



Investigation and Comparison of Social Development among Single-Child and Multi-Child Families in Isfahan City

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Abstract: Present research has been done with the aim of investigating and comparing social development among students of only-child and multi-child families of guidance level in Isfahan city. This descriptive research was a causal-comparative one. Population of this research included all students of guidance level in Isfahan city during academic year 2012-2013. Multi-stage random sampling method was used in this research. First, two school districts of 3 and 4 were chosen out of educational regions randomly. Following that, 8 schools were chosen randomly from the list of non-benefit and state schools of these two school districts. Research sample included 90 students for each group chosen randomly from these schools. Sample members responded Vaytrznm social development measure (1976). Research data were analyzed by SPSS software 16 using two-way variance analysis method. Results showed that there is no significant difference between two groups of one-child and several-child families' students considering social development. Results also showed no significant difference concerning social development between two genders.

Key words: Social Development, Only-Child, Several-Child

INTRODUCTION

In today world, factors such as changes in life style, society industrialization and economic problems expressions such as mothers employment, increase in costs and advertisement around having one child has led to increase in only-child families, parents less tendency towards having more than one child and decline in population growth rate and following that, increase in parents anxiety and worry of their child's growth. Statistics show that more than 20 to 25 percent of 40 to 45 year old women of today world have only-child and this statistics is growing ¹. In other words, only-child-ness has increased compared to the past. Sibling's absence in the family and child's dominance affects different dimensions of children's individual growth. One such aspect is learning social behaviors and skills .

Berie and Erin state that social behavior constitutes the base of one's life. Social development also leads to one's intellectual growth. Social development means one's evolution in social relations so that he can be in harmony and consistency with society individuals ². Gunder et al., ³ have defined social development as one's behavior according to social expectations. Individual's socialization means their adaptation and parallelism to social and group rules,

values and attitudes. Through this process, they learn skills, knowledge and adaptation ways and also attain possibility of mutual relations in a continuous action and reaction ⁴. Social skills are a set of learned behaviors which are the beginning point to social actions ⁴. Liberman ⁵ believes that, regarding complexity of social relations in today society, dealing with children's social characteristics and factors related to that is felt more than ever ⁶.

Only children grow in families where making contact and learning life skills style through coeval groups or individuals with little age-difference is not possible and children have less familiarity with concepts such as jealousy, rivalry and friendship. strengths of being an only-child are as follows: parents all attention and focus being paid to one child and deep intimacy between children and parents, while weak point about it include continuous attention to the child and severe dependence of the child to parents which can violate friend making process in that person ⁷. Harris showed in his research that difference between only children and children with siblings is that only children are the ones to change the world, in addition, they are trustworthy, orderly and neat, they take responsibility and love reality and thoughts. On the other side, Stubbornness, severe violence, over-expectation, refusing one's faults, unexceptionable and sensitivity is of their negative points⁸.

Children with higher social skill levels have more positive relation with their coevals, nonetheless, some children have lower social skills which become evident by their entrance to society and specially school ⁹. Rahnama and Alian ¹⁰ have shown in their research that children having gained enough social skills and reached social development act more successfully in making relation with coevals and learning in educational environment than those who lack such skills.

Child's social development level through participation in collective affairs depends on the social behavior pattern given to her by parents.

Social development in children being restricted from social activities by family was progressively less than children benefiting more suitable conditions and freedom. Child's lack of social development due to less contact with others leads to decrease in tendency and contact with people, non-interest in social life, weakening of imagination power and child's disability in future life design ¹¹. Greenberg et al., showed in their research that sensitive and responsive child raising leads to development of autonomous skills in child; while, parents inability in adapting their behavior to child's needs causes uncontrolled and non-inhibition behaviors in some children ¹². Kapikaran et al., believe that social abilities one gains in light of social development is of high importance. Communication, problem solving, self-guidance, relation with coevals and so on are of the skills which make it possible to begin and continue positive social communications ¹³.

Social development is affected by several factors such as family, school, friends group, gender and race, educational-economic status and dynamic activities which, their condition quality might lead to acceleration or conversely,

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decrease of social development¹⁴. Besides, gender factors may also affect individual's social development. Hakim javadi and Ejheii⁷ showed in their research that girls have higher emotional intelligence than boys. Vafaeian¹⁵ also showed that girls have higher social skills compared to boys. Amani et al.,⁸ have reported higher social compatibility of girls in comparison to boys but, Zarati et al.,¹¹ found no significant difference between men and women regarding emotional intelligence .

Considering family and gender importance and role as two main factors in children social development, this research seeks to study and compare social development between girls and boys of only-child and several-child families in Isfahan. Hence, research hypotheses are as follows :

1. There is a significant difference between guidance school students of only-child and several-child families regarding social development average grades .
2. There is a significant difference between social development average grades of boys and girls in guidance schools of Isfahan city.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

a. Research type

This descriptive study is causal-comparative or post-event causal research. In such plans the thing which affects outcomes after an event is studied. This research is usual in non-experimental researches but is also called as semi-experimental research¹⁶. In this research, only-child and several-child state and gender have been considered as a factor already classifying individuals whose effect upon their social skills has been studied .

Population, sample and research implementation method

Population of this research is consisted of all guidance level students of Isfahan city during 2012-2013. Sampling method used was multi stage accidental. First, two school districts of 3 and 4 were chosen randomly from school districts of Isfahan city and then 8 schools (4 schools from each school district) were chosen randomly from the list of state and non-profit schools of these two districts. After preliminary implementation of tools, sample size of 90 was attained for each only-child and several-child groups using Chocran formula. By referring to schools based upon the list of lonely-child and several-child family's students, research sample was chosen randomly and research tools were filled by them. It should be noticed that there were 45 girls and 45 boys in each group. Considering that one district was from the affluent regions and the other from lower districts, social-economical characteristic has been controlled. After getting the justification from education department and choosing the district and schools for research implementation, we then referred to guidance level schools and research sample was chosen randomly from the list of students separated to only children and those with siblings. After primary conversations with sample members, they were asked to fill all questionnaire questions attentively; they were also assured that the

results will remain confidential and that there's no need to mention their name on the questionnaires .

b. Research tools

Vaytrznm social development index which is translated by Naziri was used to measure student’s social development. This test is modified to evaluate social development among students of 12 to 18 year old and because of having no cultural load is confirmed by experts. It has a total of 27 questions and 27 points¹⁷ .

Using Chronbach's alpha, Rollick has gained social development validity of 0.96 and reliability of 0.87. In Iran, this questionnaire's validity was investigated and confirmed by Farshadfar and Ziaee 15. Vafaeeyan¹⁵ has also calculated reliability of this index as equal to 0.86 using Chronbach's alpha. Reliability of the index in this research was calculated 0.789.

RESULTS

Average and standard deviation of social development is yielded in table 1 separated into two groups of only-children and several-children and also girls and boys. Only-children group with the average of 10.55 has higher social development compared to several-children group. Besides, boys group with the average of 10.73 are more socially developed than girls. Using two-way variance analysis test, significance of this difference is shown in table 2.

Table 1. Standard deviation and average of social development separated into two groups and two genders

Factor	level	Average	Standard deviation
Only-child or Multiple-child state	Only-child	10.55	2.47
	Multiple-children	10.36	2.61
Gender	Girl	10.17	2.77
	Boy	10.73	2.26

Main effect of only-child and several-child state is not significant in table 2. Resulted significance is equal to 0.618 and more than 0.05. In other words, two groups have no significant difference regarding social development variable. The amount of only-child or several-child condition factor effect upon this variable is 0.001, meaning that only 0.1 percent of total variance or individual differences in social development variable is due to only-child or several-child state factor, which is small and non-significant. Hence, first hypothesis of the research is rejected.

Besides, main effect of gender is not significant either. Level of significance is 0.143 and more than 0.05 levels. This factor's effect upon social development variable is equal to 0.012 or near to only 1.2 percent which is small and insignificant and hence the second hypothesis is rejected, either.

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Interaction between only-child and several-child state was not significant either. Significance level is equal to 0.971 and more than 0.05 levels.

Table 2. Results of social development variable two-way analysis

Source of changes	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Average of squares	Significance	Effect size	Power of the test
Modified model	15.596	3	5.199	0.493	0.014	0.222
Fixed number	19680.492	1	19680.492	0.001	0.945	1.000
Only-child vs. multiple-child status	1.615	1	1.615	0.618	0.001	0.079
Gender	13.972	1	13.972	0.143	0.618	0.310
Only-child vs. multiple-child status * Gender	0.009	1	0.009	0.971	0.143	0.05
Error	1137.429	176	6.463			
Sum	20833.517	180				
Modified sum	1153.025	179				

P < 0.05

DISCUSSION

Considering safety and social development role in social and individual success of the adolescent and regarding parents and teachers more attention towards this dimension in recent years, it seems necessary to do some research in context of various possible factors affecting social development .

Present research results showed that social development average in only-children was 10.55 and 10.36 in children having siblings. Difference between these two groups in table 2 is not significant. The effect amount of only-child or multiple-child state factor upon social development is only 0.001 or equal to 0.1 percent which is small and insignificant .

Social development in girls and boys passes several stages. In this passing process, various factors such as family, social group and school are effective¹⁶. Upon effect of family members on children social development, researches have just emphasized upon parents role. In addition to parents, school is also important as an environment predisposing individual's interaction with coevals. School is of the most important places for social rising of children. School plays a critical role in transferring society norms and values to students¹⁷. Newman et al., believe that school is a favorable place for encouraging students to participate in social and group activities. They found that school can help in student's social development, growth in their responsibility feeling for each-other, feeling merit, aptitude, participation in group activities and problem solving skills through its various activities and programs¹⁸ .

School and its various educational programs in different physical, intellectual, emotional and social dimensions can satisfy many natural needs of students and contribute to their social development as a collective club. School can help to the growth of values, norms, competencies and student's social development through preparing group opportunities for educating social and communicational skills.

They can pave the way for the student's social development by designing and performing various activities such as suitable sport activities. As a result and considering today world social advances and spread of social activities, it seems that schools have been able to play a major role in improving students social development and filling absence of siblings through student's coevals. Derton, Sher and Seaerc stated upon their research that parents and teachers play a great role in building opportunities and conditions through which teenagers may have a healthy life besides having positive and friendly relations with others .

In addition, results in table 1 has shown that average social development in girls and boys is 10.17 and 10.73 respectively and difference between these two averages is not significant in table 2. As a whole, effect of gender factor upon social development is just 0.012 or 1.2 percent which is small and insignificant .

Results gained are in alignment with findings of Zarati et al.,¹¹ but not aligned with findings of Hakim Javadi and Ejheii⁷. The reason seems to lie within the age difference among subjects. This research sample was constituted of guidance level students. Amongst educational levels, guidance period is the beginning of preparation for maturity with all its expressions such as independence, responsibility taking and discipline. Throughout this period, the teenager is shifting from childish behavior to mature behavior gradually. In this period, coevals group is the most important focus of social activities and membership in it is important to him. In this period, the teenager is seeking for a set of values and gaining personal identity most part of which is social identity. Gaining social identity includes social acceptance, gaining social skills and human relations¹⁸. In other words, we can say that in this section, one is seeking for identity and gaining social skills beyond being a girl or boy and hence no difference is observed between girls and boys considering social development at this stage¹⁹.

Of course, this research has dealt with the study of only-child and several-child families and also girls and boys studying at guidance level schools in social development context in Isfahan city, so it is recommended to other researchers to conduct researches upon difference between these two groups regarding variables such as relation quality with parents, child-parent relations, relations with coevals, emotional intelligence and so on beside repeating the research in other samples and educational levels^{20,21,22}.

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