



A STUDY ON SELF ACCEPTANCE OF CHILDREN
BELONGING TO SINGLE PARENT AND INTACT
PARENT FAMILIES OF MALAPPURAM DISTRICT IN
KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Education today is considered those skills that are necessary to function in society. The family, being the basic element in the society, assumes a significant role in social development by providing its members a conducive atmosphere for their social, emotional and intellectual development. The present study is an attempt to find out influence of family structure, namely, Intact Parent Families and Single Parent Families on the psychological variable, Self Acceptance. An attempt is also done to find out the differences, if any, due to the differences in gender, area of residence, the income group and the type of school of the sample. It was found that there exists some significant relationship and some non significant relationship among the selected variables. The result of the study has great implications for educationists, administrators and parents as well.

KEY WORDS: Intact parent family, Single Parent family, Self Acceptance.

INTRODUCTION

Family is the first social institution which came to be established in a natural way in the evolution of the history of mankind. It has always been a place responsible for the

upbringing of the children. It moulds the character and is a key determinant in the personal development of its members. Family systems have been subject to continuous social

change across different societies in the world. Among the different family systems such as nuclear or intact parent family, single parent family, extended family and childless family, the more commonly found systems are intact parent family and single parent family. One of the striking features in family structure has been the increasing number of single parent families. Many studies show that in Indian context the emergence of single parent families is due to the last reason above mentioned.

SINGLE PARENT FAMILY AND INTACT PARENT FAMILY

Generally, family can be seen as a group of people who have biological, notional or legal ties to each other. (Daniel et.al.1990). In different cultures the term family may mean different things and a wide variation, usually people of two or more generations are involved.(Lids1983,Jallinoja2000) The child in the family is the recipient of whatever constructive influences are resulted from the interrelations of his family with the social order.

An intact parent family consists of mother, father and their biological or adoptive descendents often called the traditional family. There is a nurturing environment in such families, where both adults are the biological or adoptive parents of their children. The concept of single parent family is used when a family is formed of one custodial parent and a number of independent children. Such families arises due to the death of one parent, high rate of divorce, birth of children out of wedlock and temporary absence of one parent for employment or business purposes.

Families render the most enduring influence in children's comprehensive development. A child being brought up and cared under the protective security, guidance, love, affection and disciplinary vigil of both the parents is likely to mature into a sound and

healthy personality. One of the fundamental aspects of personality of a child is his/her ability to develop Self Acceptance. Development of a high acceptance about his/her own self is highly correlated with the family atmosphere. The problems of children who are deprived of love, care and assistance of one of their parents are assuming an epidemic proportion. Due to single parent, the child may lack parental control or may face repression or over control. It may result in multifarious problems or complexity. These may become more difficult to manage when the parent is alone. The difficulty with the role identity and social stigma attached to the single parent status may have adverse effect on children. The psychologist Eleanor Maccoby (1978) expresses concern that the children brought up in single parent families may face problems for socialization. Various studies lend support to this observation.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the differences, if any, in the scores of self acceptance of children of Intact Parent and Single Parent Families.
2. To study the differences in the scores of self acceptance of owing to the differences in
 - ✧ Gender
 - ✧ Type of school
 - ✧ Area of residence
 - ✧ Income group
 - ✧ Academic achievement

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chopra and Kalita (2006) in their study titled 'Adjustment Problems of Elementary School Children of Single Parent and Intact Parent Families' found out that the children belonging to Intact Parent Families are better adjusted emotionally and socially than those who belong to Single Parent Families. The study

also showed that the children of Intact Parent Families showed better educational performance and overall adjustment.

Mather (2003) in his 'Single Parent Family and the child's Mental Health' found that psychological, behavioural and emotional problems are more in Single Parent Family than in Biological Two Parent Families.

Levon (2001) in his article 'Self Acceptance: An ace up your sleeve' explains different aspects of self acceptance. According to him, self acceptance is the ability to see and recognize all our parts without judgment either positive or negative. He also says that as we increase our self acceptance we increase the raw material at our disposal to create with. He opines that through self acceptance we can face the life more realistically.

Brill (1999) emphasizes in his article 'Dealing with the hazards of Adolescence' the need to educate adolescents on how to deal with hurt feelings arising from an intense need for self acceptance and a heightened sense of emotional vulnerability.

Jiravanchaikul's (1997) throws light on the fact that self acceptance can be raised in children through positive thinking programmes.

DESIGN OF THE STUDY AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference in the self acceptance of children of Intact Parent Families and single Parent Families.
2. There is no association between academic achievement of children and type of families.
3. There is no significant difference in the self acceptance of children due to the differences in

- ✧ Gender
- ✧ Type of school
- ✧ Area of residence
- ✧ Income group
- ✧ Academic achievement

DESCRIPTION OF TOOLS

Self Acceptance Inventory used in this study was a standardized test prepared by Sudhir B Kakkar and published by National Psychological Corporation (1984). Self Acceptance as measured through this inventory is an assessment of factors such as sense of personal worth and satisfaction with the self. It is largely self administering and permits 'True or False' answers on the test itself. Valuing of the answered inventories was done with reference to the scoring key. Individuals with high scores may tend to be seen as intelligent, outspoken, short-willed, pervasive, verbally fluent, having self confidence and self assurance. Those having low scores tend to be seen methodical, conservative, dependable, easy-going, quiet, self abasing, and self centered. A person with low average would tend to be highly conventional, quiet, self abasing, given to the feeling of guilt and self blame and as being passive in action and limited interests. Scores below 11 and above 25 are thus of great significance in interpretation.

In addition to the Self Acceptance Inventory, a Personal Data Sheet prepared by the investigator was also used to collect information on selected variables like gender, type of school, area of residence, income group and the family type.

SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE

The sample for the study was selected randomly from different schools in Malappuram district. The sample consisted of 360 high school children. The sample was designed so as to include equal number of students from Intact Parent and Single Parent

Families. The total sample consisted of 196 girls and 164 boys. The following table shows the distribution of the sample according to the various categories and sub categories of the variable.

Table 1 Distribution of the sample according to various categories and sub categories of the variable

Variable	Sub Category	Size	Percentage
Type of Family	Intact	180	50
	Single	180	50
Gender	Boys	164	45.6
	Girls	196	54.4
Type of school	Aided	137	38.1
	Unaided	111	30.8
	Government	112	31.1
Area of residence	Rural	183	50.8
	Urban	177	49.2
Income group	High	112	31.1
	Middle	151	41.9
	Low	97	26.9
Academic achievement	High	113	31.4
	Average	144	40.0
	Low	103	28.6

STATISTICAL TREATMENT OF THE DATA

Critical ratio was computed to find the differences in Self Acceptance with respect to:

- ◆ Type of Families
- ◆ Gender
- ◆ Area of Residence

Chi Square analysis was used to test the hypothesis stating the association between academic achievement and type of families.

One way analysis of variance was computed to explore the differences in self acceptance with respect to:

- ◆ Type of school
- ◆ Income group
- ◆ Academic achievement

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The variables in the present study are Self Acceptance and some selected variables namely the type of family, gender, type of school, area of residence, income group and academic achievement. After the data was collected it was classified according to various categories and sub categories of the above mentioned variables. Category wise Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated and presented below:

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviations of Self Acceptance of children belonging to Intact Parent and Single Parent Families

Variable	Type of Family	Mean	S.D
Self-Acceptance	Intact Parent Family	17.0829	2.72973
	Single Parent Family	16.3892	3.6172

Table 3 Category wise Mean and Standard Deviation of Self Acceptance

Variable	Category	Mean	SD
Gender	Boys	16.4024	3.18301
	girls	17.0612	2.57131
Type of School	Aided	17.2409	2.61648
	Unaided	16.3784	3.02731
	Government	16.7611	2.98295
Area of Residence	Rural	16.9727	2.82149
	Urban	16.5424	2.93290
Income Group	High	16.4021	3.08781
	Middle	17.2119	2.31404
	Low	16.4643	3.29873
Academic Achievement	High	17.0388	3.08781
	Average	16.6319	2.31404
	Low	16.6726	3.29873

HYPOTHESIS-WISE ANALYSIS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the Self Acceptance of children of Intact Parent and Single Parent Families.

Table 4 Critical ratio of the difference in Self Acceptance of children of Intact Parent and Single Parent Families

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	Critical	Level of Significance
Intact	180	17.08	2.72	358	2.292	P=.022 <0.05
Single	180	16.38	3.01			

Since the calculated value of 't' (2.292) is significant difference in the Self Acceptance of children of Intact Parent and Single Parent Families, is greater than the table value (1.97) for degrees of freedom 358, the null hypothesis is not accepted at 0.05 level of significance. Thus there

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant association between the academic achievement of children and type of families.

Table 5 Chi square table showing the association between academic achievement and type of families

Family		High	Average	low	df	χ^2	Level of Significance
Intact Parent Family	Fo	159	77	57	2	0.214	P=0.899 >0.05
	Fe	60.6	77.2	55.2			
Single Parent Family	Fo	54	67	46			
	Fe	52.4	66.8	47.8			

Since the calculated value of chi square (.214) is less than the table value (5.999) of chi square for degrees of freedom 2, null hypothesis is accepted. Thus there is no significant association between academic achievement of children and type of families.

Hypothesis 3:

H_{3.1}: There is no significant difference in the self acceptance of children due to the differences in gender.

Table 5.1 Critical ratio of the difference between Self Acceptance and gender

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	Critical ratio	Level of Significance
Girls	196	17.0632	2.57131	358	2.712	P=0.031 <0.05
Boys	164	16.4024	3.18301			

Since the calculated value of 't' (2.712) is greater than the table value of 't' (1.97) for degrees of freedom 358, the null hypothesis is not accepted at 0.05 level. Thus there is significant difference in Self Acceptance due to the difference in gender.

H_{3.2}: There is no significant difference in the Self Acceptance of children due to the differences in type of schools.

Table 6 One way ANOVA showing the difference in Self Acceptance and type of schools

Source	df	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F	Level of Significance
Between	2	52.618	26.309	3.209	P=0.042 <0.05
Within groups	357	2926.838	8.198		
Total	359	2979.456	0.76		

Since the calculated value of F (3.029) is greater than the table value of F(3.02) for degrees of freedom 359, the null hypothesis is not accepted at 0.05 level. Thus there is no

significant difference in self acceptance of high school children due to different type of schools. Since F value is found to be significant post hoc is done and presented in table 6.1

Table 6.1 Multiple comparison of Self Acceptance of children studying in different types of schools

Group	Mean difference	SE	Level of Significance
Aided-Unaided	0.86250	0.36405	0.049

The computed mean difference presented in the above table indicates significant differences in the Self Acceptance of children belonging to different type of schools favouring those in aided schools. Thus students belonging to aided schools are found

to have higher self acceptance than those in unaided and government schools.

$H_{3.3}$: There is no significant difference in the self acceptance of children according to the area of residence.

Table 7 Critical ratio of the difference in the Self Acceptance of children due to different area of residence

Group	N	Mean	SD	df	Critical ratio	Level of Significance
Rural	183	16.9727	2.82149	358	1.419	P=0.031 <0.05
Urban	177	16.5424	2.93290			

Since the calculated value of 't' (1.419) is less than the table value of 't' (1.97) for degrees of freedom 358 the null hypothesis is accepted at 0.05 level. Thus there is no significant difference in the scores of Self Acceptance of children according to the area of residence.

$H_{3.4}$: There is no significant difference in the Self Acceptance of children due to different income group

Table 8 One way ANOVA showing the difference in Self Acceptance of children in different income groups

Source	df	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F	level of significance
Between	2	53.060	26.530	3.236	P=0.040
Within groups	357	2926.395	8.197		<0.05
Total	359	2979.456			

Since the calculated value of F (3.326) is greater than the table value of F (3.02) for degrees of freedom 359, the null hypothesis is not accepted

at 0/05 level of significance. Thus there is significant difference in the self acceptance of children due to different income group to which they belong.

$H_{3.5}$: There is no significant difference in the Self Acceptance of children due to different levels in academic achievement

Table 9 One way ANOVA showing the difference between Self Acceptance and academic achievement

Source	df	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F	level of significance
Between	2	11.233	5.616	0.676	P=0.510
Within groups	357	2968.223	8.314		>0.05
Total	359	2979.456			

Since the calculated value of F (.676) is less than the table value of F (3.02) for degrees of freedom 359, the null hypothesis is retained at level of significance 0.05. Thus there is no significant difference in the Self Acceptance of children according to their academic achievement.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Over the last decade, education and social demands have changed. Social and educational needs of the children are greatly influenced by parental variables. Both the parents play their own role in moulding the character and personality of their children. The present study has its implications for parents particularly single parents, teachers, administrators, and community members in general. The present study has revealed that the Self Acceptance of Children of Single Parent family is lesser as compared to that of Intact Parent Family. The relationship which parents establish with their children has a powerful influence on the overall development of child. Parents should understand the self of the children and their problems in home and outside home. They should enable the child to develop a higher level of self acceptance by creating a congenial atmosphere at home.

The present study has revealed that the children in government and unaided schools are inferior to children studying in aided

schools in the level of their Self Acceptance. Therefore the study has its implication for teachers also. They should create sound educational atmosphere in the class room and schools that the children get sufficient opportunities for developing their self concept. Schools should provide ample opportunity to share their emotions and desires freely. Children of single parents should be treated in a psychological way addressing their social characteristics. Further the teachers should create a pleasant atmosphere in the school so that the children do not feel lonely in the absence of father or mother.

The present study has its bearing on administrators as well. They should arrange Parent -Teacher meetings on a regular basis. They should understand the effects of changing family structure and evolve measures to promote child growth and development in this context. A practical stance should be taken in collaboration with the academic personnel in developing and implementing family education programme.

The present study has its implication on society also. The adult community members, community leaders and religious persons in the community should be very sensitive and responsible to the problems of children especially the children of single parents. They should realize that their negligence towards these children may in turn become a social evil.

Thus, it can be seen here that an effort was taken to study the level of Self Acceptance of children of Intact Parent and Single Parent Families who are studying in different type of schools and residing in rural and urban area. The study indicated some significant relationships and some non significant relationships among the selected variables. The study finds some usefulness in the field of education and sociology. The area of the study has scope for future research also.

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