

FAMILY LIFE EXPERIENCES: A FOUNDATION STONE FOR SELF CONCEPT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between family type and self-concept of adolescents from District Udham Singh Nagar and Pithoragarh of Uttarakhand. The sample for the present study comprised of randomly selected 319 IX standard adolescents from 21 government intermediate schools of the two districts. Self-structured socio-demographic questionnaire and Self Concept Questionnaire were administered for the present study. Mean values and standard error were calculated and Z-test was used to analyse the data. Results revealed that majority of the respondents, irrespective of their family type, had above average self concept. It was also seen that family type of the respondents' from both the districts was insignificantly related to their self concept.

KEYWORDS: Adolescents, Joint Family, Nuclear Family, Self-Concept

INTRODUCTION

Self constitutes the union of body, emotions, thoughts and sensations which constitute the individuality of a person. It seems to be partially grounded in bodily experiences, including familiar physical characteristics and capabilities (Reynolds 2003). According to Bellmore & Cillessen (2006), self-concept is the perception that individuals have of their own worth. This includes a composite of their feelings, a generalized view of their social acceptance, and their personal feelings about themselves.

It is basically each person's own subjective -view or image of him- or herself. It comprises of three main elements: self-image; referred to as the perceptions of himself /herself, self-esteem; which is related to the value individuals attach to the particular manner in which they see themselves and a behavior component; reflecting how self-concept influences and formulates the individual's behavior.

The self-concept is not a finished product at birth nor is it inherited in nature. It means self is a process and not a structure. It is formed as a result of interaction with the environment and evolutionary interaction with the others. Self-concept is people's general composite or collective view of themselves across multidimensional sets of domain specific perceptions. These perceptions are based on self-knowledge and evaluation of value or worth of one's own capabilities formed through experiences with and interpretations of the environment (Eccles et al. 2005).

By adolescence an adolescent acquires a complex and systematic understanding of self and grows into mature youth on whose shoulders lies the responsibility of taking nation to new heights. We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future. This can be done by inculcating positive self-concept in adolescents and ultimately helping them transform into dynamic, innovative and foresighted youths who have leadership quality to survive in this era of competition especially with the zeal to uphold responsibility of themselves and the nation. But it's possible only when we really know what shapes one's self concept during adolescence. It's said that the self-concept during

adolescence is influenced by adolescents' psychological and social relationships and it's well known that social relationship of prime importance in adolescents' life or any individual's life at any stage of life is the one that shared with their family.

Extensive review of literature revealed that many aspects of family like parenting attitudes, income etc have been studied in relation to the self concept but no study has been so far conducted that studied the self-concept in relationship to social relationships in joint and nuclear family. Thus, the present study intended

- To investigate the self concept of adolescents from two districts.
- To compare the difference in the self concept of adolescents of two districts across their type of family.

METHODOLOGY

Locale

The present study was conducted in 2011 in Uttarakhand, since, it's one of the developing states of India where there is a dire need to hone the potentials of adolescents and thus, transform the state from developing state into a developed state. The districts purposively selected for the present study were District. Udham Singh Nagar and District. Pithoragarh. The reasons behind selecting these two districts were researcher's easy access and acquaintance with the districts.

Sample

Firstly, the list of government intermediate schools located in both the selected districts was procured from the Education Department. Further, from this list 25% of the schools were randomly selected to draw 10% of class IX students as respondents from each selected school for present study. Thus, sample for the present study comprised of randomly selected 319 IX standard students, both boys and girls, from Distt. Udham Singh Nagar and Distt. Pithoragarh.

Tools

Self-structured Performa was employed to record the socio-demographic and socio- economic status of the respondents. The self-concept of the respondents' was assessed using Self Concept Questionnaire by Sarashwat (1984). The Self Concept Questionnaire assesses self concept in six dimensions viz. physical, social, temperamental, educational, moral and intellectual. Self concept in each dimension is assessed using eight items. The response on each item is desired in the form of five alternatives viz. always, frequently, sometimes, rarely, never. The scores obtained are categorized into High self concept to Low self concept.

Procedure and Analysis

The test was administered individually to all the respondents in classroom setting. After administration of tests, answer sheets were scored and raw scores were calculated. Mean values and standard error (sem) were calculated. Z-test was applied to see if statistical differences exist in the mean scores of self concept of respondents across family type.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

It can be deduced from Figure 1 that under physical, social, temperamental, moral and intellectual domains, majority (75.56%, 71.11%, 62.22%, 64.44% and 66.67% respectively) of respondents from nuclear family type were found to have above average self-concept followed by high self concept. Likewise majority (73.47%, 73.47%, 57.14% and

69.39%) of the respondents from joint family type exhibited above average self-concept followed by high self concept under physical, social, temperamental, moral and intellectual domains.

Under educational domain, the self concept of respondents showed a diverse trend as compared to other domains. Majority (62.22% and 65.31%) of the respondents hailing from both nuclear family type and joint family type exhibited high self concept. Maximum number (55.10%) of respondents hailing from joint family type reported high intellectual self concept followed by above average self concept.

Majority (77.78% and 65.31%) of respondent from both nuclear and joint family type were found to have above average self concept. Fortunately, no respondent reported low self concept and a few reported below average self concept.

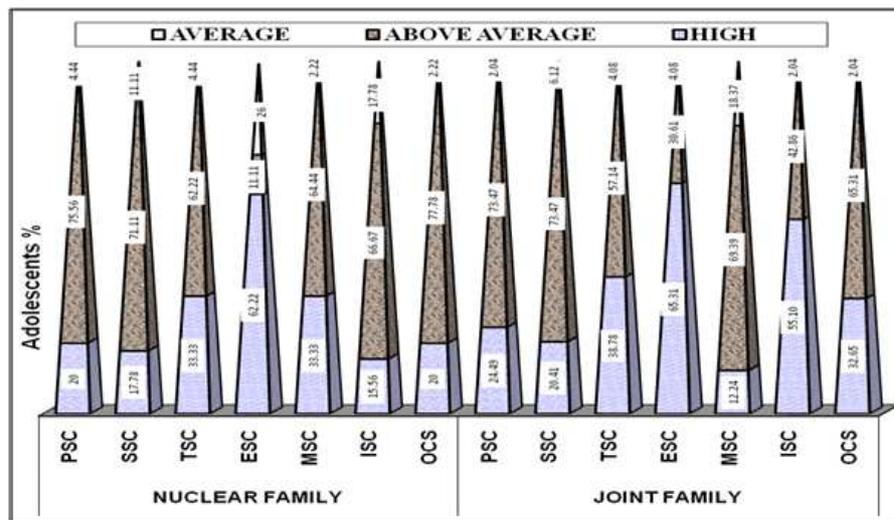


Figure 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents on Self Concept across Family Type

Note: PSC indicates Physical Self Concept, SSC indicates Social Self Concept, TSC indicates Temperamental Self Concept, ESC indicates Educational Self Concept, MSC indicates Moral Self Concept, ISC indicates Intellectual Self Concept and OSC indicates Overall Self Concept

Close perusal of Table 1 clearly shows that the type of family to which the respondents of the present study belonged had no significant difference on their overall self-concept and its domain. It is not surprising that the root of self-concept lies in family experiences. Family is the primary institution where one’s self is formed through the kinds of intimate and intensive interactions that occur among family members. It has its early grounding in parental affirmation of one’s worth and in one’s own mastery of developmental tasks and successful problem-solving. Marsh (2005) found that a student’s self-concept is partially dependent on his or her surroundings. Self-concept develops as a result of one’s experiences with the environment and ones evaluations of these experiences. Ochoa, Lopez, and Emler (2007) found a link between open communication between parents and adolescents’ positive family self-concept, which in turn related to a positive academic self-concept. Positive family communication is the key in helping adolescents maintain a positive self-concept and high self-esteem.

Throughout the continuous changes that occur regarding self-concept, the influences that family members have may be so prevalent to a child because family relationships are less likely to be dissolved like peer relationships (Dailey 2009). It means that it’s not the type of family which moulds one’s self-concept but it is the familial experiences that affects one’s self concept.

Table 1: Mean Scores and Standard Error of Self-Concept of Respondents from District Udham Singh Nagar and District Pithoragarh across Family Type

S. No.	Self-Concept	District Udham Singh Nagar (n ₁ =182)		Z cal.	District Pithoragarh (n ₂ =137)		Z cal.	Total Population (N=319)		Z cal.
		Nuclear Family (n _{1.1} =133)	Joint Family (n _{1.2} =49)		Nuclear Family (n _{2.1} =92)	Joint Family (n _{2.2} =45)		Nuclear Family (n ₁ =225)	Joint Family (n ₂ =94)	
		\bar{X} SEM	\bar{X} SEM		\bar{X} SEM	\bar{X} SEM		\bar{X} SEM	\bar{X} SEM	
1.	DOMAINS									
1.	Physical	29.93 (0.33)	30.88 (0.47)	0.19	29.72 (0.39)	29.71 (0.52)	0.01	29.84 (0.25)	30.32 (0.35)	0.09
2.	Social	29.81 (0.35)	29.55 (0.52)	0.05	28.70 (0.41)	28.82 (0.58)	0.02	29.36 (0.07)	29.20 (0.39)	0.03
3.	Temperamental	31.09 (0.37)	31.12 (0.49)	0.01	30.71 (0.42)	30.38 (0.58)	0.06	30.93 (0.28)	30.77 (0.37)	0.03
4.	Educational	33.27 (0.36)	33.47 (0.60)	0.03	33.51 (0.41)	33.00 (0.45)	0.10	33.37 (0.27)	33.24 (0.38)	0.02
5.	Moral	32.32 (0.27)	32.47 (0.46)	0.03	31.99 (0.37)	30.96 (0.48)	0.22	32.19 (0.22)	31.74 (0.34)	0.10
6.	Intellectual	28.46 (0.39)	28.10 (0.54)	0.06	27.48 (0.43)	28.24 (0.62)	0.13	28.06 (0.28)	28.17 (0.41)	0.02
2.	OVERALL	184.95 (1.39)	185.80 (1.93)	0.04	182.10 (1.55)	179.87 (2.23)	0.11	183.79 (1.04)	182.96 (1.49)	0.04

CONCLUSIONS

Due to the various social forces like industrialization, urbanization and westernization Indian families have undergone substantial changes in its structure. Joint and extended families have transformed into nuclear families. This predictable shift from joint to nuclear families is spontaneous and inevitable. However, family is the primary institution where one's self is formed through the kinds of intimate and intensive interactions that occur among family members. It has its early grounding in parental affirmation of one's worth and in one's own mastery of developmental tasks and successful problem-solving. It means that it's not the joint or nuclear family that makes any difference in one's self concept but it's the experiences associated with living in either of the family types.

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