

Social Maturity as a Function of Number of Children, Mother's Educational Level and their Interaction

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Abstract

Recent years have witnessed considerable concern and debate on what could be an ideal family size primarily because of the population explosion taking place in the third world countries, mainly, China, India and Africa. Simultaneously, a major change in the social order has taken place where the Indian society change the slogans like "May you be the Mother of hundred sons" to "Doo Ya Teen Bas" to "Hum doo Humare doo" to the desperate plea of "Ladki Ya Ladka Ek hi Bas," that is shifting gears to a single child or the only child due to the global and national pressures desiring change in the family size and structure. The objective was to study the influence of Number of Children, Mother's Educational level and their interaction on Social Maturity separately. The sample comprised 979 children of 10–12 year selected through Stratified Random Sampling Method. Out of 979 children, the number of only child and child with siblings were 303 and 676 respectively. For Social Maturity the Indian adaptation version of Malin's Vineland Social Maturity Scale was used and data collected and put to appropriate data analysis. The findings of the study were Children whose Mother's Educational level was above Graduation were found to have better Social Maturity. Child with sibling group was found to be socially more adjusted than only child group. Both only child and child with siblings were found to attain Social Maturity to the same extent irrespective of the Educational Level of Parents.

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Introduction

Recent years have witnessed considerable concern and debate on what could be an ideal family size primarily because of the population explosion taking place in the third world countries, mainly, China, India and Africa. It is said that half of the world population resides between India and China and the two countries have been facing pressures, like, feeding the growing population, providing accommodation and livelihood, the basic amenities of life, job, transport, education, health and overall economic development of the country.

Simultaneously, a major change in the social order has taken place. More and more women are getting educated and they are entering into jobs, till recently which were

domains of the man at all levels, administrative, professional and even business extending into army and air force of the nation. The woman, therefore, is not prepared only to raise a family and look after the husband and children but to participate fully and actively in nation's development. This has forced the society to think about an ideal family size, which could meet the concerns of the family and of the nation allowing the progeny to develop into intellectually developed healthy child who would be in a position to meet the concerns of the society and participate in the development of a strong nation.

The two concerns have led the society to change the slogans like "May you be the Mother of hundred sons" to "Doo Ya Teen Bas" to "Hum doo Humare doo" to the desperate plea of "Ladki

Ya Ladka Ek hi Bas,” that is shifting gears to a single child or the only child. The All India Medical Council recently adopted a resolution recommending one child family as a way out for checking population explosion. Contrary to this there is a news report saying ' Thanks God, India's population policy has failed giving the nation an edge over other countries in the manpower needed to meet the global challenge in economic development based on production'.

Apart from these global and national pressures desiring change in the family size and structure, the main concern is of the development of a child under changed scenario. How being the only child, affect the personality development of a child compared with those with siblings, his social behavior, performance, achievements etc? Thus, there is an urgent need to examine such questions and the pros and cons of the single child policy before the government as the guiding national policy accepts it

The concern of this research, therefore, is to examine this most burning and exploding issue.

Objective

The objective was to study the influence of Number of Children, Mother's Educational level and their interaction on Social Maturity separately.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis stated was that there is no significant influence of Number of Children, Mother's Educational level and their interaction on Social Maturity separately.

Sample

The population of this study was families having one child and children with siblings from Jabalpur city, Madhya Pradesh. The sample comprised 979 children. It was selected through Stratified Random Sampling Method. The age of children ranged from 10–12 year and studying in schools, which were affiliated to Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi and M.P. Board of Secondary Education, Bhopal, Madhya

Pradesh. Out of 979 children, the number of only child and child with siblings were 303 and 676 respectively. Out of 303 only child group, 168 were males and 135 females. On the other hand, out of 676 child with siblings group, 377 were males and 299 females. The sample represented schools where medium of instruction was Hindi or English.

Tools

In this study, for Social Maturity the Indian adaptation version of Malin's Vineland Social Maturity Scale was used and the researcher did the Hindi translation so that the parents have no difficulty in understanding the scale. The tool was considered to be the most appropriate. The Malin's Vineland Social Maturity Scale (Indian adaptation – J. Bharatraj) consisted of 89 items and can be used for children up to 15 years of age.

Procedure of Data Collection

The investigator sought permission from School Principals to collect data. The investigator on the first day established rapport with the children and identified the children with siblings and only child and collected information on the Data Information Sheet. The investigator sent the Social Maturity Scale through the children on the first day to their Parents giving brief instructions to the children. The investigator gave her address and phone number to the students so that in some rare / special cases where parents could not understand /or wanted to contact the investigator could meet / talk to the parents to solve their doubts and to know more about the child. The parents were given enough time to fill the Social Maturity scale. The class teacher was requested therein to collect the Social Maturity scale from the students. Therefore, it took about four to five visits to each school to collect the required data. The scoring of the tool used in this study was done as per scoring procedure given in the manual.

Results

Influence of Number of Children, Mother's Educational level and their Interaction on Social Maturity

The objective was to study the influence of Number of Children, Mother's Educational Level and their interaction on Social Maturity. The Social Maturity has been assessed with the help of Malin's Vineland Social Maturity Scale. The Number of Children were divided into two groups, namely, only child group and child with sibling group. There were four levels of Mother's Educational Qualification, viz., up to middle, greater than middle but equal to Higher Secondary, greater than Higher Secondary but equal to Graduate and above Graduation. Thus, the data were analysed with the help of 4 x 2 Factorial Design ANOVA. The results are given in Table 1

Table 1 : Summary of 4 x 2 Factorial Design ANOVA for Social Maturity

Source of variance	df	SS	MSS	F-value
Mother's Educational Level (A)	3	1426.37	475.46	3.60*
No. of children (B)	1	732.07	732.07	3.54*
A x B	3	188.03	62.68	0.47
Error	971	128269.71	132.10	
Total	978			

*Significant at 0.05 level

From Table 1, it is evident that the F-value for Mother's Educational Level is 3.60 which is significant at 0.05 level with df equal to 1/971. It indicates that the mean scores of Social Maturity of children belonging to different Mother's Educational Levels differ significantly. Thus, there was a significant influence of Mother's Educational Level on Social Maturity of children. So, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of Mother's Educational Level on Social Maturity is rejected. In order to know which groups of children belonging to Mother's Educational Levels differ significantly, the data were further analysed with the help of t-test and results are given in Table 1a.

From Table 1, it indicates that the F-value for Number of Children is 3.54 which is significant at 0.05 level with df equal to 1/971. It indicates that the mean scores of Social Maturity of only child group and child with sibling group differ significantly. Thus, there was a significant influence of Number of Children on Social Maturity. So, the null hypothesis that there is no

Table 1a: Mother's Educational Level-wise M, SD and t-values of Social Maturity of Children

Mother's Educational Level	Mean	SD	B	C	D
Upto Middle (A)	62.28	13.67	0.61	1.69	2.23*
Greater than Middle but equal Hr.Sc.(B)	63.30	11.38		1.61	2.45*
Greater than Hr.Sc. but equal to Graduation (C)	64.92	11.32			0.97
Above Graduation (D)	65.75	11.42			

*Significant at 0.05 level

significant influence of Number of Children on Social Maturity is rejected. Further, the mean score of Social Maturity of only child group is 63.43 which is significantly lower than child with sibling group whose mean score of Social Maturity is 65.30. It shows that child with sibling group was socially more adjusted than only child group.

The F-value for the interaction between Mother's Educational Level and Number of Children is 0.47 which is not significant. It indicates that there was no significant differential influence of the interaction between Mother's Educational Level and Number of Children on Social Maturity of children. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence of interaction between Mother's Educational Level and Number of Children on Social Maturity of children is not rejected. It may, therefore, be said that the Social Maturity was found to be independent of the influence of interaction between Mother's Educational Level and Number of Children.

From Table 1a, it is evident that t-values 0.61, 1.69, 1.61 and 0.97 are not significant. It indicates that mean scores of Social Maturity of children whose Mother's Educational Level up to Middle do not differ significantly from those whose Mother's Educational Level was greater than middle but equal to Higher Secondary as well as greater than Higher Secondary but equal to Graduation. Also, children with Mother's Educational Level greater than middle but equal to Higher Secondary and greater than Higher Secondary but equal to Graduation did not differ significantly on Social Maturity. Lastly, the mean scores of Social Maturity of children whose Mother's Educational Level was greater than Higher Secondary but equal to Graduation and above Graduation did not differ significantly. Thus, children whose Mother's Educational Level was up to Middle, greater than Middle but equal to Higher Secondary were found to have Social Maturity to the same extent. The same situation prevailed in case of children whose Mother's Educational Level was greater than Higher Secondary but equal to Graduation and above Graduation.

The t-values of 2.23 and 2.45 are significant at 0.05 level with df equal to 439 and 573 respectively. It shows that the mean scores of Social Maturity of children whose Mother's Educational Level up to Middle differ

significantly from those whose Mother's Educational Level was above Graduation. The mean score of Social Maturity of children whose Mother's Educational Level was above Graduation is 65.75 which is significantly higher than mean score of 62.28 those whose Mother's Educational Level was up to Middle. Also, the mean score of Social Maturity of children whose Mother's Educational Level was above Graduation is significantly higher than those whose Mother's Educational Level was greater than Middle but equal to Higher Secondary. It may, therefore, be said that children whose Mother's Educational Level was above Graduation were found to have better Social Maturity.

Discussion

Influence of Mother's Educational level on Social Maturity

Children whose Mother's Educational level was above Graduation were found to have better Social Maturity. Since the mothers are more educated, therefore, they are more in the literate class of people, know the norms of the society, have awareness of inculcating good habits and better adjustment of the child in the society. Also, mother is the first teacher of the child, therefore, mother's being more educated help the child in conforming to the standards of the society. Further, the socialization process starts from the early childhood when the child spends most of the time with mother. The educated mothers these days are quite cautious of inculcating good habits and desirable behaviours. Good habits developed at an early age do not die because child starts getting its reward by way of praising from elders and teachers. Mahatma Gandhi also said that educating the girl means educating the family. Father does not play an important role in socialization of the child. This is due to the fact that he does not share child rearing responsibility. His interaction with the child is

limited. He is more involved in earning bread for the family. At present, this situation is changing and in future the present finding may not hold good.

Influence of Number of Children on Social Maturity

Social Maturity was found to be dependent on Number of Children. Child with sibling group was found to be socially more adjusted than only child group. This finding has been supported by Nelson, Plesa and Henseler (1998) who proposed that the social interactions in which a child engages are an important source of theory of mind knowledge; knowledge that may be used to develop mental concepts. This shows that the effect of family size is due to greater social practice in sibling interaction, which increases the efficiency of social, reasoning strategies. On the more positive side, the finding that siblings help develop a TOM (Theory of Mind) is compatible with the socio-cognitive tradition proposed by Doise (1985) and Perret-Clement (1980), who emphasized intellectual progress as a function of social interaction among peers and view intellectual growth as process of internalizing the knowledge already incorporated in social interaction.

Bernice Sorensen in her paper wrote that sibling interactions provide social and emotional learning and without them opportunities are lost for dealing with jealousy, anger, envy and conflict in the relatively safe environment of the home.

Only children have the disadvantage of not having a close sibling relationship and being under pressure from parents to succeed at the same time, they are also spared from sibling rivalry having more privacy, enjoying greater affluence and closer relations with parents (Hawkes and Knox, 1978). Only children lack siblings, they lose the immediate availability of other's company with whom to interact socially. In order to develop normal social skills, only

playgroups can be valuable for the learning of social skills. However, only children must work to win friends, because family life does not provide them.

Influence of Interaction between Number of Children and Mother's Educational level on Social Maturity Profile

Social Maturity of children was found to be independent of the influence of interaction between Number of Children and Mother's Educational Level as well as Number of Children and Father's Educational Level. That means, both only child and child with siblings were found to attain Social Maturity to the same extent irrespective of the Educational Level of Parents. Age of the children of this study might be one of the potent explanations of this finding. At the age of 10 to 12 years, the Social Maturity is developed to the same extent because children get same exposure. At a later age, due to differential exposure, the Social Maturity may vary and parent's educational level may contribute significantly

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