Chapter 4
Method
The purpose of the present investigation is to assess the relationship of temperament, parenting styles and parenting stress with social competence and subjective well being and to determine their relative contribution in social competence and subjective well being. Research also endeavoured to assess whether any significant differences exist between the easy and difficult children on parenting style, parenting stress, social competence and subjective well being.

The variables selected for the investigation had various dimensions. The dimensions for temperament are approach/withdrawal, adaptability, threshold of responsiveness, mood, persistence, activity, intensity, distractibility and rhythmicity. The dimensions for parenting style were authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles. Parenting stress comprised parental distress, difficult child and parent-child dysfunctional interaction. Social competence includes cooperation, assertion, empathy and self control. While subjective well being was assessed in terms of global life satisfaction, domain specific life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect.

Based on the review of the literature and also keeping in view the various dimensions, the following objectives and hypotheses were formulated.

**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 if temperament, parenting styles and parenting stress are significant predictors of 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.
**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.

**Design**

For the present investigation to assess the relationship of 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 differences between temperamentally *easy* and *difficult* children on parenting styles, parenting stress, social competence and subjective well being, t-test was applied.

**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.

\[ N = 360 \]

\[ \downarrow \]

Females 180

Males 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 the sample was divided into 2 groups “Easy temperament profile” and “Difficult temperament profile”.

![Diagram showing N = 100 divided into Easy (50) and Difficult (50)]

**Tools**

The following tools were used in the study.

1. **Malhotra Temperament Schedule (Malhotra & Malhotra, 1988):** This is a parent rating form based on the 9 temperament dimensions identified by Thomas and Chess (1977). It can be used as an interview schedule or as a self administered questionnaire. It comprises 40-items, in simple Hindi and English, pertaining to the day-to-day activities of the child.

   Each item is rated on a 5 point scale considering both the intensity as well as the frequency of occurrence of that particular behaviour. The scores 1 and 5 represent the extremes and or frequency of the occurrence of that particular behaviour rated on negative and positive directions. Score of 3 at the midpoint represents average as per the parents’ perception. Means of the five items scores on each of the nine variables is calculated. Also, the nine temperament variables are reduced to four factors. Factor I (Sociability) comprises approach/withdrawal, adaptability and threshold of responsiveness. Factor II (Emotionality) constitutes mood and persistence. Factor III (Energy) includes activity and intensity. Factor IV (Attentivity) consists distractibility. Rhythmicity is retained as an independent fifth factor.

   The Malhotra temperament schedule is reported to have high test-retest reliability (0.83 to 0.94), high inter rater reliability (0.82 to 0.96) as well as high validity. It can be used on all child populations normal or abnormal, within an
age range of 4-14 years of both genders and any socio-economic class. It can be used to study the temperamental profile of children to identify any risk of developing emotional problems, behavioral problems in children seeking psychiatric help; to evolve intervention strategies for counseling.

2. Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (Robinson, et al., 2001): Parenting styles and dimensions questionnaire (PSDQ) includes 32 items forming three patterns of parenting: authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. The **authoritative** pattern consists of three stylistic dimensions: (1) *connection*—warmth/acceptance, 6 items; (2) *regulation*—reasoning/inducation, 4 items; and (3) *autonomy granting*—democratic participation, 4 items. These three stylistic dimensions were summed to form a single measure of authoritative parenting. The **authoritarian** pattern includes three stylistic dimensions: (1) *verbal hostility*, 3 items; (2) *physical coercion*, 3 items; and (3) *nonreasoning/punitive*, 3 items. The **permissive** pattern includes Indulgence, 5 items.

Parenting behaviours reflected in each item” using a 5-point scale anchored by 1 (never) and 5 (always). This yields a self-report measure and a spouse-report measure of authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting for mothers and for fathers. For the present research mother’s responses have been used. The PSDQ questionnaire is reliable and valid measure that is widely used by psychologists. The Cronbach’s alpha for primary factors was found to be 0.91 (authoritative), 0.86 (authoritarian) and 0.75 (permissive) (Robinson et al., 2001).

3. Parenting Stress Index - Short Form (PSI-SF) (Abidin, 1995): The PSI short form (PSI-SF) is a direct derivative of the Parenting stress index (PSI) full-length test, a widely used and well-researched measure of parenting stress. It comprises 36 items, all of which are identical to those in the original version. Similar to the Long Form it requires a 5th-grade reading level, for parents of children 12 years and younger.
It comprises three subscales viz., *parental distress*, *difficult child*, and *parent-child dysfunctional interaction*. The responses range from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree* on a five point scale. Each of the three subscales yield scores ranging from 12 to 60, with higher scores in each subscale indicating greater parenting stress.

The Cronbach’s alpha for test retest reliability of primary factors was found to be 0.84 (total parenting stress), 0.85 (parental distress), 0.78 (difficult child), and 0.68 (parent-child dysfunctional interaction) (Ippen et al., 2005). The PSI-SF is a reliable and valid measure (Ippen et al., 2005; Tan & Rey, 2005), ideal for clinicians who work in a variety of primary health care settings and have a limited time available to patients, targeting those families most in need of follow-up services. It also is valuable for use in schools and mental health clinics where the parent-child dyad is not the primary focus of the assessment.

4. **Social Skills Rating System – Student Form (SSRS-S) {Gresham & Elliott, 1990}**: It is a self-report measure of childhood social skills (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). It was designed to document the perceived frequency and importance of behaviors influencing the student’s development of social competence and adaptive functioning. It has four subscales: *cooperation*, *assertion*, *empathy*, and *self-control*.

For the current study, only the SSRS-S, the elementary form designed for use with children in grades 3-6, was used. Subjects rated themselves on the frequency of behaviors (from 0-never to 3-very often) described by items that load on four subscales; *cooperation*, *assertion*, *empathy*, and *self-control*.

The *cooperation* subscale consists of 10 items which measure behaviors such as helping others, sharing materials, and complying with rules and direction. The *assertion* subscale includes initiating behaviors such as asking others for information, introducing oneself and responding to the actions of others and has 10 items. The *empathy* subscale, 4 items, includes behaviors that show concern and respect for others. The *self-control* subscale consists of 10 items and measures behaviors that emerge in situations of conflict (e.g.
responding to teasing) and non-conflict situations requiring compromise and taking turn. To calculate the cooperation, assertion, empathy, and self-control subscale scores, frequency ratings for each of the 10 items on each subscale were summed. Subscale scores had a potential range of 0 to 20.

The SSRS has proven to be a reliable and valid instrument. In a recent study, the internal consistency estimate (Cronbach’s alpha) for SSRS-S elementary form was found to be 0.68 (co-operation), 0.56 (assertion), 0.67 (self-control), 0.72 (empathy) and 0.86 (Total) (DiPerna & Volpe, 2005). It has been used extensively in social skills and social competence research and has proven to be a useful tool for screening, classification, and intervention planning (Bates et al., 2003).

**Subjective well being:** Subjective well being comprises four separate components global life satisfaction and domain specific life satisfaction, positive affectivity and negative (Diener, 2004). As a result, the following scales were used in the present study:

5. **Satisfaction With Life Scale (Pavot & Diener, 1993):** The Satisfaction with life scale (SWLS) is a short, 5-item instrument designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one’s lives. It was developed to assess satisfaction with the respondent’s life as a whole. The scale usually requires only about one minute of respondent’s time and does not tap related constructs such as positive affect or loneliness. Using the 1 - 7 scale the rater indicates his or her agreement with each item by placing the appropriate number on the line preceding that item.

The SWLS is shown to have favorable psychometric properties, including high temporal reliability and discriminant validity from emotional well-being measures. When used with children the internal consistency has been reported to range between ranged between 0.67 and .84 and the stability of the scale over a 1-year time period has been reported as 0.44 (Gadermann et al., 2009).

In a recent study Gadermann et al. (2009) found that when adapted for use with children, SWLS demonstrated a unidimensional factor structure and
high internal consistency as well as the evidence of construct validity for this age group. Also, the differential item functioning and differential scale functioning analyses indicated that it measures satisfaction with life in the same way for different groups of children at the item and at the scale level.

Thus, it is suited for use with different age groups and is recommended as a complement to scales that focus on psychopathology or emotional well-being as it assesses an individual’s conscious evaluative judgment of his or her life by using the person's own criteria.

6. **Multidimensional Student’s Life Satisfaction Scale (MLSS) (Huebner, 2001)**: The Multidimensional student’s life satisfaction scale (MSLSS) was designed to provide a profile of children’s satisfaction with important, specific domains (i.e. school, family, friends) in their lives and to assess their general overall life satisfaction.

MLSS is self report instrument used for students in grades 3-12. It comprises 40 items designed to assess children’s subjective perception of life satisfaction in five conceptually relevant domains: *family, friends, school, self* and *living environment*. Each item is scored on a 6- pt. scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The readability of the scale is at the 1.5 grade level; hence, students require little or no assistance in responding to the questions.

The scoring is straightforward. The four response options are assigned points as follows: (never = 1); (sometimes = 2); (often = 3); and (almost always = 4). Negatively-keyed items must be reverse scored. Hence, negatively-keyed items are scored so that almost always = 1, and so forth. Higher scores thus indicate higher levels of life satisfaction throughout the scale. It should be noted that a 6-point agreement format has been used with middle and high school students (Huebner et al., 1998). In this case, response options are assigned points as follows: (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = moderately disagree, etc.).

Reviewing various studies Huebner (2001) reported that internal consistency (alpha) coefficients of the scale range from .70s to low .90s. Test-
retest coefficients for two- and four-week time periods have also been reported falling mostly in the .70 - .90 range, providing further support for the reliability of the scale. In addition to reliability indices, convergent and discriminant validity have also been demonstrated through predicted correlations with other self-report well-being indexes, parent reports, teacher reports, and social desirability scales (Huebner, 2001; Huebner et al., 1998).

7. Positive And Negative Affect Scale For Children {PANAS-C} (Laurent et al., 1999): The *Positive and negative affect scale for children* (Panas-C) is a child version of the original *Positive and negative affect scale* (Watson & Tellegen, 1988), similar in content, format & instructions. It was developed using students in Grades 4-8 (N = 707). It is a 30 item self report measure consisting of 2 scales: a 15 items self *positive affect scale* (including happy, proud, joyful etc.) and a 15 items *negative affect scale* (including sad, upset, nervous etc.). The 30 items are rated on 5-pt scale where 1 denotes not at all & 5 denote extremely.

The negative affect (NA) and positive affect (PA) scales demonstrated good convergent and discriminant validity with existing self-report measures of childhood anxiety and depression.

For the scale development and replication samples Laurent et al. (1999) reported the alpha coefficients for negative affect to be 0.94 and 0.92 for, and for positive affect to be .90 and .89. They also reported good convergent and discriminant validity, with the negative affect scale correlating positively with self-reports of depression and anxiety, and the positive affect scale correlating negatively with depression and to a lesser extent with anxiety. In their study using PANAS-C, Crook et al. (1998) reported alphas for Positive Affect to be 0.89 and for Negative affect to be 0.92.

Overall, the PANAS-C, like the adult PANAS, is a brief, useful measure that can be used to differentiate positive affect from negative affect in youngsters. It is also used for screening purposes and in differentiating children who are anxious from those who are depressed.
**Procedure**

For the present investigation, the 360 children were contacted through various schools in Patiala. They 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).

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