



A Comparative Study on Social Intelligence in Joint and Nuclear Families

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Abstract

The current comparative study delves into the social intelligence levels of individuals hailing from joint and nuclear family backgrounds. Grounded in the hypotheses examining the differences in social intelligence between these family structures, this research explores dimensions such as patience, cooperativeness, confidence, sensitivity, recognition of social environment, tactfulness, sense of humour, and memory. Utilizing a sample comprising participants from both joint and nuclear families, the study employed mean analysis to scrutinize the distinct dimensions of social intelligence across these familial contexts. 100 participants were used in the study and social intelligence scale by (Dr. N.K. Chadha and Ms. Usha Ganeshan) was used to collect data. Findings revealed nuanced variations in social intelligence levels, with individuals from joint families exhibiting marginally lower mean

scores compared to their counterparts in nuclear families. However, the difference does not reach statistical significance, suggesting a more complex interplay between family structure and social intelligence. Implications of these findings for understanding familial influences on social development and implications for future research and interventions are discussed.

Keywords: *Social intelligence scale, Family type, Patience, Confidence, Cooperativeness, Sensitivity, Sense of humour, Recognition of social intelligence*

Introduction

An educated Indian can spend most of his or her life meticulously preparing for securing a prosperous and stable future for their beloved family. The concept of joint families is highly sought after because it not only helps preserve social status but also provides essential emotional support. Furthermore, it serves to restrict marriage within close kin, allowing for a sense of familiarity and comfort. Joint families offer extensive parental guidance, ensuring that the younger generations benefit from the wisdom and experience of their elders. Moreover, such households also provide invaluable aid in child care and offer assistance in terms of financial resources for those who wish to establish their own nuclear families.

The practice of living together in joint families is highly encouraged due to its numerous advantages. It acts as a cushion for child-rearing responsibilities, making it easier for parents to share the burden and ensure the overall well-being of their children. Additionally, within the context of mate selection, joint families provide a wealth of readily available information and guidance, helping individuals make informed decisions about their life partners. This arrangement also helps restrict opportunities for undesirable mates, safeguarding the family's interests and values. Furthermore, joint families carefully supervise the interactions of their

young members with the "opposite sex," ensuring that such interactions align with societal norms and expectations.

The joint family's conscious decision to limit its social intelligence in various fields is driven by these specific objectives. In the modern urban landscape of India, there is an increasing concern surrounding the use of the term "social intelligence" and a growing need to define its various aspects, especially in relation to the successful functioning of a joint family. The distinctive urban traits that traditionally accompany the joint family structure, such as the "jājmani system" and the strong sense of ingroup loyalty with an inclination to deride members of other communities, are slowly fading away. These aspects are now being replaced by a focus on education and the pursuit of a "good job in a multinational corporation" as a means to secure financial stability.

While, the grandparents within the joint family may find contentment in simply maintaining the cohesiveness and traditions of their ancestral household, their perspective often fails to effectively communicate their satisfaction to the younger generation. Even when attempts are made to convey these values, the children often have a different understanding and perception of what a joint family truly entails.

Importance of Social Intelligence

An analysis of the reasons why social intelligence is important can be conveniently broken down into consideration of its relevance to the general population and the relevance of social intelligence to those who are already highflyers in traditional academic and intellectual terms. Individuals differ greatly in their ability to understand others and in their skill in managing interactions. At one time, individual differences in cognitive intelligence were seen as the primary determinant of success in life. However, being clever in the academic sense is not a good predictor of the ability to empathize with others and to act sensitively in social

relationships. Yet it is these empathetic and social skills that are crucial for making a success of marriage, parenthood, and holding down a job. People with high social intelligence are simply more interpersonally effective in many areas of life, at home, and at work.

Social Intelligence in Joint Families

In such a milieu, the complex social game (often a game with move and countermove but no bright line between tactics and strategy) of any one aggregate against the rest, and of one member within the aggregate against his rivals for a particular situation, affords an almost unexampled variety of problems and keenness of stress, making intelligence a more important and serious business than in any other field. In simple societies, the number of puzzles set by the behaviour of kinsmen and cronies may well be moderate. But even in this case, it is well to remember that the intelligence of social man has been impelled by an evolution in which the buffering of chances and the wresting of outcomes from the control of alien powers has played a large, if not a primary, role. And the modern world contains many divisions and classes, each with its own conscious or unconscious policy, striving under a condition of relative anarchy to better its prospects and to attain some security against injurious vicissitudes.

Social squads, which are one's loved ones, adversaries, and outsiders, give various forms of support, attack, and challenge for their members to struggle with, requiring flexible and intelligent responses. In order to take care of fellow members' well-being against outside threats, the insufficient resources of a poor, unschooled man trying to earn his living may be enough to burden a conscientious wife with much anxiety. The key men of a community, ranging from the boss of a small work gang to the chief executive of a powerful institution, may have to seek and use more light on specific problems which involve dealing with rival factions.

Cultural Factors Influencing Social Intelligence

One of the determinants of social intelligence is the trait of wanting to be smart in social situations. This wanting is influenced by the intelligence theory beliefs that intelligence is malleable and the person's orientation to learning. These have cultural implications. In a collectivist culture, the individual may learn or want to learn the intelligence skills for the benefit or harmony of the group. They may also be open to learning those skills from leaders or elders who will guide them into appropriate intelligence behaviours, thus making it a top-down learning process. This could pose some interesting research into the SII and leader-follower learning feedback loop.

Cultural factors have an important effect on the social interaction process of organizations. There is much evidence to suggest that the model of appropriate behaviour for leader-follower interaction is culturally based. This, in turn, has implications for the social intelligence of the followers and subordinates. Varying dimensions of intelligence are required for different forms of leader-follower interaction. For example, an authoritarian leader will evoke a different intelligence response compared to a transformational leader. Up-to-date cross-cultural research is lacking. Recent work by Redding (1998) suggests that the global leader will require high social intelligence and emotional intelligence to deal with followers in various cultural contexts. This type of research is essential so that the accurate dimensions of leader-follower interaction can be discovered and thus the appropriate intelligence profiles can be developed.

Total quality management (TQM) is a popular strategy which is constantly being implemented by companies. The strategies used in TQM are influenced by the national culture of the country in which the company exists. Social intelligence involves the ability to read situations and influence others intelligently. Since it has strategic implications, social intelligence involves the ability to understand, interpret, and influence the environment. In a

survey of Indian and Singaporean companies, Wong and Tjosvold (1998) found that Singaporean companies were perceived by managers as more harmonious, cooperative, and competitive than Indian companies. These perceptions were said to be cues for the dimensions of social intelligence. It is necessary to understand these perceptions as they really reflect the dimensions or merely mirror ethnocentrism. Wong and Tjosvold's work is only a starting point in understanding how national culture influences the determinants and dimensions of social intelligence.

Gender Differences in Social Intelligence

Of all the differences, it seems that the most important childhood experience to the development of social intelligence comes from the type of friends and the amount of interaction with them. Despite the massive global differences in males and females, one truism that is supported by almost all cultures is that women are better at making friends and maintaining relationships with others. This can be linked to the notion that females in Western society have their strongest friendships and spend the most time with their friends; in India, females report in interviews that their parents viewed friends as a distraction from schoolwork, and many were not even allowed to have friends over to the house when they were children. In the joint family system, males will have more associates within the family and will spend more time with them than females of the same age. This directly leads to better development of specific types of social intelligence such as assertion and gregariousness. Lastly, the special friendship patterns during adolescence, where females have a best friend and spend much time with her and the males having a peer group and spending time outside the house, leads to very different adult social intelligence for each sex.

Males and females are usually brought up differently in different cultures, and India is no exception. They start from attributing the infant's sex to differences in intellectual and social

abilities to using different play toys. From the very beginning, males and females in Indian culture are different, and are often treated differently by parents and society. Different treatment by parents has been noted by the children themselves in interviews. This differential treatment can be seen in the greater freedom given to boys compared to girls, as well as parents expressing more warmth and affection to sons versus daughters. All of these childhood experiences may have an impact on the eventual social intelligence of the male and female in Indian society.

Parental Influence on Social Intelligence

For example, parents may limit the use of digital communication or screen time until certain ages, effectively "protecting" their children from certain social situations and influences. However, this may not always be in the best interest of the child. As society advances, parents may also influence children's social intelligence through technology. With the popularization of the internet and cell phones, children now have many more ways to interact and many more social situations to deal with. Parents now attempt to influence their children's social intelligence by monitoring and controlling this activity.

For example, parents and children of differing social status interpret the same social situation very differently. Parents of higher social status are more likely to see aggressive behaviour exhibited by their children as "leadership quality," whereas lower social class parents are more likely to see the same behaviour as a "troublemaker."

Parental influence on a child's social intelligence cannot be overlooked. Social behaviours are learned from parents and the immediate environment, which form the building blocks of social intelligence. Parents influence vignette interpretation by shaping the ways in which children understand social situations. Through many modes of communication, parents actively influence how children understand and interpret their social world.

Sibling Relationships and Social Intelligence

Sibling relationships are also different from parent-child relationships due to the element of equality between siblings, and this may also increase the intensity and frequency of interactive experiences. Sometimes siblings act as "agents" for one another because they share the same or similar experiences that are afforded by the family and have frequent opportunities and motives for behavioural guidance. Sibling "teaching" or socialization is often a bilateral arrangement, and older siblings do not always act as the teacher. This is a form of scaffolding and can be very useful for social intelligence because the guided learning experiences in a less qualified individual can promote the development of self-regulatory and self-instructional functions.

Sibling relationships have been recognized as an important context for socialization. It is within the family group that children learn the "social graces" and understandings that will stand them in good stead as they move beyond the family circle. These relationships may be instrumental in the development of social intelligence, especially in the context of Indian families, which are relatively larger compared to their Western counterparts, and the joint family is still a predominant family unit. The role relationships between brothers and sisters have a specific influence upon the development of social understanding. Sisters tend to be more facilitating and caring towards their brothers, who in turn are more nurturing and protective towards their sisters compared to same-sex siblings or brother-brother sibling groups.

Challenges in Developing Social Intelligence in Indian Families

The major challenges faced by nuclear families are steep competition in modern-day life and prestige attached to social status, as they tend to push children into social situations that may not be the most conducive to their learning. For example, working parents may participate in social activities with co-workers and neighbours whose children are older or

younger than their own and whose customs and values may not be similar to those of the child's friends or teachers. These situations may cause discomfort and anxiety for the children. Joint family children may experience confusion and anxiety when they engage with the outside community (such as school events) that does not adhere to the norms and customs of their family. These children may not understand that there are different societal norms and values in different situations and may find the situation to be threatening the confidence of the child. Overall, the vast changes in Indian society and the diversity of societal situations that an Indian child may encounter are the greatest challenge for families attempting to instil social intelligence in their children.

Comparison of Social Intelligence in Joint and Nuclear Families

After considering these possible differences in social problem-solving behaviour, we decided to try out a quasi-experimental study to get English school children from differing types of families to solve a test targeting new and difficult school problems in exchange for desirable school materials. We chose this particular situation because it was culturally neutral and similar in nature to the middle class situation. Available evidence shows that nuclear families are more goal-oriented and egalitarian in decision making, while power in joint families tends to centre on the senior-most male, with others being deferential to his preferences. This is conducive to the learning of autonomy and influential friend-related task skills in nuclear families, while joint family adolescents may place more premium on the maintenance of constrained relationships. This was reflected in the higher tendency of joint family subjects to implement one to maintain a smooth face during the interactions by using jokes or laughter. It was considered an indicator that they were attempting to avoid open conflicts. High use of induction tactics was another item measured in terms of constrained behaviour in high preference alternatives. Induction involves the elucidation of adverse

consequences to another person's action plan, to make him change it to the one preferred. It was predicted that joint family adolescents would make more use of compromising tactics, which are in between maintenance and task skills. In the IPA sample, joint family subjects who saw low preference alternatives as unsuitable were more often abandoned due to high induction of adverse consequences by the person. Lastly, joint family adolescents might fall back on coercive tactics if other maintenance and task skills failed to yield preferred results.

Our research has taken advantage of a development behaviour and situation-specific approach to social problem-solving assessment by focusing on an arranged meeting situation in a sample of trained adolescents. This research tested the hypothesis that joint family adolescents would rely more on the maintenance skills and less on the task skills than their counterparts from nuclear families to achieve a successful outcome in an arranged meeting. Observed differences between joint and nuclear families, especially in types of interaction patterns, have led us to hypothesize that the essence of social skills learning in joint families is still imparting more cultural emphasis on maintenance than on task skills. Subsequently, adolescents from joint families may be learning more of the former and less of the latter type of social skill. These skill differences will be reflected in different patterns of social problem-solving effectiveness. Although the maintenance-task distinction has become a classic in the social psychology literature, so far, objective evidence in support of the concept has been meagre.

Methodology

Purpose

The aim is to study social intelligence of individuals in joint and nuclear family.

Research Objectives

- To study the social intelligence of individuals in a joint family and nuclear family.
- To compare the social intelligence of individuals in a joint family and nuclear family.

Hypothesis

- H0 - There will be no significant difference between the social intelligence levels of individuals from joint and nuclear families.
- H1 - There will be significant difference between the social intelligence levels of individuals from joint and nuclear families.
- H2 - Individual in Joint family will have comparatively better social intelligence than the individuals in nuclear family.

Methods

The following sample, measures, and procedures were done to study the research objectives.

Sample

A total sample of 100 was taken, 50 from Joint Families and 50 from Nuclear Families

Measures

The following measure was used:

Social Intelligence Scale by Dr. N.K. Chadha and Ms. Usha Ganeshan (1986). The scale consists of 66 items having 8 dimensions. The six dimensions i.e., patience, confidence, cooperativeness, sensitivity, sense of humour and recognition of social intelligence, the subjects were given a choice of three alternatives for each item and was asked to choose one.

In the case of the first four dimensions (Patience, Cooperativeness, Confidence and Sensitivity, scores of 1,2 and 3 were given to three response alternatives.

The scale test-retest and split half techniques were used to find the split half reliability, a sample of 150 was taken. The following coefficients were obtained. The techniques of validity used to validate this scale were empirical validity and cross validation.

Procedure

The form was distributed among the respondents in a soft copy via google forms. The test was administered to a sample of 100 individuals. They filled in a consent form indicating that they have been briefed about confidentiality and about the test. A consent form was signed by every participant and then they proceeded with the questionnaire.

Analysis of Data

The analysis of data was done by using t-test, mean analysis and standard deviation.

Results

Table 1

Social Intelligence of Individuals from Nuclear and Joint Family

1. CATEGORY	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T-VALUE
NUCLEAR FAMILY	107.6764706	9.40	2.331
JOINT FAMILY	101.27	11.35	

Table 2*Mean Analysis of Different Dimensions of Social Intelligence*

AREA	NUCLEAR FAMILY	JOINT FAMILY
PATIENCE	20.71	19.35
COOPERATIVE	27.65	26.31
CONFIDENCE	17.85	18.23
SENSITIVITY	21.65	18.81
RECIGNITION OF SOCIAL ENVIRNMENT	1.76	1.77
TACTFUL	4.59	4
HUMOUR	4.41	3.81
MEMORY	9.06	9

Table 3*Patience of Individuals from Nuclear and Joint Family*

CATEGORY	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T-VALUE
NUCLEAR FAMILY	20.71	2.52	1.835
JOINT FAMILY	19.35	3.07	

Table 4*Cooperativeness of Individuals from Nuclear and Joint Family*

CATEGORY	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T-VALUE
NUCLEAR FAMILY	27.65	2.42	1.572
JOINT FAMILY	26.31	3.79	

Table 5*Confidence of Individuals from Nuclear and Joint Family*

CATEGORY	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T-VALUE
NUCLEAR FAMILY	17.85	2.69	0.579
JOINT FAMILY	18.23	2.35	

Table 6*Sensitivity of Individuals from Nuclear and Joint Family*

CATEGORY	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T-VALUE
NUCLEAR FAMILY	21.65	2.63	4.236
JOINT FAMILY	18.81	2.53	

Table 7*Recognition of Social Environment of Individuals from Nuclear and Joint Family*

CATEGORY	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T-VALUE
NUCLEAR FAMILY	1.76	0.74	0.0264
JOINT FAMILY	1.77	0.59	

Table 8*Tactfulness of Individuals from Nuclear and Joint Family*

CATEGORY	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T-VALUE
NUCLEAR FAMILY	4.59	1.44	1.622
JOINT FAMILY	4	1.36	

Table 9*Humor of Individuals from Nuclear and Joint Family*

CATEGORY	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	T-VALUE
NUCLEAR FAMILY	4.41	2.02	1.196
JOINT FAMILY	3.81	1.88	

Discussion

The study aimed to investigate the differences in social intelligence between individuals from nuclear and joint family backgrounds across various dimensions. Overall, the findings offer valuable insights into the social dynamics influenced by family structure.

Table 1 presents the overall social intelligence scores of individuals from nuclear and joint families. While the mean social intelligence score for individuals from nuclear families was notably higher (107.68) compared to those from joint families (101.27), the difference did not reach statistical significance ($t = 2.331$). This suggests that although there might be a slight trend towards higher social intelligence in nuclear family settings, other factors may contribute to variations in social intelligence levels.

Further analysis in Table 2 delves into specific dimensions of social intelligence. Notably, individuals from nuclear families tended to exhibit higher mean scores across dimensions such as patience, cooperativeness, sensitivity, and recognition of social environment compared to those from joint families. However, the differences in mean scores between the two-family types varied across dimensions, with some dimensions showing more pronounced disparities than others.

For instance, in Table 3, while individuals from nuclear families demonstrated slightly higher mean scores in patience compared to those from joint families (20.71 vs. 19.35), the difference was not statistically significant ($t = 1.835$). Similarly, in Table 4, although nuclear family individuals showed higher mean scores in cooperativeness (27.65 vs. 26.31), the difference did not reach significance ($t = 1.572$). Interestingly, in Table 6, individuals from nuclear families exhibited significantly higher sensitivity mean scores compared to those from joint families (21.65 vs. 18.81, $t = 4.236$), indicating a potential influence of family structure on emotional responsiveness and empathy development. However, it is essential to note that dimensions such as confidence (Table 5), recognition of social environment (Table 7),

tactfulness (Table 8), and humour (Table 9) did not show significant differences in mean scores between individuals from nuclear and joint families. These findings suggest that while certain dimensions of social intelligence may be influenced by family structure, the overall differences between nuclear and joint families are nuanced and multifaceted. Factors beyond family structure, such as individual personality traits, upbringing, and socio-cultural influences, may also play significant roles in shaping social intelligence levels. The results underscore the complexity of familial influences on social development and highlight the need for further research to elucidate the underlying mechanisms driving variations in social intelligence across different family structures. Additionally, implications for interventions aimed at enhancing social intelligence skills in individuals from diverse family backgrounds should be carefully considered, taking into account the multifaceted nature of social intelligence development.

Conclusion

The adolescents of nuclear and joint families differ significantly on composite scores of social intelligences. On patience dimension of social intelligence, the adolescents of nuclear and joint families showed significant difference. On comparing the adolescents of nuclear and joint families on cooperativeness dimension of social intelligence, they showed significant difference. The adolescents of nuclear and joint families differ significantly on confidence level dimension of social intelligence. The results revealed that both the groups differ significantly on 'sensitivity' dimension of social intelligence. On comparing the adolescents of nuclear and joint families on 'Recognition of Social Environment' dimension of social intelligence, the difference was found to be very mild. It can be concluded from the study that the adolescents of nuclear and joint families differ significantly on 'Tactfulness' dimension of social intelligence. While comparing the adolescents of nuclear and joint families on 'Sense of Humour' dimension of social intelligence, the difference was found to be significant. There

was slight difference between the adolescents of nuclear and joint families on ‘Memory’ dimension of social intelligence.

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