Socio-economic status and personality of school going children

■ ONAM DAYAL **AND** NEHA DAYAL

■ **ABSTRACT :** Effect of socio-economic status was studied on the personality factors of children. Respondents were 300 school going children of age 7 to 13 years belongs to different socio-economic groups. A fourteen factor personality inventory CPQ (1979) by S.D. Kapoor was used to determine the personality factors of children. For statistical analysis one way ANOVA was applied. The results showed a significant effect of socio-economic status on the personality factors of children.

See end of the paper for authors' affiliations

ONAM DAYAL
Department of Home Science, Hindu
Degree College, MORADABAD (U.P.)
INDIA
Email : onambbau@gmail.com

A family's socio-economic status is based on family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community (such as contacts within the community, group associations, and the community's perception of the family (DeYoung, 2006).

Socio-economic status (SES) remains a topic of great interest to those who study children's development. This interest derives from a belief that high SES families afford their children an array of services, goods, parental actions, and social connections that potentially redound to the benefit of children and a concern that many low SES children lack access to those same resources and experiences, thus putting them at risk for developmental problems (John *et al.,* 2008).

The interest in SES as a global construct persists despite evidence that there is wide variability in what children experience within every SES level, despite evidence that the link between SES and child well-being varies as a function of geography, culture, and regency of immigration, and despite evidence that the relation between SES and child well-being can be disrupted by catastrophes and internal strife (Bradley *et al.,* 1999).

Children who have spent any part of their prenatal period, infancy, or early childhood in poverty have often already encountered several developmental challenges by the time middle childhood begins. Children who enter, progress through, and leave middle childhood in poverty are at much greater risk of negative developmental outcomes than those who briefly enter and then exit poverty while still in middle childhood. In other words, evidence suggests that persistent and "deep," or extreme, poverty poses the most significant threat to healthy child development (Linver *et al.*, 2004).

Middle childhood also is the period that witnesses the development of increased independence, peer relationships and intellectual challenges, making this developmental period especially interesting for the study of environmental influences on the development of executive skills. Environmental influences may be conceptualized at multiple levels of analysis including the microenvironments (*i.e.*, the family setting, Non parental care settings, peer group); and the macro-environments (*i.e.*, neighbour hoods, culture and social policy) (Baumeister and Vohs, 2004 and Hertzman and Boyce, 2010). Family's socio-economic status can exert a powerful influence on a young person's developing personality. Not only is the adolescent of an economically underprivileged home denied many of the privileges and enriching experiences enjoyed by upper- and middle-class children but his life values are affected by parental ambitions for him (Zentner and Bates, 2008).

According to a study conducted by the University of California Berkley and reported in USA Today, poverty significantly affects a child's brain development. When comparing the brains of 9 to 10 year old children from low income and high income families, the prefrontal cortex showed as much of a difference between the incomes levels as a patient who has had a stroke! This area of the brain controls problem solving and higher-order thinking, so this finding is very significant. Poverty affects a child's IQ, brain function and behaviour. Also discovered that the neural systems of poor children develop differently from those of middle and upper class children, and this affects the child's language development, ability to remember details and ability to pay attention in school. By the age of 3, a middle class child has twice the working vocabulary as a poor child. Children from low-SES families are more likely to experience growth retardation and inadequate neurobehavioral development (DiPietro *et al.,* 2002). Overall, poor families live in more Chaotic environments, are more highly stressed, and have fewer psychological and social resources than those who are more economically secure (Ackerman *et al.,* 2004).

As a result, parents living in poverty tend to treat their children differently than do working-class or middle-class parents. They talk to them less, provide fewer age-appropriate toys, spend less time with them in intellectually stimulating activities, explain things less often and less fully, are less warm, and are stricter and more physical in their discipline (Sampson and Laub, 2004).

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The universe of the present study was comprised of school going children. The study was conducted in the year 2010-11.The school was selected purposively form Lucknow city as a universe. Simple random sampling technique was employed for the selection of the sample. A total of 100 respondents were selected for the study. At final stage, children were interviewed. The data were collected with the help of interviewing schedule in a face to face situation with the respondents. The interviewing schedule consisted of structured and unstructured question. They were tested individually for personality development with the help of CPQ personality scale of Kapoor (1979) and other aspects were studied with the help of a pre-structured interview schedule. For the purpose of present study, socio-economic indicators like age, education, occupation, income, family type and family.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS and DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study as well as relevant discussion have been presented under following heads :

Ho 1: There is no significant effect of family socio-economic status on children's overall personality :

This hypothesis was tested by applying one way ANOVA.

Present the data about the means of the fourteen factors of personality on the basis of socio-economic status. Regarding factor 'A' *(Affectothymia (easy going) vs. Sizothymia (cool critical)* the highest mean (6.34) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group, tend towards high score describing their personality warm hearted and easy going and the lowest mean (3.61) was found for the subject who belonged to low income group, tend towards low score, describing their personality as detached and reserved (Table 1).

Regarding factor 'B' *(less intelligence vs. more intelligence)* the highest mean (5.49) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group, depicted high scores *i.e.* above 5, indicating the personality being bright and higher scholastic mental capacity and the lowest means (2.57) was found for the subject who belonged to low income group, tend towards low score,

describing their personality being concrete thinking, lower scholastic mental capacity. These results are somewhat in agreement with the studies of Kruse (1996) revealed from his study a statistically significant difference between the academic achievements of students from low socio-economic environment, compared to those from high socio-economic environment. The findings of the present study were also consistent with their findings. Dave (1963) and Wolf (1964) found that family background was highly related to intellectual development. Werner *et al.* (1971) concluded from their longitudinal study that the child's learning and achievement were significantly related to indices of family environment and family background.

Factor 'C' Emotional Instability or Ego Weakness (Affected by feelings, easily upset) versus higher ego strength (Emotionally stable, Mature, Face Reality, Calm) the highest mean (6.17) was found for the subject of high income group tend towards high score describing their personality Emotionally stable and Mature and the

lowest mean (3.88) was found for the subject of low income group tend towards low score describing their personality emotionally instable and weaker ego strength. These findings of the present study support the findings of previous researches. Drucker and Remmers (1952) and Sims (1954) found that children of economically low background and less educated parents or totally uneducated had low emotional stability and were more anxious and proven to problem. The present study also found that students with highly educated (post graduate) parents had better personalities than those whose parents were less educated.

Regarding factor 'D' Phlegmatic temperament (Undemonstrative, Deliberate, Inactive, Stodgy) Versus excitability, (Excitable, Impatient, Demanding, Overactive, Unrestrained) highest mean (5.02) was found for the subject of high income group tend toward average score describing their personality sometime deliberate, inactive and sometime impatient, demanding and overactive and the lowest mean (2.94) was found

Table 1 : Association between socio-economic status and personality of school going children		HIG n=100	MIG n=100	LIG n=100	Total n=300
Personality factors					
(A) Sizothymia versus affectothymia	Mean	6.340	4.060	3.610	4.670
	S.D	1.478	1.503	1.675	1.958
(B) Low intelligence versus high intelligence	Mean	5.490	3.190	2.570	3.750
	S.D	1.760	1.426	1.265	1.952
(C) Emotional instabily versus higher ego strength	Mean	6.170	6.070	3.880	5.373
	S.D	1.858	1.320	1.519	1.898
(D) Phlegmatic temperament versus excitability	Mean	5.020	4.260	2.940	4.073
	S.D	1.238	1.467	1.153	1.550
(E) Submissive versus dominance	Mean	5.810	4.870	5.170	5.283
	S.D	1.998	1.823	2.127	2.019
(F) Sober versus enthusiastic	Mean	5.840	4.780	3.320	4.900
	S.D	1.618	1.210	1.023	1.803
(G) Low super ego strength versus higher super ego strength	Mean	5.460	4.780	3.320	4.597
	S.D	1.976	1.210	1.023	1.666
(H) Threat-sensitive versus socially bold	Mean	5.570	6.120	4.840	5.510
	S.D	1.558	1.532	1.937	1.760
(I) Tough minded versus tender minded	Mean	5.270	6.200	6.290	5.920
	S.D	1.406	1.614	1.742	1.654
(J) Zestful versus individualism	Mean	6.470	5.620	6.390	6.160
	S.D	1.395	1.587	1.716	1.613
(N) Forthright versus astute and artful	Mean	6.470	4.770	5.700	5.677
	S.D	1.395	1.619	1.374	1.693
(O) Untroubled adequacy versus guilt proneness	Mean	6.080	5.660	6.330	6.023
	S.D	1.631	1.918	1.371	1.673
(Q3) Low self sentiment versus high self sentiment	Mean	6.430	5.230	2.730	4.797
	S.D	1.950	1.739	1.246	2.271
(Q4) Low ergic tension versus high ergic tension	Mean	5.300	0.050	5.400	4.917
	S.D	2.337	1.616	1.530	1.956

for the subject of low income group tend towards low score, describing their personality undemonstrative and deliberate.

Regarding Factor 'E' *Submissive (Obedient, Mild,*

Personality factors		ANOVA				
		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
A	Between groups	428.460	2	214.230	88.632	.000
	Within groups	717.870	297	2.417		
	Total	1146.330	299			
B	Between groups	473.360	2	236.680	105.406	.000
	Within groups	666.890	297	2.245		
	Total	1140.250	299			
C	Between groups	335.007	2	167.503	66.940	.000
	Within groups	743.180	297	2.502		
	Total	1078.187	299			
D	Between groups	221.547	2	110.773	66.218	.000
	Within groups	496.840	297	1.673		
	Total	718.387	299			
E	Between groups	46.107	2	23.053	5.838	.003
	Within groups	1172.810	297	3.949		
	Total	1218.917	299			
F	Between groups	378.960	2	189.480	94.734	.000
	Within groups	594.040	297	2.000		
	Total	973.000	299			
G	Between groups	187.447	2	93.723	43.307	.000
	Within groups	642.750	297	2.164		
	Total	830.197	299			
H	Between groups	82.460	2	41.230	14.500	.000
	Within groups	844.510	297	2.843		
	Total	926.970	299			
I	Between groups	63.780	2	31.890	12.556	.000
	Within groups	754.300	297	2.540		
	Total	818.080	299			
J	Between groups	44.060	2	22.030	8.911	.000
	Within groups	734.260	297	2.472		
	Total	778.320	299			
N	Between groups	160.287	2	80.143	34.133	.000
	Within groups	697.350	297	2.348		
	Total	857.637	299			
O	Between groups	22.927	2	11.463	4.183	.016
	Within groups	813.910	297	2.740		
	Total	836.837	299			
Q3	Between groups	712.667	2	356.333	127.518	.000
	Within groups	829.930	297	2.794		
	Total	1542.597	299			
Q4	Between groups	113.167	2	56.583	16.288	.000
	Within groups	1031.750	297	3.474		
	Total	1144.917	299			

Table 2 : Univariate analysis of variance for effect of socio-economic status on fourteen factors of children's personality

Note= * and ** indicate significance of values at P < 0.05 and P < 0.01, respectively; NS = Non-significant

Easily led) versus Dominance (Assertive, Aggressive, Competitive) the mean (5.81) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group tend towards high score describing their personality dominance or ascendance and the lowest mean (4.87) was found for the subject who belonged to middle income group tend toward average score describing the personality sometime obedient, mild and easily led and sometime assertive and aggressive.

Regarding factor 'F' *(Desurgency (sober and serious) Versus Surgency (Enthusiastic Happy Go-Lucky)* the highest mean (5.84) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group tend toward high score describing their personality Enthusiastic Happy Go-Lucky and the lowest mean (3.32) was found for the subject who belonged to low income group tend towards low score describing the personality sober and serious.

Factor 'G' *Low Super ego strength (disregards rules) versus high super ego strength (conscientious, moralistic)* highest mean (5.46) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group tend towards high score, describing their personality having high super ego strength and the lowest mean (3.32) was found for the subject who belonged to low income group tend towards low score describing their personality having low super ego strength.

Regarding factor 'H' *Threctia, (Shy, Timid restrained) versus Parmia (Adventurous, Thick skinned, Socially Bold)* highest mean (6.12) was found for the subject who belonged to middle income group tend towards high score, describing the personality adventurous, thick skinned and socially bold and the lowest mean (4.84) was found for the subject who belonged to low income group tend towards average score, describing the personality sometime shy, timid restrained and sometime adventurous, thick skin and socially bold.

Regarding factor 'I' *Harria (Tough-minded, Rejects illusion) versus Premsia (Tender-mind, sensitive, dependent, overprotected),* the highest mean (6.29) was found for the subject who belonged to low income group tend towards high score describing the personality tender minded, sensitive and dependent and the lowest mean (5.27) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group tend towards average score describing the personality sometime tough minded and some time sensitive, dependent and overprotected.

Factor 'J' Zeppia (zestful, liking group actions) versus Costhenia (Circumspect Individualism, Reflective, the highest mean (6.47) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group tend towards high score describing the personality zestful and liking group action and the lowest mean (3.56) was found for the subject who belonged to low income group tend towards average score describing the personality sometime zestful, liking group action and sometime circumspect individualism and reflective.

Factor 'N' *Naiveté (forthright, unpretentious) versus Shrewdness (Astute, Artful)* the highest mean (6.47) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group tend toward high score describing the personality astute and artful and the lowest mean (4.77) was found for the subject who belonged to middle income group tend towards average score describing the personality sometime unpretentious, forthright and sometime artful and astute.

Factor 'O' *Untroubled Adequacy (self confident, cheerful) versus Guilt Proneness (Worrying, depressed) the highest mean (6.33)* was found for the subject who belonged to low income group and the lowest mean (5.66) was found for the subject who belonged to middle income group, no significant difference were found between all income groups, the mean value of all groups tend towards average score describing the personality sometime self confident, cheerful and sometime worrying and depressed.

Factor Q3 Low self sentiment versus High Strength of self sentiments the highest mean (6.43) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group tend towards high score describing the personality having high strength of self sentiment and the lowest mean (2.73) was found for the subject who belonged to low income group tend towards to low score describing the personality having low strength of self sentiments.

Factor 'Q4' *Low Ergic tension versus High Ergic Tension* the highest mean (5.40) was found for the subject who belonged to high income group tend towards high score describing the personality having high Ergic tension and the lowest mean (0.05) was found for the subject who belonged to middle income group, tend towards low score describing the personality having low ergic tension.

There is evidence (Cattell and Stice, 1960) that when persons of A+ score come together they more

readily form active groups, and there is experimental proof that they are more impulsive, generous in personal relationship, less distributed by criticism, and (with the same general memory power) better able to remember names of people. The sizothymes, on the other hand, are more penetrating in dependable in long term undertaking and those requiring exactness, e.g, electricians, and more uncompromising, more inventive, obligations exactly. It is this difference which they probably explains the A+ or a affectothyme's generally getting superior social adjustment rating in junior and senior high school.

Regarding results of factor B, indicate a slight tendency for the more intelligent child to show better morale, more persistence and greater school interest.

Eysenck (1953) and Cattell (1957) shows that ego strength is not entirely dependent on learning in home or school. Factor C appears to be the core of what is as capacity for frustration tolerance.

Degan (1952) and Lorr et al. (1953), factoring of mental hospital behavior, in what has been ascribed to manic and catatonic excitement, with loading on restless over activity, distractibility, sleepiness and physical assaults (Cattell, 1957). Similarly, the high-D-scoring individual, through likable and affectionate in quitter moods, is apt to be regarding as a considerable nuisance in restrictive situation, since he is so "impulsive".

The Table 2 presents the summary of Univariate analysis of variance, which shows that p value of all personality factors is less than 0.05 and the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant effect of socio-economic status on the personality development of children, is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. Thus a highly significant relationship found between socio-economic status and children personality development. Crow and Crow (1999) think that family's socio-economic status can exert a powerful influence on a young person's developing personality. Not only is the adolescent of an economically under privileged home denied many of the privileges and enriching experiences enjoyed by upper and middle class children but his life values are affected by parental ambitions for him. Steinberg et al. (1991) defined SES as "measure of an individual's or family's standing in society, based primarily on income, education and occupation". Barnard et al. (1984); reported a positive relationship between SES and personality of children. They found

that the children belonging to families of higher socio-economic class receive an intellectually more beneficial environment.

According to present study it is clear from the Table 2 that the experience of long-term poverty affects a child's personality development, poverty is considered to be one of the major factors. This causes family dysfunction, stress among caregivers and inadequate parenting. Many factors contribute to family poverty including underemployment and unemployment. Some may 'inherit' poverty because of being born into a particular social group defined by race, class and location. Families who constitute the 'working group' may have one or both parents working at or near the minimum wage.

Economically deprived parents struggle for the survival of their families. They are often unable to pay attention to the importance of parental care. Therefore, the children in poor families usually miss the personality development teachings from their first learning institution the family. These results somehow support the findings of McClelland and Mac Donald (1998) found that at age six, the children in families of low incomes had more isolated lives in that they were significantly less likely than other children to:

– Live in a good neighborhood.
– Play with friends away from school.
– Be involved in sport and music.
– Be involved in any formal activities.
– Go on holiday.

Conclusion :

There was a significant cause- effect relationship between the independent variable of socio-economic status and dependent variables of children's overall personality. Extroversion, anxiety, tough poise and independence factor of children's personality were also significantly affected by the socio-economic status of children's personality; only tough poise factor of children's personality was not affected by the socio-economic status. It means personality was also significantly affected by the family income.

The study was also concluded that the children who belonged to high income group were more outgoing, participating, intelligent, emotionally stable, excitable, competitive and enthusiastic. It also found that children who belong to low income group were more tender

minded and sensitive.

Authors' affiliations:
NEHA DAYAL, Department of Home Science, Hindu Degree College, MORADABAD (U.P.) INDIA

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