

SELF-ESTEEM, EXTRAVERSION PERSONALITY, AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG CHILDREN FROM INTACT FAMILY AND ORPHANS

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Abstract:

The aim of this study is to determine the differences of self-esteem, extraversion personality, and academic achievement among the children from intact families and children who are orphans, and to determine the relationship between self-esteem and extraversion personality with academic achievement among children from intact family and children who are orphans. Data was collected from 70 children, which consisted of 36 children from intact family and 34 orphans, with a mean age 14.47 years old. This study was carried out in Sabah, Malaysia. Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) and Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) was used to measure the variables in the study. The result showed that there was a significant difference of total self-esteem and its subscales (general self and School – Academic), extraversion personality, and academic achievement between children from intact family and children who are orphans. The result also showed that there was no significant relationship between self-esteems and extraversion personality with academic achievement.

Keywords: *Self-esteem, Extraversion, Academic Achievement, Intact Family, and Orphans*

1. Introduction

The percentage of orphans is increasing. According to Onuoha, Munakata, Serumaga-Zake, Nyonyintono, & Bogere (2009), orphan means children under eighteen who lost one of their parents, or both parents. There are many factors that can cause parental loss, which includes parental death, divorce or separation, and birth before marriage (Raphael, Cubis, Dunne, Lewin, & Kelly, 1990).

Orphans often have greater responsibility at home, as they need to help in housework and in taking care of their siblings' welfare. Hence, they tend to have higher autonomy, self-esteem, and aspiration as compared to children from intact family (Ford-Gilboe, 2000). However, Casals (2009) stated that parental bereavement can dramatically lower a child's level of self-esteem. Naderi, Abdullah, Aizan, Sharir, & Kumar (2009) also argued that self-esteem correlates with job success, school achievement, interpersonal compatibility, and general happiness.

Children who lost either one of their parents have negative impacts on their achievement (Silverman & Worden, 1993). One of the troubles suffered by children who lost their parent is they have the feelings of not wanting to go to school (Black, 1974; Davidson, 1960). Besides, children of parental death or divorce may come from a poor family, or families low in social economic status, and this was the reason that explained why they were poor in academic. Furthermore, death of a parent can affect them psychologically, thus the academic achievement of children tends to decrease (Jeynes, 2002).

The personality of a person can be influenced by family structure. Children who experienced parental death were found to be more introverts as compared to children from intact family and children from divorced families (Raphael et al., 1990). Besides, some researcher was found that

children who experienced parental bereavement have serious emotional and personality distraction (Dietrich, 1984).

There were few research questions in the present study. Generally, orphans were often looked down by the society. Hence, the society assumed them of having low achievement in their life and also labelled as trouble makers. However, does this indicate that every orphan will have low achievement in their life? Do orphans have bad attitudes? Is it that having a complete family can increase the children's level of self-esteem, extrovert personality, and achievement?

Hence, the purposes of the present study were to compare the overall self-esteem and its subscales (general self, social self – peers, home – parents, academic – schools), extrovert personality, and academic achievement among children from intact family and children who are orphans. The present study also seeks to define the relationship between self-esteems and academic achievement, and also the relationship between extraversion personality and academic achievement.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

This research was participated by 70 children aged 14 to 15 years old (36 were 14 years old and 34 were 15 years old). Among the participants, 36 children were chosen from intact families, and 34 children who are orphans. Male and female participants were distributed equally in this study, which comprised of 35 children in each group.

2.2 Research Location

The location of the present study was conducted in several areas around Sabah, Malaysia. Children from intact family were taken from a secondary school located at Kota Kinabalu, while orphans were taken from orphanage homes located at Tambunan and Beaufort.

2.3 Study Tools

Self-Esteem Inventory – The School Form (SEI) (Coopersmith, 1981) was used to measure the level of self-esteem among children and adolescents from eight to 15 years old. SEI contained 58 closed-ended items and four subscales, which were General Self, Social Self – Peers, Home – Parents, and School - Academic. The reliability of this instrument in present study was .691 during pilot and .741 during actual study.

The Extraversion Subscale of Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1991) was used to measure extrovert-introvert personality among the participants. This subscale contained 21 closed-ended items. The reliability of Extraversion subscale of EPQ was .762 during pilot study and .605 during the real study.

The *Demographic set* illustrated the background of participants, such as gender, age, and family backgrounds. Besides, academic achievement was obtained by accumulating the exam grades of seven main subjects in secondary schools in Malaysia, which were the subjects of the National Language of Malaysia, English Language, Mathematics, Science, Geography, History, and Life Skills.

2.4 Data Analysis

The data were entered and analysed by IBM Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

The present study consisted of 70 children, which were 35 females (50.0%) and 35 males (50.0%) children. There were 36 participants (51.4%) from 14 years old, 32 participants (45.7%) from 15 years old, and 2 participants (2.9%) did not answer the age item. Besides, 36 participants (51.4%) were form two students and 34 participants (51.4%) were form three students. There were 36 participants (51.4%) from an intact family, and 35 participants (48.6%) who are orphans.

3.2 Inferential Analysis

Table 1

Difference in Self-Esteem (General self, Social-Self, Home, and School), Extraversion Personality and Academic Achievement among Children from Intact Family and Orphans

	N	\bar{x}	s.d.	df	t	Sig
Self-esteem (Total)						
Children from intact family	36	32.03	6.46	68	2.274	.026*
Orphans	34	28.47	6.63			
General Self						
Children from intact family	36	16.53	3.94	68	2.402	.019*
Orphans	34	14.35	3.62			
Social self – Peers						
Children from intact family	36	4.56	1.36	68	1.332	.187
Orphans	34	4.12	1.39			
Home – Parents						
Children from intact family	36	5.53	1.81	68	0.479	.634
Orphans	34	5.32	1.75			
School – Academic						
Children from intact family	36	5.42	1.32	68	2.042	.045*
Orphans	34	4.68	1.70			
Extraversion Personality Trait						
Children from intact family	36	13.03	3.23	68	3.252	.002*
Orphans	34	10.62	2.95			
Academic Achievement						
Children from intact family	36	14.19	3.51	58.50	2.802	.007*
Orphans	34	11.26	5.05			

The t-test analysis result showed that there was a significant difference in total self-esteem among children from intact family and children that are orphans, $t_{(68)} = 2.274$, $p < .05$. The result revealed children from intact family ($\bar{x} = 32.03$, s.d. = 6.46) shown higher self-esteem than orphans ($\bar{x} = 28.47$, s.d. = 6.63). When the self-esteem was tested independently on its subscales, the result showed only general self, $t_{(68)} = 2.402$, $p < .05$ and school – Academic, $t_{(68)} = 2.042$, $p < .06$ had significant differences among children from intact family and orphans. The result revealed that children from intact family ($\bar{x} = 16.53$, s.d. = 3.94) had higher general self than orphans ($\bar{x} = 14.35$, s.d. = 3.62). For academic – school sub-scale, children from intact family ($\bar{x} = 5.42$, s.d. = 1.32) also had higher mean than orphans ($\bar{x} = 4.68$, s.d. = 1.70). Meanwhile, there was a significant difference in extrovert personality among children from intact family and orphans, $t_{(68)} = 3.252$, $p < .05$. Children from intact family ($\bar{x} = 13.03$, s.d. = 3.23) was higher in extraversion personality if

compared to orphans ($\bar{x} = 10.62$, s.d. = 2.95). For academic achievement, there was a significant difference in academic achievement among children from intact family and orphaned, $t_{(58,50)} = 2.802$, $p < .05$. Children from intact family ($\bar{x} = 14.19$, s.d. = 3.51) have higher academic achievement compare with orphans ($\bar{x} = 11.26$, s.d. = 5.05).

Discussion

Lanz, Lafrate, Rosnati, & Scanimi (1999) shown that the level of self-esteem of children from intact family may increase by having effective communication with their family members, especially their parents. The way of communication between children and their family members is more positive in intact families, if compared to family with parental loss. Meanwhile, the level of self-esteem of orphans may increase if they can adjust themselves in different situations, such as facing with parental bereavement or staying in an orphanage. Parental loss can cause children's life to be unstable (Williams, 2001). According to the researcher, 92% adults from intact family rated they were happy during their childhood, whereas only 72% orphans rated themselves happy during their childhood. This phenomenon showed that children from intact family were happier than orphans. Besides, Williams also explained that children from intact family had higher happiness compared to orphans.

Another research found that orphans have a tendency to develop an antisocial personality (Zhang Jianxin *et al.*, 1999). According to the researchers, individuals with antisocial personality were more impulsive, rebellious tendency, and difficult to express their feelings. Besides, they were also more psychotic, introvert, and neurotic. This was due to their family paying less attention to them. Hence, they tend to behave anti-socially to seek other's attention. Besides, Zhang, Araki, Sato, & Yokoyama (1999) also found that orphans reported higher loneliness in comparison with children from intact families. This is because their family pays less or no concern at all about them. Furthermore, they were powerless and had a peripheral role in major family decision. Hence, they feel themselves being isolated, thus developing a lack of self-confidence in term of socialization. This was the reasons why orphans tending to isolate themselves in socialization.

There were many researches that indicated academic achievement was correlated with socioeconomic status. A number of researchers agreed children from high socioeconomic status have higher academic achievement (Barry, 2005; Abdelnoor & Hollins, 2004; Jeynes, 2002). Children from intact family had higher socioeconomic status as compared with children who are orphans (Mackay, 2005; Abdelnoor & Hollins, 2004; Jeynes, 2002). Hence, the socioeconomic status among orphans caused them to have low academic achievement. Orphans often suffer more from emotional problems such as lack of warmth, love, and in having numerous disciplinary problems (Uwaifo, 2008). These problems they face can influence their academic achievement. On the other hand, children from intact family are more emotionally stable. Hence, their level of anxiety is lower and they can concentrate more on their studies.

Table 2

Relationship between Self-esteem (General self, Social-Self, Home, and School), Extrovert Personality and Academic Achievement among Children from Intact Family and Orphans

	Academic achievement (Total)	Academic achievement (Children from intact family)	Academic achievement (Orphans)
Self-esteem (Total)	.043	-.286	.123
General Self	.022	-.291	.093
Social self – Peers	.063	-.059	.065
Home – Parents	-.034	-.228	.072

School – Academic	.115	-.160	.155
Extraversion personality	.153	-.111	.161

The result showed that total self esteem ($r = .043, p > .05$); the subscales of self-esteem which were general self ($r = .022, p > .05$), social self ($r = .063, p > .05$), home – parents ($r = -.034, p > .05$), school – academic ($r = .115, p > .05$); and extraversion personality ($r = .153, p > .05$) were not significantly correlated with academic achievement among all of the participants. For children from intact family, total self esteem ($r = -.286, p > .05$), general self ($r = -.291, p > .05$), social self ($r = -.059, p > .05$), home – parents ($r = -.228, p > .05$), school – academic ($r = -.160, p > .05$), and extraversion personality ($r = -.111, p > .05$) were not significantly correlated to academic achievement. Meanwhile, for the orphans, the total self esteem ($r = .123, p > .05$), general self ($r = .093, p > .05$), social self ($r = -.065, p > .05$), home – parents ($r = .072, p > .05$), school – academic ($r = .155, p > .05$), and extraversion personality ($r = -.161, p > .05$) were also not significant correlated to academic achievement.

Discussion

The result in the present study indicated there was no relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among the children. However, there are several studies that indicated children who had high academic achievement were also high in self-esteem. However, these studies did not mention whether the level of self-esteem was a key factor that may influence children's academic achievement (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003). A study conducted by Bachman & O'Malley (1977) revealed that the level of self-esteem was correlated with academic achievement. However, they also concluded that level of self-esteem was not a factor that can influence an individual's academic achievement. In their study, they emphasized more on the level of intelligence and level of socialization as factors to influence levels of self-esteem and academic achievement.

There are many studies proving personality can influence a student academic achievement. A study from Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham (2003) agreed that personality was significantly correlated with academic achievement. This researcher's study proved that individuals who are high in neuroticism have lower academic achievement. Meanwhile, individuals who have higher scores in consciousness, openness, and psychotism also have higher academic achievement. On the other hand, an extrovert - introvert, do not affect academic achievement. Meanwhile, Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham (2008) explained that children with the introvert personality had higher academic achievement. This is due to children with the introvert personality spend more time to study, while children with an extrovert personality spend more time in socializing.

4. CONCLUSION

The present study had proven that there were significant differences in overall self-esteem, academic subscales, extrovert personality, and academic achievement among children from intact family and orphans. This study also proved that there was no significant relationship between overall self-esteem and its subclass, extrovert personality and academic achievement among the children. Studies in orphans are still a new study area in Malaysia. There are only a few researchers studying on orphans in Malaysia. The present study will be viable as an academic reference towards certain institutions such as educational and counselling institutions, and Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development. This study also hopes to be able to raise parents' concern about the importance of their role in their child's psychological development.

There are several limitations in this study. Firstly, this study is conducted in one state only instead of the whole of Malaysia. The present study also involved two age groups only, and the samples were very small. Future research can take larger sample, or obtain data in several states in

Malaysia. Those researchers who were interested to do their study in this field can investigate other variables that may influence the psychological development of orphans such as depression, emotional intelligence, and happiness. The range of age of the sample can also be investigated in a larger range in future research.

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Article received 2017-03-08