Chapter 6
Discussion
Correlation Analysis

Temperament with Social Competence

The results revealed that certain temperament dimensions viz. approach/withdrawal, adaptability and quality of mood contributed positively towards social competence while intensity of reaction incurs a negative impact on it.

According to Carlson et al. (1986) and Sanson et al. (2002) children who are high on approach actively participate and initiate interactions and generally make friends easily. They also tend to be affectively spontaneous in their reactions to unfamiliar people, situation and events. Research conducted by Stocker and Dunn (1990) on children aged five to eleven years, also, reported similar findings that temperamentally sociable children were more popular with peers and had more positive relations with others as compared to children who were less sociable. Such positive interactions further enhance their prosocial skills, making them more socially adroit an adept in social situations, thus, augmenting their social competence. Sociable children also tend to be adaptable. Adaptability to changing people and situational demands, coupled with a high level of approach, may predispose some children towards greater elicitation and readiness for social interactions (Goldberg, 1977). Adaptability not only facilitates interactions with a variety of people but also responsiveness to verbal and nonverbal behavior (Carson et al., 1986), and is critical for the development of social competence even in the early years of life. In contrast, children who are shy, wary, and hesitant, generally, remove themselves from peer interactions, hence, miss the opportunities to resolve conflict and engage in social problem solving; and, thus, loose out on learning socially desirable behaviours and effective problem solving. Such children as infants had been also been rated as "difficult" or as low in adaptability. According to Semrud-Clikeman (2007) children who are unable to adjust are often not selected for play and may be rejected outright by their peers. Numerous studies and
reviews, too, indicate that early inhibition and low adaptability amongst children is associated with difficulty in their interactions with peers and also behavioural or adjustment problems (Billman & McDevitt, 1980; Hinde et al., 1993; Howes & Phillipsen, 1998; Kagan et al., 1984; Sanson, 2000; Smart & Sanson, 2001; 2003; Walker et al., 2001), thus, indicating that they are associated with lower levels of social competence.

Similarly, **quality of mood** also has an impact on children’s social competence. Researchers and theorists (Rothbart, 1989; Semrud-Clikeman, 2007) opine that children with frequent positive mood, smiling, laughing generally seek pleasurable activities, enjoy higher peer status, are rated as more friendly and display fewer behavioural difficulties. Conversely, children who show a tendency toward negative emotionality paired with poor emotional regulation, show less prosocial behaviour, avoid social interactions and tend to have higher levels of internalizing disorders and depression (Colpan et al., 2004; Semrud-Clikeman, 2007). Such children tend to be more fearful, experience more frustration, anger and negative emotionality that further hinders their prosocial behaviors (Eisenberg et al., 1996; 2004; Farver & Branstetter, 1994; Kiang et al., 2004).

Results also revealed a negative correlation of **intensity of reaction** or **reactivity** with all the dimensions of social competence indicating a negative impact on it. Implications of these results find support from previous researches that children whose temperament is characterized by moderately high levels of emotional intensity are viewed as impulsive. They get easily frustrated, exhibit reactive aggression and less control over their emotions which can be challenging to parents as well others around them (Eisenberg et al., 2000; Smart, 2007). Consequently, it is expected that these children are less popular, manifest problems in social relationships, display peer-directed conflict behavior and also are prone to externalizing behaviour problems and oppositional or conduct disorders (Maziade, 1989; Rothbart and Derryberry, 1981; Smart, 2007; Wertleib et al., 1987). However, in a contrasting study, Bryant (1987)
found that emotional intensity combined with low soothability was related to higher empathy for girls, but not boys.

**Temperament with Subjective Well Being**

Concurrent with the findings of the previous correlations i.e. sociable children were not only socially competent but were also found to have better subjective well being. Outgoing, friendly and gregarious children indulge in social activities with others in their free time, are better sought after and have positive interactions with parents, peers and adults alike (Pavot et al., 1990). Such children are likely to experience not only overall life satisfaction but also satisfaction with various domains of their life, viz., family, self, friends, school, and neighbourhood etc. They also tend to experience more positive affect than less sociable individuals, hence, incrementing evaluation of their subjective well being. On the other hand, research shows that children with inhibitory and withdrawal disposition are less affiliative, lack social support and are prone to internalizing disorders and lesser life satisfaction (Caspi et al., 1996; 2003; Fogle et al., 2002; Kagan et al., 1994). They may also experience dissatisfaction with family, friends, school and self and lower positive affect, accordingly overall reporting lower subjective well being.

Children who are more sociable also tend to be more adaptable. *Adaptability* was found to increment not only children’s global as well as domain specific life satisfaction but also their positive affect. Such children get habituated to new stimuli easily and are better able to cope with and manage unpleasant occurrences, e.g., conflicts in the peer group or parental admonitions (Pitzer et al., 2007). According to Guerin et al. (2003) such children adapt successfully to life tasks and challenges that are part of growing up process. Their family environments are generally more cohesive, less conflictual and highly oriented toward intellectual activities. Adaptability in children also reveals how they are viewed and treated by others. Keogh (1989) and Rothbart (1998) opine that teachers also rate adaptability as an important characteristic of a “Model Student”. Other researchers (Cole et al., 1994; Eisenberg & Morris,
are also supportive of the view that a child’s ability to respond in a flexible, adaptable and socially acceptable manner to life experiences elicits positive emotions and incurs good responses from the environment and link it with to their life satisfaction. Conversely, low adaptability has been found to be correlated with hopelessness (Kashani et al., 1991).

Similarly, **quality of mood**, too, exerts important influence on subjective well being. Positive emotions reflect an individual’s sense of pleasurable engagement with the environment, enthusiasm, joy, and energy. Children’s frequent display of positive moods has been associated with their interpersonal goals, development of relationships, and positive expectations (Beaver, 2008; Forbes & Dahl, 2005), thus, enhancing not only their global but also domain specific life satisfaction and consequently leading to better subjective well being. Conversely, high levels of negative emotions reflect emotional distress and specific negative mood states including anxiety, dejection, anger, and sadness. Researchers (Seligman & Ollendick, 1998; Watson et al., 1988) further opine that negative emotionality may at least partially account for the high levels of comorbidity between anxiety and depression in children and youth.

Results also reveal that **threshold of responsiveness** and **distractibility** contributed negatively to satisfaction with school. While persistence and rhythmicity correlated positively with satisfaction with school and self. **Persistence** and **rhythmicity** have often been associated with child’s academic performance, ability to initiate and forge friendships and also appreciations by others (Prior et al., 2000; Rothbart & Jones, 1998) which enhances a child’s self-esteem and self-concept, thus increasing his satisfaction with self and positive affect. Children high in persistence and rhythmicity are well organized, reliable, constant in their likings and regular in academics. They tend to earn praise from teachers, parents, peers and get good grades which cumulatively increments satisfaction with self and school and contribute positively to their evaluation of their subjective well being. Conversely, a child low in persistence and rhythmicity finds it hard to stay on-task, which may pose direct limitations
not only on their learning capacity but is also challenging to parents and teachers, and can lead to a negative perception about the child. Low persistence has been indicated as a factor for rejection by peers, later substance use, delinquency, oppositional behavior problems (Walker, 2002; Webster-Stratton & Eyberg, 1982; Williams et al., 2000; Windle, 1992). All these factors may lead to lower satisfaction with self. Such children also perhaps tend to be high on threshold of responsiveness and distractibility which would lead to lower satisfaction with school as the results reveal. Researchers (Bernstein, 2008; Rothbart & Jones, 1998; Walker, 2001) reported that such children cause high level of frustration to their parents and experience great hardships at school and in relationships, perhaps the reason for their poor academic performance, peer rejection, dissatisfaction with school and negative affect.

Results also demonstrate that intensity of reaction (reactivity) had an adverse impact on not only children’s global but also domain specific life satisfaction and positive affect and incremented children’s report of their negative affect. Children with high levels of emotional intensity are viewed as impulsive, emotional, get easily frustrated, exhibit reactive aggression find it hard to control their emotions, and tend to have problems with peers and teachers (Eisenberg et al., 2000; Smart, 2007). They thus have varied adjustment and internalizing problems and dissatisfaction with school, living environment and friends. According to Chess & Thomas (1984), a very reactive child may be difficult to control and demand great attention and direction from parents. Eisenberg et al. (2000) suggests that children and adolescents who experience difficulty regulating their emotions, particularly negative ones, have difficulty with over-arousal during emotionally charged social situations and show inappropriate behaviors. Many researches have associated negative reactivity with poor peer and teacher-student relationships, low academic achievement, specific developmental delays and later substance use among 15-16 year old (Lerner et al., 1985; Maziade et al., 1990; Sanson et al., 2004; Williams et al., 2000). Perhaps all these factors contribute to lower positive
affect, higher negative affect and overall negative impact on subjective well being in them.

**Parenting Style with Social Competence**

Results indicate that *authoritative parenting style* and its sub dimensions viz., connection, and autonomy, enhance not only cooperation but also strengthen the overall development of social competence amongst children. Authoritative parents are *child-centered* in their interactions; provide appropriate guidance, support and autonomy that instill confidence, security and self-reliance in the child (Rubin & Burgess, 2002). Such parental involvement promotes empathy, effective socializing techniques which they employ with their peers and other adults, generally reaping positive results in return. Studies show that authoritative parent’s demands and expectations for socially responsible and moral behavior have been associated with children’s and adolescents’ responsible and prosocial behavior, endorsement of caring values, and moral reasoning and helps prevent them from developing behaviour problems especially exaternalising disorders (Dekovic & Janssens, 1992; Pratt et al., 2003; 2004; Smart & Sanson, 2001, 2003). This is because, children, generally emulating their parents, exert self-control, display more co-operative, assertive, empathetic behaviour, thus, enhancing their overall social competence.

Conversely, the *authoritarian* parenting style and its sub dimension, viz., physical coercion, verbal hostility, non-reasoning/punitive behaviour not only impedes social skills like cooperation, assertion, empathy and self control but also negatively impacts the overall development of social competence amongst children. Such a parenting style that is characterized by high levels of restrictiveness, hostility, punitiveness and power assertive techniques creates a family environment that elicits feeling of frustration and may result in further hostility and anger amongst family members. This produces not only conflict, hostility and antagonistic, aggressive exchanges between parents and children,
but further escalates the harsh coercive and punitive discipline (Dishion, 1990; Rubin & Burgess, 2002). Such parents interfere with the child’s ability to identify rules and expectations; and inadvertently reinforce non-compliant, impulsive, aggressive behaviour (Rubin & Burgess, 2002). Moreover, the child begins to view the world as cold and distrustful, thus contributing to the child’s lack of expressed concern for others in social interactions and development of socially insecure, anxious, and withdrawn behaviour, resulting in lower social competence.

On the other hand, *permissive* parenting was found to contribute positively to assertiveness in children. Permissive parents, though warm and indulgent, are lenient in disciplining their child, have few expectations and impose little or inconsistent discipline, thus have lesser control over the behavior of their children. There are empty threats of punishment without setting limits. In such situations, role reversal may occur; the children may act more like the parents, and the parents behave like the children (Alfie, 2005; Linwood, 2006). Such children eventually learn that they can get away with any behavior. Permissive parents’ nurturance and support may instill confidence and security but the lack of monitoring and supervision may be detrimental for the child. Generally such children demonstrate poor impulse control and may be disrespectful, disobedient, aggressive, irresponsible, and defiant. They learn to assert themselves in front of their parents and get what they want and replicate this behaviour with their peers too. Though frequently creative and spontaneous, such children may be low in both social responsibility and independence, yet, they are usually more cheerful than the conflicted and irritable children of authoritarian parents (Linwood, 2006).

**Parenting Style with Subjective Well Being**

Results reveal that global life satisfaction of children was influenced substantially when there was good connection (a sub-domain of authoritative parenting style) with the parents. But the other sub-domains of authoritative
parenting style, viz., regulation and autonomy and the overall impact of such parenting had a positive influence on children’s satisfaction with family, friends, school, self and living environment. Authoritative parenting style and its sub domains also augmented children’s valuation of their positive affect while lowering their negative affect. These results can be explicated as authoritative parents display warmth and support towards the child, and value both autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity. They direct the child’s activities but in a rational, issue-oriented manner, encourage verbal give and take, share with the child the reasoning behind their policy, and solicit child’s objections when he or she refuses to conform; exerts firm control at points of parent-child divergence, but do not hem the child in with restrictions. Parental warmth has consistently been linked to positive child outcomes, viz., high self-worth and competence, enhanced emotional well-being, self-esteem, reduced adolescent depression (McFarlane et al., 1995). Parental positive expressiveness, supportive and problem-focused parental reactions help children deal with their own negative emotions rather than become overwhelmed by them. Children exposed to such reactions would be expected to display more empathetic and prosocial behavior, (Eisenberg et al., 1994). Responsive parenting helps create a mutually responsive parent–child relationship which encourages the development of a child who is compliant, responsible, happy, socially more adept, and has better adjustment. Such children have been found to display more positive affect and task orientation during problem solving and less acting-out behavior (Easterbrooks & Goldberg, 1984; McCabe et al., 1999). They also tend to have better relations with their peers, adults, teachers etc., and also generally have good academic grades. Authoritative parenting has also been shown to buffer children against adjustment and behavioural problem (Rubin & Burgess, 2000). Hence, a supportive, warm, responsive parent not only promotes emotional regulation, positive affect and life satisfaction, but consequently also enhances subjective well being.

Conversely, authoritarian parenting style and its sub dimensions physical coercion, verbal hostility and non-reasoning/punitiveness had a
negative impact on global as well as domain specific life satisfaction of children. They not only adversely affected their positive affect; but also contributed to negative affect. Such an effect is probably due to authoritarian parent being highly demanding, strict disciplinarian, often relying on physical punishment to shape behaviour and withhold affection from children. Such parenting may invoke varied negative reactions amongst children and they may either become fearful, meek and frustrated or display rebellious and antisocial propensities. This also hampers the parent child relationship and may produce hostile and aggressive interactions between parents and children (Rubin & Burgess, 2002), thus leading to their dissatisfaction with family. Probably parental rejection, hostility, lack of support forms the basis for a child to develop an internal model of self as unworthy and view the world as cold, distrustful and hostile (Bowlby, 1973), thus, contributing to dissatisfaction with self, family and living environment. Such children are generally moody, unhappy, depressed, angry, fearful, irritable and socially withdrawn. They also tend to have poorer social skills, low self-esteem, negative self-perceptions, and may perform moderately well in school (Baumrind, 1991; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). This all, ultimately, contributes to child’s account of high negative affect and dissatisfaction in different domains of their life.

**Parenting Stress with Social Competence**

Results indicate that **parental distress** hampers both co-operation and overall social competence of children. Theorists (Crnic & Low, 2002) have opined that high levels of parent’s perceived distress is generally reflected in parent’s own behaviour, viz., reduced responsiveness and warmth towards the child. This may bring forth parent’s inability to care for their children in sensitive ways (Abidin et al., 1992) and may even vent their ire and frustration on the child through harsh words, rejection, neglect or even punitiveness. Children not only tend to imbibe such maladaptive behaviour of parents but also harsh parenting responses impart negative socialization cues to them and hence they may
employ them in their own interactions. Thus, high parental distress may also
hamper children’s ability to build up prosocial behaviours like co-operativeness
and self control, thus obstructing development of optimal social competence, as
depicted by the present study.

Parent’s perception of their child as being a **difficult child** was also found
to lead to low co-operation and social competence amongst children. This may
also have an indirect impact on parenting (Putnam et al., 2002). “Difficult
children” more often than not, are quick to react negatively and strongly, have
difficulty calming down, and exhibit poor self-control. Such children have been
shown to lessen their parent’s self-esteem, self-efficacy, marital harmony, mood
and satisfaction as parents, thus, leading to higher levels of parental stress
(Carey, 1998; Ostberg & Hagekull, 2000). This may induce lack of
responsiveness and warmth, inconsistent discipline, high expectations which
ultimately not only retard parent-child interactions but also their own ability to
practice good parenting skills (Crnic & Low, 2002; Deater-Deckard, 2004). Such
parents also often suffer from depression, anxiety and are unable to provide
appropriate discipline and socialization. This has a reciprocal bi-directional
impact. Since children also feel frustrated, angry, react negatively, aggressively
and are also non-co-operative resulting in overall poor social competence as well
as further perpetuating parental distress. Contrary to difficult children, easy
children make their parents feel happy, competent, are successful and have
better social competence.

The findings also suggest that parental distress and parent’s perception of
the child being difficult may hamper their relationship with their children. Such
**parent-child dysfunctional interaction**, probably, would increment children’s
assertiveness. As already mentioned above, parent-child relationships involve
reciprocity and are bi-directional. A parent perceiving the child as “difficult” is
often dissatisfied, focuses more or only on their shortcomings, responding
harshly and irritably leading often to aversive exchanges with the child. In
retribution, the child, too, learns to respond in belligerent, demanding and
aggressive manner.
Thus, overall parenting stress has an impact on co-operation amongst children as the findings suggest. Observation of display of parental distress, inappropriate, aggressive, maladaptive behaviours, makes children imbibe and behave in similar patterns with others. Such poor model behaviour, lack of parental support and guidance for appropriate social behaviour encumbers the growth of several prosocial tendencies in the child, like sharing, assisting, supporting and co-operating.

**Parenting Stress with Subjective Well Being**

Results revealed no impact of parental distress on children’s report of global life satisfaction, but it certainly affected the children’s report of their domain specific life satisfaction, e.g., satisfaction with school. Though it had no impact on children’s report of their positive affect, it contributed towards increased report of negative affect in children. Also, parent’s perception of their child being “difficult” did not have any impact on children’s global life satisfaction but there was an adverse impact on their report of domain specific life satisfaction, e.g., satisfaction with friends, school, and living environment. It also inversely affected children’s report of their positive affect, while contributing towards increased negative affect, thus, overall indicating some adverse impact on children’s subjective well being. These results imply that while rearing children parents should convey warmth and acceptance towards them. Parents who are themselves distressed, perceive their child as difficult and hard to manage, are more likely to be punitive, hostile, harsh, and rejecting in their behavior toward them (Deater-Deckard 2004). Such parenting and emotional rejection by parents leave children at greater risk of having adjustment problems with their peers, teachers and also for developing various emotional behavioural and conduct problems, substance abuse, depression and even poor performance in school (Rohner & Britner, 2002; Rubin & Burgess, 2002). The present results too reflect similar findings, i.e. dissatisfaction with friends, school, environment etc. Also, the child may view the world around him as cold,
distrustful and feels frustrated, rejected, and may respond with anger and hostility to his parents, further escalating the conflict (Rubin & Burgess, 2002); thus accounting for lower satisfaction, lower positive affect and increased negative affect.

Results also indicate that though **parent-child dysfunctional interaction** had no impact on children’s report of their global as well as domain specific life satisfaction, but it had an inverse impact on children’s report of positive affect while adding to their negative affect. Parent child relationships are bi-directional and the quality of parent-child relationship subsequently plays a role in mental health of both the parent and child. In a dysfunctional relationship, during conflicts and disagreements, the parent feels insulted, rejected or abused, even alienated because of the child’s behaviour and may perceive such behavior as intentional. This may invoke the parent to be distant and less sensitive to the child. The child, too, feels hurt, upset and rejected, further escalating the discord, creating chasms between parents and children. This has a spill over impact on varied facets of the child’s life e.g., relationships with peers, interest in academics, and school etc., thus lowering satisfaction and positive affect and adding to negative emotions among them.

Parallel to these results, the overall **parenting stress**, though may not impact the children’s global life satisfaction but hampers their domain specific life satisfaction, for e.g., school, living environment etc. It hinders not only positive affect, but also augments report of negative affect in them. Parenting stress has been associated with less positive interactions between parents and children, a higher likelihood of child maltreatment and abuse, and results in higher conflict between family members (Coyl et al., 2002; Deater-Deckard, 2004; Rodriguez & Green, 1997; Webster-Stratton, 1990). It may form a basis for harsh reactive parenting and obstructs parents’ abilities to respond in constructive ways to their children’s ever-changing competencies and limitations (Deater-Deckard, 2004). All these factors not only obstruct the effective social-emotional development of the child but also lead the child to feel
rejected, unwanted, insecure, angry, anxious, dissatisfied with life, unhappy and depressed.

Thus, the obtained correlation results convey that a child, who is more sociable, cheerful, adaptable and regulate his or her emotions is assertive, exerts more self-control and makes friends easily. Such positive social interactions would facilitate their social competence and also their report of positive affect as well as satisfaction with life, home, school, friends etc. Moreover, children who are persistent and regular not only do well in academics but are also appreciated by teachers, parents and friends alike, thus enhancing their self evaluation and augmenting their satisfaction with self and school. While children who show intense negative reactions often have poor peer relationships and report lower subjective well being.

The results also indicate that parents who are not only warm, supportive yet also firm, set explicit expectations and standards for socially competent and age-appropriate behaviours tend to have more adept and co-operative children. Such parents promote autonomy; permeate confidence, happiness, satisfaction, self-belief in the child, probably leading to higher subjective well being. Conversely, parents who are cold, hostile, punitive and use power assertive disciplinary techniques not only teach their children these very maladaptive social interactions but also alienate their children from themselves. Such children display less co-operation, are aggressive and exert less self-control, thus lowering not only their social competence but also leading to greater negative affect and lower subjective well being.

The correlations also demonstrate that parenting stress impacts the development of socially competent behaviours in the child. It 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. Parents are role models for their children, but distressed parents are somewhat unable to provide the necessary stimulation that promotes their children’s optimal social-emotional and cognitive development.
Regression Analysis

Social Competence

The stepwise multiple regression analysis revealed that temperament, parenting styles and parenting stress contributed significantly in causing variance in social competence.

**Approach**, a dimension of temperament, also referred to as *sociability*, accounted for 24% of variance in social competence. Sociable or approachable children tend to interact more easily including unfamiliar others, and are friendly, outgoing, willing to try new things or to meet new people. Consequently these children gain a broader experience of social interaction, potentially resulting in more effective politeness skills (Pedlow et al., 2001), which perhaps facilitates social competence. Conversely, children high on *withdrawal* are shy, fearful children and “slow to warm up” (Thomas & Chess, 1977). They are cautious, adapt more slowly to novelty than other children and at times manifest problems in social interaction and behaviour. Though once they feel at home can be sociable, friendly and adventurous, yet, because of their apprehensions about intermingling with others, they may miss out on those social experiences that are accrued from frequent interaction with peers. Thus they may exhibit social–cognitive deficits, unskilled behavior and lower social competence (Booth-LaForce & Oxford, 2008).

**Parent-child dysfunctional interaction**, a dimension of parenting stress, accounted for only 2% of variance in children’s social competence. It illustrates the distress of a parent as a result of the quality of his or her parent-child interaction, the degree of conflict in the parent-child relationship and the child not meeting their expectations. The parent may feel insulted as well as alienated from the child’s behavior. Parent’s dissatisfaction and distress may translate to parenting behaviour that is devoid of affection, warmth, praise and responsiveness. Since, parent-child relationships are bi-directional in nature, such excessive parental control, lack of autonomy granting, parental harshness
and even common conflict situations not handled properly may exacerbate the already fragile relationship. Moreover, children too imbibe, learn and model the parent’s maladaptive behaviour and employ it not only with their peers, siblings and other adults, but with the parent too, thus, further increasing the parent’s distress. As a result, parental negative affect, harsh parenting and dysfunctional parent-child interaction has been related to various social outcomes in children, viz., hostility, non-cooperation, apathy, lower levels of peer acceptance, poor social skills, less altruistic, avoidant and aggressive behaviour, thus overall low social competence (Anthony et al., 2005; Carson & Parke, 1996).

Though overall parenting stress accounted for only 1% of variance, but it was significant in indicating its impact on social competence. This comprises parental distress, their perceptions of their children as difficult and the dysfunctional interactions. Research demonstrates such parenting stress spills over to inconsistent discipline, lack of appropriate structure and guidance, and unrealistic expectations from the children (Anthony et al., 2005; Crawford & Manassis, 2001). Parent’s role is not only to provide, teach and guide but also be role models for them. According to Abidin (1982, 1995) parenting stress could lead to not only dysfunctional parenting, but also disengagement may initiate inappropriate responses in conflict as well as normal interactions. It may also pave the way for harsh reactive parenting that interferes with their ability to respond in constructive ways to the child’s ever-changing competencies and limitations (Deater-Deckard, 2005). Parent’s such harsh, maladaptive behavioural tendencies can also be transmitted to the children and are imbibed and modeled by them in their interactions. Research shows that such parenting is also associated with externalizing behaviour problems and poor social competence amongst such children (Anthony et al., 2005; Crnic & Low, 2002; Dishion, 1990).
Subjective Well Being

The stepwise multiple regression analysis for each of the four components of subjective well being, viz., *global life satisfaction*, *domain specific life satisfaction*, *positive affect* and *negative affect* reveals:

- **Global Life Satisfaction**
  Temperament, parenting styles and parenting stress contributed significantly in causing variance in global life satisfaction.

  **Quality of mood**, a dimension of temperament, alone accounted for 14% of variance, indicating its significance in children’s report of their global life satisfaction. Children who display positive and pleasant emotions generally exhibit more social engagement, approach coping and reward seeking behaviour; conversely, frequent negative emotions in children have been associated with avoidance coping, low self esteem, depression, hopelessness and lower subjective well being as well as lower life satisfaction (Crook, Beaver, & Bell, 1998; Forbes & Dahl, 2005; Harter, 1994; Shweta & Sokhey, 2005). Positive emotions are considered central to children’s interpersonal goals and development of relationships as well as affect the child’s construction of the self. They have been associated with positive self-concept, higher self-esteem, better peer relationships, optimism, and positive parent child interactions, hence, have a significant impact on child’s valuation of his global life satisfaction.

- **Parent-child dysfunctional interaction**, a dimension of parenting stress, yielded 3% of variance indicating its role in global life satisfaction. Parents who reports higher levels of stress and greater dissatisfaction with their children may behave differently. They may either feel less involved in the child’s life or they may become more authoritarian, overbearing and project their own stress on to the child. In each of the instances, parents are less likely to provide the necessary stimulation that promotes their child’s optimal social-emotional and cognitive development (Crnic & Low, 2002; Deater-Deckard, 2004). In such situations, the child will not only feel alienated and rejected from the parent, but is more likely to show problems in development and signs of maladjustment.
This kind of dysfunctional parent-child relations has not only been associated with depression, conduct disorders, poor social competence and poor academic grades (Baumrind, 1990; Deater-Deckard, 2004), but also lower life satisfaction among children.

Apart from quality of mood, certain other temperament dimensions also contributed in predicting global life satisfaction. Approach/Withdrawal accounted for 3% of variance and rhythmicity accounted for 2% variance, yet they both contributed significantly in children’s subjective well being. These results also find support from some of the previous researches as well. Hemphill et al. (2004) and Smart and Sanson, (2001, 2003) report that approach generally has a positive impact on peer, family, and parent-child relationships. Such children tend to spend more time with others, are better liked, have more fulfilling interactions (Hills et al., 2000; Pavot et al., 1990; Watson et al., 1992), subsequently they are happier and satisfied. Such approach tendencies of the child may help create situations that may indirectly influence subjective well being. If such children display high rhythmicity, i.e., they are well organized, reliable and constant in their likings they tend to do well in various aspects of life such as regularity in his household chores, regularity in his school work, hence, get good academic results, are often appreciated and praised by parents, teachers, peers and fellow students. This enhances a child’s self-esteem and adds to his positive self-concept (Fogle et al., 2002), thus augmenting the estimate of his or her satisfaction with life. Conversely, social withdrawal has been linked to problems with social competence. Rubin et al. (1995) found in a longitudinal study that children who were high on measures of social withdrawal and aggression exhibited more loneliness and showed poorer social competence. Thus, aggression, anger and social withdrawal have been associated with poorer outcome in adolescents.

Authoritative parenting style’s sub-dimension i.e., parent’s positive emotional connection with the child too added 1% variance in children’s global life satisfaction. These parents affectively respond to their children by being loving, warm, supportive, attentive, nurturing, sensitive and encouraging
children’s individual interests, needs and feelings (Wu et al., 2000). Such parenting increment secure attachment, builds lasting parent-child bonds, promotes empathy and better school performance, positive sociable outcomes, and prevents anger, hostility as well as internalizing and externalizing problems in children (Maccoby, 1983; Wu et al., 2000). Consequently, the child feels better satisfied with his life.

> **Domain Specific Life Satisfaction**

Results revealed that temperament and parenting styles contributed significantly in causing variance in domain specific life satisfaction also.

Amongst the various dimensions of temperament, **quality of mood** not only had an input on global life satisfaction but also accounted for 22% variance, thus illustrating its impact on domain specific life satisfaction also. These results imply that children who are happy gregarious and popular amongst peers are also better liked by adults. They are able to elicit positive emotions from their parents and have not only good parent-child relationships but also adjust better in school, have more friends and tend to be happier not only with self but also with their living environment. Conversely, children who are irritable, hostile or sad are prone to negative emotions, poorer peer interactions, leading to generally lower social status (Rubin et al., 2006). Positive experiences affect social, emotional, and cognitive functioning beyond the influences of family, school, and neighborhood. It also enhances attachment and self-esteem, etc. (Harter, 2006; Kochanska, 2001), thus, incurring greater life satisfaction. Consequently, it can be said that quality of mood is a predictor of domain specific life satisfaction.

Also, keeping in view its negative correlation with various facets of Domain specific life satisfaction, **physical coercion**, a sub-dimension of authoritarian parenting style, also impacts domain specific life satisfaction as it accounted for 3% variance. The findings suggests that power-assertive techniques of discipline such as physical punishment or deprivation of privileges are generally negatively related to children’s prosocial behavior,
empathy, sympathy, poor academic grades. The findings of several researches (Deater-Deckard et al., 2001; Spinrad et al., 1999; Steinberg et al., 1994) lend support to these results. They suggest that children tend to imitate such maladaptive behaviours, employing them with their peers and siblings, further resulting in poor interpersonal relationships, disillusionment and alienation from not only peers but also incurring admonishments from parents, teachers and elders. Such children are liable to feel hurt, disillusioned, and hostile toward their parents; and tend to feel isolated, distrustful towards others, thus showing dissatisfaction with various aspects of their life.

The contribution of intensity of reaction (2%) and adaptability (2%) (dimensions of temperament) causing significant variance in domain specific life satisfaction cannot be undervalued. These results imply that children with low reactivity and higher adaptability generally report higher domain specific life satisfaction. Children who are better able to manage and regulate their emotional displays and are adaptable to new experiences, people and situations, surroundings and also to new life challenges are rated by parents, teachers and peers as more socially competent and are more popular. They also tend to do academically well, have enhanced self-esteem and are better satisfied with varied aspects of their life. In contrast, children with higher levels of intensity are viewed as volatile, impulsive and high-maintenance (Thomas & Chess, 1977). Display of negative reactivity has been linked to socially undesirable behaviour, low social competence, lower academic grades, classroom behaviour problems, deviant peer affiliations and, probably later substance use (Aron & Aron, 1997; Hemphill et al., 2004; Martin, 1994; Nelson et al. 1999; Rothbart & Jones, 1998; Williams et al., 2000). They get easily agitated, frustrated, and generally report less satisfaction with various aspects of their life.

- **Positive Affect**

Temperament and certain parenting styles also contributed significantly in causing variance in children’s report of their positive affect.
Temperament dimensions not only have an impact on Global as well as Domain specific life satisfaction of children but also influences their affect. Concurrent to the previous findings, quality of mood, here too, contributed significantly on children’s valuation of their positive affect as accounted for by 65% variance. Halle (2003) proposed that dispositional emotionality plays a pivotal role in a host of positive life outcomes. Individuals who experience frequent positively valenced moods and emotions are perceived to have tendency to approach, to think, feel, and act in ways that promote both resource building and involvement with approach goals (Elliot & Thrash, 2002; Lyubomirsky, 2001; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). Concurrent to this view researchers have found positive emotionality to be linked with achievement, adjustment, mastery motivation, surgent engagement, and self-assurance in middle childhood (Shiner et al., 2002; Rothbart, 2003). Negative emotionality, however, is linked to low adjustment, lower academic achievement, conduct problems and with other varied arrays of child’s life, viz., coping, decision making, social relationships, social competence, performance, perception and self-appraisal (Caspi, 2000; Eisenberg, 2006; Eisenberg et al., 2000), thus, contributing significantly to children’s evaluation of their positive affect.

Children’s report of positive affect, as revealed by the results, is also affected by intensity of reaction, another dimension of temperament, causing 2% of variance. Soothable children display lower emotional intensity, are popular, display better social skills, have better parent-child and peer relationships, and school performance (Contreras et al., 2000; Eisenberg et al., 1993, 1997). Probably, such positive experiences lead to more satisfaction in life as well as augmenting a child’s report of positive affect. Conversely, children who are impulsive, volatile, difficult to discipline, and rated high on frequency and intensity of negative affect are known to display more externalizing and internalizing problems in the preschool through middle-childhood periods (Bates & Bayles, 1988; Bates et al., 1991). All these researches imply that intensity of reaction contributes to positive affect among children.
As the previous researches and present results reveal that authoritative parenting style benefits not only social development but also influence children’s psychological well being especially positive affect. The overall authoritative parenting style renders an impact on child’s positive affect, leading to significant variance of 2% while its sub dimension connection incurred a significant variance of 1% on children’s valuation of their positive affect. It implies that connection between parent and child not only enhances global life satisfaction but also positive affect. Also such children show higher levels of psychological competence and lower levels of psychological and behavioral dysfunction in comparison to children and adolescents who perceived their parents as neglectful (Milevsky et al., 2007). More parental connectedness, i.e. patience, playful and sensitive parenting makes the child feel nurtured, loved and secure; instills confidence, security, and contentment; and prevents anger, hostility, frustration, and resentment in children (Wu et al., 2000). As a result, better parent-child connectedness augments happiness and positive affect among children.

Overall authoritative parenting style, too, renders an impact on child’s positive affect, leading to significant variance in children’s report of their positive affect. When parents are supportive, emotionally available and teach children emotion regulation and coping skills, their children are likely to be more secure, socially competent and less prone to experience negative affect, report better attachment, and coping strategies across situations (Anthony et al., 2005; Hardy et al., 1993). Authoritative parenting has also been associated with child’s better academic performance and positive relationships with teachers and peers. Such children generally feel loved, secure, happy, content and confident. This enhances their satisfaction with life and positive affect.

- **Negative Affect**

Results revealed that temperament and certain parenting styles contributed significantly in causing variance in children’s report of their negative affect too.
Quality of mood or dispositional emotionality, a dimension of temperament, contributed significantly in children’s report of their negative affect by incurring 18% variance. Previous research has associated dispositional negative emotionality with poor academic performance, personal distress, alienation, and self-descriptions of worry, anxiety, feeling victimized, resentfulness and drug abuse (Davidson, 2000; Tellegen, 1985; Wills et al., 1998). It plays an important role in varied aspects of child’s life such as performance, self-concept, coping, decision making, social interactions as well as children’s perception of and reactions to others, thus, probably not only shaping children’s socio-emotional development but also significantly affecting children’s subjective well being (Eisenberg, 2006; Saarni et al., 2006). Hence, as quality of mood impacts children’s various experiences, relationships, developmental tasks, and outcomes, it can be said that it does play a role in children’s valuation of their negative affect.

Parent’s perception of their child being difficult too, adds to child’s report of negative affect, as evident from the 4% variance it incurred. Parents who report elevated level of stress often view their child as moody, demanding, “difficult” and lack positive interactions with the child. Such parents, probably display lack of warmth and responsiveness in their parent-child interactions, use controlling and authoritarian parenting style in rearing the child and are often critical, emotionally insensitive, and unsupportive toward their children (Cummings & Davies, 1999; Deater-Deckard, 2000; Gelfand et al., 1992). They exhibit discipline that is either lax or harsh and may have developmentally inappropriate expectations from their child (Crawford & Manassis, 2000). Such interactions may make the child feel alienated, disillusioned, insecure, rejected and hurt; thus adding to the child’s account of his or her negative affect.

Physical coercion by the parents seems to have a vital impact on child’s well being as revealed by 2% variance it caused on negative affect. Parents who rely on physically punitive disciplinary measures and isolation are rigid and continuously demean and mock the child or even try to put the child in his or her place (Fabes et al., 2001; Kochanska, 1995; Wu et al., 2000). This
consequently makes the child feels inferior, angry, frustrated, dejected, insecure, thus exacerbating his or her negative affect.

**Intensity** of the child’s reaction, another dimension of temperament, too has an impact on children’s negative affect as it incurred 2% variance. Children with high dispositional intensity respond intensely, get easily frustrated, also exhibit reactive aggression and may thus find it hard to control their emotions (Eisenberg et al. 2000; Smart, 2007). Being more susceptible to negative cues, they experience greater negative affect, viz., anxiety, depression, distress, fear, shame etc. and show lower levels of constructive coping and attentional control (Eisenberg et al., 1993; Saarni et al., 2006). High emotional intensity has further been associated with emotional avoidance, aggression, socially undesirable behaviour, deviant peer affiliations, academic problems, substance abuse, externalizing types of behavior problems and low social competence (Aron & Aron, 1997; Eisenberg & Fabes, 2006; Laor et al., 2001; Williams et al., 2000; Wolmer et al., 2001). Thus, intensity of reaction too may have an impact on child’s report on negative affect.

The obtained regression results clearly delineate that an outgoing, cheerful child who initiates interactions with children of his age is more likely to be socially adept and competent. When supported by positive directive guidance from parents the child is liable to have a larger repertoire of prosocial behaviour. On the contrary, parent’s stress could lead to adverse exchanges or disengagement in parent-child relationship, disruption in effective guidance and may pave the way for a child to learn and adapt aggressive, undesirable social tendencies, thus, causing hindrance in their social competence development.

The stepwise multiple regression analysis for each of the four components of subjective well being, viz., global life satisfaction, domain specific life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect revealed that a cheerful, sociable child, regular in all aspects of his life and who feels well connected with his parents has not only reports greater global life satisfaction but will also be satisfied with various domains of his life. This also paves way for several positive
developmental outcomes, adding to a child’s positive affect. Conversely, discord and aversive exchanges with parents lessens children’s global life satisfaction as well as satisfaction with various domains of their lives, especially when the child receives harsh, punitive parenting or is not able to regulate his emotions or is not adaptable. Such children also tend to display negative mood and intense reactions and are susceptible to negative cues in the environment. This adds to the child’s report of negative affect, thus lessening their subjective well being.

Overall, the regression results highlight the significant contributions of temperament dimensions, parenting styles and parenting stress in children’s social competence and subjective well being.
t-test Analysis

Results revealed significant differences between Easy and Difficult children, on parenting styles, parenting stress, social competence as well as subjective well being.

A child’s behavioral style may evoke certain reactions from others. Accordingly, the results, too, reveal that easy children received more authoritative parenting in comparison to difficult children. Easy children are characterized by positive approach, high adaptability to change, regularity, and often positive mood (Chess & Thomas, 2002). They are sociable, less intense, cheerful, able to adapt to changes in their environments, and are not easily distressed by limitations that are placed on them (Rothbart & Bates, 1998). They tend to be more responsive to parental demands and receive high levels of warm and responsive parenting (Keyes, 2002). The parents also tend to be warmer, responsive, emotionally connected to their children and offer ample directive guidance and support. Yet, when the easy children perform transgressions, they do receive admonishments and disciplinary punishment from their parents, as parent-child relationships are bidirectional. Conversely, children in difficult temperament configuration are characterized by irregularity in biological functions, negative withdrawal to new stimuli, poor adaptability to change, and intense mood expressions which are frequently negative (Chess & Thomas, 2002). They tend to elicit less sensitive and responsive parenting as compared to easy children (Crockenberg & Leerkes, 2002). They have trouble adapting, regulating their behaviour, following instructions and often display intense negative reactive behaviour, thus, elicit harsher punishment from their parents and in so doing negatively influence their parent-child relationship. Even from authoritative parents they receive harsh parenting as such a relationship is bidirectional.

In addition, results reveal that easy children induced lesser distress in their parents, in comparison to difficult children. A child with a temperamentally cheerful sunny disposition may not only naturally educe
smiles and interest but also promotes positive reciprocal engagements and responsiveness with parents. Conversely, difficult temperament of the child can certainly have a negative impact on family life and also increment parental distress. Abidin (1986) and Östberg and Hagekull (2000) are of the view that difficult temperament poses challenges for parents. Such children have generally been observed to typically exhibit a pattern of behaviour that is distressing to parents and this behaviour often evolves into more serious problems if destructive labeling and behaviour patterns set in (Thomas & Chess, 1977).

Temperament differences not only evokes reactions of others’ towards the child but it also influences how the child interacts with people and settings (Chess & Thomas, 2002). Results show that easy children are more socially competent as compared to difficult children as they are cheerful, adaptable and actively participate in social interactions, thus, honing their social skills and become adept, adroit and more competent in social situations. Alternately, results indicated that difficult children had lower social competence as compared to easy children. It has been proffered that a child with a difficult temperamental profile may have a more profound negative influence on other people than a child with a more sociable or adaptable style (Thomson & Goodvin, 2002). Studies reveal that when the parental or teacher attitudes to discipline are punitive and dysfunctional, a difficult child tends to be predisposed to externalizing behavioral disorders (such as violence) aggression and later antisocial behavior (Chess & Thomas, 2002; Eisenberg et al., 2006).

Results also reveal that easy children report more global as well as domain specific life satisfaction, positive affect and lower negative affect in comparison to difficult children. Positive temperament traits that promote reciprocal engagements with caregivers foster the early development of effective coping strategies such as a balance between autonomy and help-seeking, effective communication, goal-directed problem solving, better performance and social competence (Teglasi & Epstein, 1998; Werner, 1995). These factors subsequently incur a positive impact on child’s socio-emotional development,
enhance social competence and also increment subjective well being. On the other hand, difficult children reported not only higher negative affect but also lower global and domain specific life satisfaction as well as lower positive affect in comparison to easy children. Difficult children generally experience less sensitive and harsher parenting, have poor parent-child relations, are less popular, generally feel alienated, isolated and hurt. All these factors will consequently cause a detrimental impact on the child’s socio-emotional development, leading to lower social competence and subjective well being.

Hence, the obtained results signify significant differences between easy and difficult children on parenting style, parenting stress, social competence and subjective well being.
Implications of the present research

Social competence and subjective well being are considered to incur a significant long term influence upon psychological, academic, adaptive functioning (Fogle, et al., 2004; Bates, et al., 2003). A higher and better-developed social competence enables youngster to cope with and overcome adjustment difficulties and is an important contributor to the subjective well being of the child. Similarly, subjective well being serves not only as a key indicator of positive development but also as a broad enabling factor that promotes and maintains mental health.

Discerning the importance of these constructs in the overall development of the child, their significance in developmental psychology and viewing the paucity of such research in India, the present investigation explored the relevance of these constructs.

The present research highlighted several antecedents of social competence and subjective well being, but these precursors need to be employed and implemented to ensure appropriate socio-emotional functioning amongst children. Parent and teacher education programmes, workshops with children to augment their social skills and emotion regulation etc., would help in paving way for enhanced social competence and subjective well being among children, thus aiding in the over all development of a child. Higher levels of social competence and subjective well being in a way would shield children and youth from developing psychological and behavioural problems even in the face of environmental stress, encourage them to explore the world, to challenge themselves to grow and prosper, and to be successful in all their endeavours along with increasing and maintaining their happiness as well as mental health.
Limitations and suggestions for future research

1. In the present study, father’s involvement and participation in report of child’s temperament, their own parenting style and parenting stress was almost non-existent. Out of 360 fathers, only 7 fathers returned fully completed forms. Hence, father’s participation could not be procured for the present study.

2. In the present investigation, children’s own self-report of their temperament as well as their own perspective of their parent’s parenting style could not be taken.

3. In order to avoid unwieldiness of the study the investigator could not do full justice to other demographic variables like socioeconomic status, family structure, types of family (e.g., single parent, divorced parent.), marital discord etc.