

# Family ecology: context of adolescents' personality from disorganized families

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■ **ABSTRACT :** This study investigated the role of socio-economic variables on personality of adolescents from disorganized families. Multidimensional Assessment of Personality Series (MAP Series Form-T) form for Teens had been used for the said purpose. Test contained 20 dimensions and 7 items for each dimension to objectively assess the personality of adolescents. A list of adolescents of urban disorganized families was prepared from five randomly selected city schools of Hisar city. A sample of 45 urban respondents was randomly selected from the prepared list. Following the same procedure, a sample of 45 rural adolescents was taken from the list of rural disorganized family's adolescents of purposively selected villages in Hisar-I block. The findings indicated significant association between personality of adolescents and personal and socio-economical variables. Age and area of belonging had significant association with adolescent's enthusiasm, boldness, guilt proneness, leadership, maturity, mental health, self-control, self-sufficiency and tension. Parent's occupation and family income had significant association with general ability, guilt proneness, leadership, mental health, self-control and social warmth of the respondents. Family size had a significant effect on boldness, general ability, innovation and self-control while parent's education was significantly associated with guilt proneness, leadership, maturity, self-control and tension, further sex of parents was significantly associated with self-control level of adolescents. There was a significant association between caste and adolescent's mental health, self-control and self-sufficiency while family type was associated with enthusiasm, general ability and individualism of respondents.

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Family is an important life setting where much of small children's care and socialization take place. For older children and adolescents, family environment and resources also constitute an integral component of their quality of life directly affecting their relational experiences and life chances.

Present scenario tells us more about dissolution in family structure or family disorganization. Family disorganization is breakdown of a family system. It may be associated with parental overburdening or loss of significant others who served as role model for children or support system for family members (Mosby's Medical Dictionary, 2009). Family dissolution not only affects the husband and wife, or one of

them but also put an impact on the life course of the children and it may be more challenging for the adolescent who is simultaneously involved in critical developmental transitions (Hines, 1997).

Adolescence has been described as a phase of life beginning in biology and ending in society (Petersen, 1988). Indeed, adolescence may be defined as the period within the life span when most of a person's biological, cognitive, psychological, and social characteristics are changing from what is typically considered child-like to what is considered adult-like (Lerner and Spanier, 1980). Adolescents from single-parent families are more likely than their peers from two-parent families to engage in health risk behaviours. Such as, smoking,

drinking, delinquency, violence, unsafe sexual activity and suicide attempts (Blum *et al.*, 2000).

It is conceivable that these disadvantaged children would have a harder time landing a successful adulthood. In theory, single-parent family cannot compete with two-parent family in terms of social, economic, and psychological resources that are contributory to harmonious and constructive family processes. Predictions of specific form of deviant or damaged behaviour depend upon the contributing factors to the child's personality and behaviour. As, many single parents lack the social, economic or parenting resources that are known to promote good parenting (Bumpass and Sweet, 1989).

Family socio-economic status touches many aspects of an adolescent's life. The general idea that socio-economic status has far-reaching influences can be seen in the sheer variety and number of studies in which it serves as a background factor. Socio-economic status of family of origin can affect factors ranging from community or neighborhood characteristics to types of personality adolescents exhibit (Avenevoli and Steinberg, 2000).

Variables such as sex, landholding, family income, adolescent's relation with grandparents and activities at school; the meso system variable such as occupation of parents; exo system variable such as benefits availed by parents from any government scheme, developmental facilities at school and in the surrounding community are significantly associated with socio-economic and emotional problems of adolescents (Devi, 2007). In spite of these all variables, the type of family either nuclear or joint, parents educational level, family income and occupation directly affect child's personality through all areas of development.

The present investigation tried to assess the association between socio-economic variables and personality components of the adolescents from disorganized families. The relationship was assessed to see the influential role of socio-economic factors on their personality.

## ■ RESEARCH METHODS

### Sample :

A sample of 90 adolescents was randomly selected from purposively selected Hisar district of Haryana state. City area of the selected district was taken purposively to have urban respondents. From the selected city area, 5 senior secondary schools were selected. To have rural sample, Hisar I block was selected randomly, three villages Kaimeri, Mangali and Gangwa were selected purposively from selected block, and further three higher/senior secondary schools were selected from the selected villages.

A list of adolescent (13-18 years) boys belonging to disorganized families was prepared. A sample of 45 adolescent boys was selected randomly from both rural and urban area thus, making a total sample of 90 adolescent respondents.

Two types of variable *i.e.* dependent and independent were studied under present investigation. The independent variables included personal and socio economic variables. Personality aspects of adolescent were taken as dependent variable.

### Tool for data collection :

Two questionnaires were formulated. Data regarding personal and socio-economic variables were collected with the help of self-structured questionnaire. Personality of adolescents was assessed by Multi Dimensional Personality Assessment form for Teens (Vohra, 1993).

### Data collection :

Data were collected separately from each school. The questionnaires were distributed to randomly selected adolescents with proper instruction. The investigator was present during the data collection and attended to the subjects, whenever they had any difficulty.

### Analysis of data :

Descriptive statistics like percentage, frequency were calculated and Chi square test was used to see the effect of socio-economic variables on adolescent's personality.

## ■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

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

### Association of personal and socio-economic variables with adolescent's personality aspects :

This section presents result related to the association of personality aspects of respondents with personal and socio-economic variables of respondents. Chi- square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of independence has been used to measure the degree of association between dependent (personality aspects) and independent (personal and socio - economic) variables.

### Association of adolescents' personality aspects with area :

Data regarding association of personality aspects and area to which respondents belong, are compiled in Table 1. Result portrayed significant association of adolescent's boldness ( $\chi^2= 13.97^*$ ), guilt proneness ( $\chi^2= 12.8^*$ ), leadership ( $\chi^2= 25.7^*$ ), maturity ( $\chi^2= 8.18^*$ ), mental health ( $\chi^2= 6.15^*$ ), self-control ( $\chi^2= 4.55^*$ ), self-sufficiency ( $\chi^2= 6.42^*$ ) and tension ( $\chi^2= 8.78^*$ ) with respondents area of belonging.

Boldness, leadership, maturity, mental health, self-control and tension level of adolescents were significantly associated with area to which the respondent belongs. The high level of rural respondent's leadership, boldness and mental health may be due to more social participation, and socialization opportunities.

**Association of adolescents' personality aspects with personal variables :**

It is evident from the data compiled in Table 2 that enthusiasm level of the respondents had significant association with age of the respondents ( $\chi^2 = 4.78^*$ ), whereas,

ordinal position and number of sibling of the respondents had non-significant association with all personality aspects of adolescents. Age group was significantly associated with enthusiasm level as growing older makes people less expressive and more concealing thoughts and feelings.

**Table 1: Association of adolescents' personality aspects with area**

Sr. No.	Personality aspects	Area	Rural (n=45)	Urban (n=45)	$\chi^2$ value
1.	Adaptability	Below average	7	8	0.08
		Average	38	37	
2.	Academic achievement	Below average	6	05	0.10
		Average	39	40	
3.	Boldness	Below average	3	18	13.97*
		Average	42	27	
4.	Competition	Below average	9	8	0.07
		Average	36	37	
5.	Enthusiasm	Below average	12	4	3.11
		Average	33	41	
6.	Creativity	Below average	14	15	0.05
		Average	31	30	
7.	Excitability	Below average	6	15	4.03
		Average	39	30	
8.	General ability	Below average	23	14	2.96
		Average	22	31	
9.	Guilt proneness	Below average	23	7	12.80*
		Average	22	38	
10.	Individualism	Below average	11	16	1.32
		Average	34	29	
11.	Innovation	Below average	14	6	4.11
		Average	31	39	
12.	Leadership	Below average	9	33	25.71*
		Average	36	12	
13.	Maturity	Below average	18	6	8.18*
		Average	27	39	
14.	Mental health	Below average	9	20	6.15*
		Average	36	25	
15.	Morality	Below average	8	13	1.55
		Average	37	32	
16.	Self - control	Below average	24	14	4.55*
		Average	21	31	
17.	Sensitivity	Below average	4	8	1.53
		Average	41	37	
18.	Self - sufficiency	Below average	5	15	6.42*
		Average	40	30	
19.	Social warmth	Below average	8	13	1.55
		Average	37	32	
20.	Tension	Below average	14	3	8.78*
		Average	31	42	

\* indicate significance of value at P=0.05, respectively

On the basis of frequency distribution, it can be said that first and second born adolescent of >15-18 years having 1-3 siblings were slightly better in their boldness, creativity, general ability,

innovation, leadership, maturity, mental health, self-control, self-sufficiency and social warmth level than 3<sup>rd</sup> and above born adolescents of younger age groups having more than 3 siblings.

**Table 2 : Association of adolescents' personality aspects with personal variables**

Sr. No	Personality aspects	Personal variables	Age group		$\chi^2$ value	Ordinal position		$\chi^2$ value	No. of siblings		$\chi^2$ value
			13-15 yrs. (n=39)	>15-18 yrs. (n=51)		1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> born (n=48)	3 <sup>rd</sup> and above born (n=42)		1-3 (n=60)	4 and above (n=30)	
1.	Adaptability	Below average	8	7	0.73	6	9	1.28	11	4	0.36
		Average	31	44		42	33		49	26	
2.	Academic achievement	Below average	32	47	2.10	41	38	0.53	52	27	0.20
		Average	7	4		7	4		8	3	
3.	Boldness	Below average	11	10	0.91	9	12	1.20	13	8	0.28
		Average	28	41		39	30		47	22	
4.	Competition	Below average	7	11	0.55	10	7	0.25	12	5	0.14
		Average	32	40		38	35		48	25	
5.	Enthusiasm	Below average	3	13	4.78*	6	10	1.96	27	9	1.87
		Average	36	38		42	32		33	21	
6.	Creativity	Below average	14	15	0.42	16	13	0.65	19	11	0.22
		Average	25	36		32	29		41	19	
7.	Excitability	Below average	10	11	0.20	9	12	1.20	41	22	0.23
		Average	29	40		39	30		19	8	
8.	General ability	Below average	15	21	0.06	18	18	0.26	27	9	1.87
		Average	24	30		30	24		33	21	
9.	Guilt proneness	Below average	15	15	0.81	17	13	0.20	13	6	3.07
		Average	24	36		31	29		47	24	
10.	Individualism	Below average	12	15	0.01	17	10	1.43	46	23	0.20
		Average	27	36		31	32		14	7	
11.	Innovation	Below average	9	11	0.02	14	6	2.87	16	4	2.05
		Average	30	40		34	36		44	26	
12.	Leadership	Below average	21	21	1.42	22	20	0.02	28	14	0.10
		Average	18	30		26	22		32	16	
13.	Maturity	Below average	12	12	0.59	13	11	0.08	16	8	0.06
		Average	27	39		35	31		44	22	
14.	Mental health	Below average	15	14	1.22	15	14	0.04	21	8	0.63
		Average	24	37		33	28		39	22	
15.	Morality	Below average	6	15	2.43	10	11	0.35	15	6	0.28
		Average	33	36		38	31		45	24	
16.	Self-control	Below average	16	22	0.04	22	16	0.55	25	13	0.03
		Average	23	29		24	26		35	17	
17.	Sensitivity	Below average	7	5	1.26	9	3	2.61	9	3	0.43
		Average	32	46		39	39		51	27	
18.	Self-sufficiency	Below average	9	11	0.02	12	8	0.45	15	5	0.80
		Average	30	40		36	34		45	25	
19.	Social warmth	Below average	10	11	0.20	10	11	0.35	14	7	0.05
		Average	29	40		38	31		46	23	
20.	Tension	Below average	7	10	0.04	12	5	2.50	12	5	0.14
		Average	32	41		36	37		48	25	

\* indicate significance of values at P=0.05, respectively

**Association of adolescents' personality aspects with economic variables :**

Results of Table 3 unveil the association of personality aspects of adolescents with economic variables. Result

indicated that father's occupation was significantly associated with guilt proneness ( $\chi^2=5.63^*$ ), and leadership ( $\chi^2=8.79^*$ ) and mental health ( $\chi^2=8.07^*$ ). While the family monthly income had significant impact on general ability ( $\chi^2=5.83^*$ ), self-

**Table 3: Association of adolescents' personality aspects with economic variables**

Sr. No.	Personality aspects	Economic variables	Parent's occupation			' $\chi^2$ ' value	Family income			' $\chi^2$ ' value
			Labours and farming (n=38)	Service (n=26)	Business (n=26)		Low (n=30)	Middle (n=30)	High (n=30)	
1.	Adaptability	Below average	5	5	5	0.58	3	9	3	5.76
		Average	33	21	21		27	21	27	
2.	Academic achievement	Below average	6	4	1	2.39	4	4	3	0.20
		Average	32	22	25		26	26	27	
3.	Boldness	Below average	6	10	5	4.78	6	11	5	4.47
		Average	32	16	21		25	19	25	
4.	Competition	Below average	8	4	5	0.32	5	7	5	0.58
		Average	30	22	21		25	23	25	
5.	Enthusiasm	Below average	5	4	7	2.22	7	7	2	3.80
		Average	33	22	19		23	23	28	
6.	Creativity	Below average	11	10	8	0.67	8	8	13	2.54
		Average	27	16	18		22	22	17	
7.	Excitability	Below average	10	5	6	0.43	6	6	9	1.11
		Average	28	21	20		24	24	21	
8.	General ability	Below average	18	10	8	1.80	17	8	11	5.83*
		Average	20	16	18		13	22	19	
9.	Guilt proneness	Below average	12	5	13	5.63*	11	10	9	0.30
		Average	26	21	13		19	20	21	
10.	Individualism	Below average	7	10	10	4.19	10	5	12	4.12
		Average	31	16	16		20	25	18	
11.	Innovation	Below average	9	4	7	1.09	9	7	4	2.44
		Average	29	22	19		21	23	26	
12.	Leadership	Below average	12	18	12	8.79*	13	13	16	0.80
		Average	26	8	14		17	17	14	
13.	Maturity	Below average	8	8	8	1.06	6	9	9	1.02
		Average	30	18	18		24	21	21	
14.	Mental health	Below average	8	14	7	8.07*	7	10	12	1.93
		Average	30	12	19		23	20	18	
15.	Morality	Below average	12	4	5	2.60	7	8	6	0.37
		Average	26	22	21		23	22	24	
16.	Self-control	Below average	20	9	9	2.92	17	12	9	4.46*
		Average	18	17	17		13	18	21	
17.	Sensitivity	Below average	4	4	4	0.44	3	4	5	0.57
		Average	34	22	22		27	26	25	
18.	Self-sufficiency	Below average	7	5	8	1.55	6	6	8	0.51
		Average	31	21	18		24	24	22	
19.	Social warmth	Below average	6	6	9	3.06	3	7	11	5.96*
		Average	32	20	17		27	23	19	
20.	Tension	Below average	9	4	4	0.98	6	4	7	1.01
		Average	29	22	22		24	26	23	

\* indicate significance of value at P=0.05, respectively

Table 4: Association of adolescents' personality aspects with social variables

Sr. No.	Personality aspects	Caste						Family type				Family size				Parent's education				Parental sex	
		Low (n=24)	Middle (n=33)	High (n=33)	Nuclear (n=58)	Joint (n=32)	Value $\chi^2$	Small (n=31)	Large (n=59)	Value $\chi^2$	Up to 8 <sup>th</sup> (n=52)	9 <sup>th</sup> to graduation (n=38)	Value $\chi^2$	Male (n=42)	Female (n=48)	Value $\chi^2$	Value $\chi^2$				
1.	Ad Below average	1	7	7	12	3	1.90	7	8	1.19	6	6	2.33	8	7	0.32					
	Average	23	26	26	46	29	3.68	24	51		46	29		34	41						
2.	Am Below average	3	6	2	8	3	2.26	4	7	0.02	7	4	0.17	5	6	1.34					
	Average	21	27	31	50	29	0.37	27	52		45	34		37	42						
3.	Bo Below average	6	7	8	13	8	0.13	3	18	4.93*	8	13	4.35	11	10	0.35					
	Average	18	26	25	45	45	0.07	28	41		44	25		31	38						
4.	Co Below average	4	8	5	11	6	0.99	7	10	0.42	12	5	1.41	6	11	1.08					
	Average	20	25	28	47	26	0.00	24	49		40	33		36	37						
5.	En Below average	4	7	5	13	3	0.44	5	11	5.40*	11	5	0.96	10	6	1.96					
	Average	20	26	28	45	29	0.44	26	48		41	33		32	42						
6.	Cr Below average	9	8	12	20	9	1.52	13	16	1.04	13	16	2.94	14	15	0.04					
	Average	15	25	21	38	23	0.38	18	43		39	22		28	33						
7.	Ex Below average	2	10	9	18	3	4.20	8	13	2.16	15	6	2.09	9	12	0.16					
	Average	22	23	24	40	29	0.60	23	46		37	32		33	36						
8.	Ga Below average	12	15	9	28	8	3.63	18	13	6.43*	24	12	1.94	14	22	1.45					
	Average	12	18	24	30	24	4.65*	13	41		28	26		28	26						
9.	Gp Below average	11	10	9	21	9	2.36	14	16	2.97	24	6	9.10*	11	19	1.80					
	Average	13	23	24	37	23	0.60	17	43		28	32		31	29						
10.	Id Below average	7	7	13	23	4	2.60	12	15	1.70	15	12	0.07	13	14	0.03					
	Average	17	17	20	35	28	7.24*	19	44		37	26		29	34						
11.	In Below average	6	7	7	15	5	0.14	12	8	7.43*	15	5	3.12	9	11	0.02					
	Average	18	26	26	43	27	1.25	19	51		37	33		33	37						
12.	Ld Below average	10	13	19	26	16	2.52	13	29	0.42	19	23	5.07*	19	23	0.06					
	Average	14	20	14	32	16	0.22	18	30		33	15		23	25						
13.	Ma Below average	5	9	10	14	10	0.64	5	19	2.68	8	16	8.01*	14	10	1.79					
	Average	19	24	23	44	22	0.53	26	40		44	22		28	38						
14.	Mh Below average	3	18	8	17	12	12.76*	9	20	0.22	12	17	4.01	14	15	0.04					
	Average	21	15	25	41	20	0.63	22	39		40	21		28	33						
15.	Mo Below average	4	7	10	11	10	1.57	8	13	0.162	14	7	0.88	8	13	0.80					
	Average	20	26	23	47	22	1.74	23	46		38	31		34	35						
16.	Sc Below average	14	15	9	28	10	5.71*	19	19	7.04*	30	8	12.08*	11	27	8.29*					
	Average	10	18	24	30	22	2.45	12	40		22	30		31	21						
17.	Se Below average	3	5	4	9	3	0.15	6	6	1.48	7	5	0.00	5	7	0.13					
	Average	21	28	29	49	29	0.67	25	53		45	33		37	41						
18.	Ss Below average	1	8	11	14	6	6.96*	8	12	0.35	10	10	0.63	9	11	0.02					
	Average	23	25	22	44	14	0.34	23	47		42	28		33	37						
19.	Sw Below average	2	8	11	11	10	4.87	5	16	1.37	12	9	0.07	11	10	0.35					
	Average	22	25	22	47	22	1.74	26	43		40	29		31	38						
20.	Tn Below average	6	6	5	13	4	0.89	8	9	1.47	15	2	7.97*	8	9	0.05					
	Average	18	27	28	45	28	1.32	23	50		37	36		34	39						

\* indicate significance of value at P=0.05, respectively

control ( $\chi^2=4.64^*$ ) and level of social warmth ( $\chi^2=5.96^*$ ) of adolescents.

Parental occupation and family income were found to be significantly associated with guilt proneness, leadership, mental health, general ability, self-control and social warmth level of respondents. Economic hardship contributes in family tension level of adolescents, components such as adolescent's role performance, school structure, resources and family background is also affected. The multivariate regression results indicate that the strongest influence on a student's academic achievement is their socio-economic placement (Engweiler, 2005).

#### **Association of adolescents personality aspects with social variables :**

The association of personality aspects with social variables are reported in Table 4. The data elucidate that caste had significant association with the mental health ( $\chi^2=12.76^*$ ), self-control ( $\chi^2=5.71^*$ ) and self-sufficiency ( $\chi^2=6.96^*$ ). Caste was significant variable for mental health, self-control and self-sufficiency, low caste respondents were more outgoing, warmhearted and calm. The reason for this difference may be due to the fact that low caste families are scattered and isolated, particularly in rural areas (Mehta *et al.*, 2008).

Family type had significant effect on enthusiasm ( $\chi^2=5.40^*$ ), general ability ( $\chi^2=4.65^*$ ) and individualism ( $\chi^2=7.24^*$ ) level of adolescents at 5 per cent level of significance. It may be because joint family set up provides support especially those children and adolescents who are not enough fortunate to be with their biological parents. Joshi and Bhatnagar (2005) observed that staying in joint family helped single parents by reducing their worries regarding finance, childcare and housing. Emotional support also provided to the single parent family thus making the single parent less burdened than single parent in nuclear families.

Data further reflected significant association of family size with boldness ( $\chi^2=4.93^*$ ), general ability ( $\chi^2=6.43^*$ ), innovation ( $\chi^2=7.43^*$ ), and self-control ( $\chi^2=7.04^*$ ). Parental education had a significant impact on respondents' guilt proneness ( $\chi^2=9.10^*$ ), leadership ( $\chi^2=5.07^*$ ), maturity ( $\chi^2=8.01^*$ ), self-control ( $\chi^2=12.08^*$ ) and tension ( $\chi^2=7.97^*$ ).

Parental education and gender had significant association with adolescent's guilt proneness, maturity self-control and tension level. As well educated parents are more involved in their children's education as compared to less educated parents. Hill and Duncan (1987) found that parents' education, especially father's education, as a measure of socio-economic status, plays an important part in children's educational attainment.

Table 4 further reflected significant association between adolescents' personality aspect and parental sex. It is evident from data that there was significant association of parental sex with respondents' self-control ( $\chi^2=8.29^*$ ). Frequency

distribution pointed out that adolescent of female living parent or parent surrogate were slightly higher in adaptability, maturity and level of tension. The presence of mothers or female parental figure at home leads to increased psychological well-being (Govender and Moodley, 2004).

#### **Conclusion :**

Result showed that age and area of belonging had significant association with adolescent's enthusiasm, boldness, guilt proneness, leadership, maturity, mental health, self-control, self-sufficiency and tension. Parent's occupation and family income had significant association with general ability, guilt proneness, leadership, mental health, self-control and social warmth of the respondents. Family size had a significant effect on boldness, general ability, innovation and self-control while parent's education was significantly associated with guilt proneness, leadership, maturity, self-control and tension, further sex of parents was significantly associated with self-control level of adolescents.

There was a significant association between caste and adolescent's mental health, self-control and self-sufficiency while family type was associated with enthusiasm, general ability and individualism of respondents.

A general conclusion is that there are many factors, which influence adolescent's personality such as parenting style, parent's education background, environment of the students (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2009). Home stability, family surrounding, and the pattern in parents' behaviour, parents' socio-economic status, family education background, parent child relationship quality and sibling's relationship quality give different impact towards personality expressed by the adolescents.

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