialists should design the programmes, emphasizing the importance of the late childhood period for an individual's development into a successful adult, with a focus on the development of a healthy self-concept that leads to healthy personality development.

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