Role Of Temperament, Parenting Styles, Parenting Stress on Social Competence and Subjective Well Being among children.

Abstract

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

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

The following objectives were formulated:

**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 if differences between temperamentally easy children 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.

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\begin{align*}
N &= 360 \\
\text{Females} &= 180 \\
\text{Males} &= 180
\end{align*}
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The parents (mothers) of these children were administered the Malhotra Temperament Schedule (Malhotra & Malhotra, 1988), the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (Robinson et al., 2001), and the Parenting Stress Index - Short Form (Abidin, 1995).

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

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

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\begin{align*}
N &= 100 \\
\text{Easy} &= 50 \\
\text{Difficult} &= 50
\end{align*}
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**Results**

**Correlation Analysis**

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

It was found that adaptability, approach/withdrawal and quality of mood were positively correlated while intensity negatively correlated with social competence.
Subjective well being was analyzed by viewing correlations for global life satisfaction, total domain specific life satisfaction, positive affect and negative affect separately. Temperament dimensions of approach/withdrawal, adaptability and quality of mood were found to be positively correlated with the children’s global and domain specific life satisfaction including its sub-dimensions and positive affect, but showed negative correlations with negative affect. The temperament dimension of intensity negatively correlated with children’s global and domain specific life satisfaction including its sub-dimensions as well as positive affect, but showed positive correlations with negative affect.

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

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

Overall the results revealed that authoritative parenting style correlated positively, while authoritarian parenting style correlated negatively with social competence.

For subjective well being, results illustrated that authoritative parenting style correlated positively with it; while, authoritarian parenting style correlated negatively.

These findings suggest that warm, responsive and supportive parents, who also set explicit expectations and standards for children’s behaviors, promotes autonomy, permeates confidence, happiness, satisfaction, in a child, thus enhancing their social competence and subjective well being. While, parents who interact with their children in cold and unresponsive ways, use harsh, hostile and punitive and/or power assertive disciplinary techniques teach their children not only these very social interactions but also alienate their children from themselves, thus inversely affecting their social competence and decreasing subjective well being.

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

Overall, parenting stress was found to be inversely related with social competence. For subjective well being, results reveal that parenting stress was correlated positively with negative affect and inversely with life satisfaction and positive affect.

The results indicate that parenting stress negatively impacts the development of socially competent behaviours as well as subjective well being among the child.

**Regression analysis**

Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis results revealed that:

**Social Competence:** It is highly affected by approach/withdrawal, parent-child dysfunctional interaction and total parenting stress.

**Subjective Well Being**

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

- **Global and Domain Specific Life Satisfaction**
  Results demonstrate that quality of mood, parent-child dysfunctional interaction, approach/withdrawal, rhythmicity and connection incur a significant impact on Global Life Satisfaction. Almost similar trends were observed for domain specific life satisfaction i.e., quality of mood, physical coercion, intensity and adaptability were found to be the significant predictors.
Positive and Negative Affect

Results reveal that quality of mood, intensity, connection, and total authoritative parenting have a significant impact on positive affect. While, quality of mood, difficult child, physical coercion, and intensity elevate negative affect.

t-test Analysis

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

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

Keywords: Temperament, Parenting Styles, Parenting Stress, Social Competence and Subjective Well Being.