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Parental Approval As A Correlate Of Divergent Thinking Ability In Young Children

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Abstract: The significance of ability to think differently and explore many possible solutions to generate creative ideas has been well recognized in the present competitive world. Although there are many factors affecting development of divergent thinking ability in children, parental approval is one of the important factors in the development of divergent thinking ability in children. The present study was carried out to assess the divergent thinking ability of children in the setting selected and analyze it with reference to academic grades and gender. Further, the relationship of parental approval with the development of divergent thinking was assessed. The sample comprised 102 school children (51 boys and 51 girls) in the age group 6-9 years and their parents (either father or mother).The entire sample was selected from different schools of urban areas of Jammu (J&K). Standardized Divergent Production Ability Test devised by Sharma (2006) and Measures of Approving Parents devised by Ambast and Tripathi (1980) were used to collect data. Results of the study revealed that boys showed a progressive increase in mean value scores of word fluency, Ideational fluency, Spontaneous flexibility, Associational fluency and Elaboration with increasing academic grades. Similarly girls also showed increasing trend in some indicators of divergent thinking namely Ideational fluency, Associational fluency, Originality and Elaboration. With an increase in academic grades, consistent increasing trends were observed in all the factors except adaptive flexibility and expressional fluency. Statistically, no significant difference was found on creativity scores of all the three academic grades. It was also found that majority of parents of sample children showed moderate approving behaviour as most of them (82.3%) scored between the range of 129-171.Very few (10.7%) were in high approving behaviour. A positive significant correlation was found grade wise between the parental scores of sample children and creativity scores. The study points to a need for strengthening positive parental approval for the development of divergent thinking ability among young children.

Key words: Parenting, Creativity Thought, School children ideas, Stimulation, School Education.

INTRODUCTION :

People think in two distinct ways and these influence how they communicate and absorb information. We each tend to be predominately either a convergent or divergent thinker. Convergent thinking is defined as the kind of thinking that focuses on coming up with the single, well established answers to a problem .Convergent thinking is synonymous with rationality and involves the sort of thinking that most of us do every day: that is, find the correct answer to a problem and it involves logic. Divergent thinking, on the other hand, is defined as the kind of thinking that goes beyond the single, well established answer and generates a wide variety of interesting, alternative answers as well. Divergent thinking involves intuitive thinking which seeks a range of solutions to a single problem and that each may be equally acceptable. Divergent thinking is believed to be a characteristic of creative minds (Baer,1993; Wakefield,1992).Divergent thinking typically occurs in a spontaneous, free flowing manner, such that many ideas are generated in a random, unorganized fashion.(http:// faculty. Washington. edu/ezent/imdt.htm. Retrieved 2009-08-06). The concept of divergent thinking was developed in the 1950s by psychologist J.P.Guildford, who saw it with four main characteristics. The characteristics were fluency (the ability to rapidly produce a larger number of solutions to be a problem); flexibility (the capacity to consider a variety of approaches to a problem simultaneously); originality (the tendency to produce ideas different from those of most other people); and elaboration (the ability to think through the details of an idea and carry it out). Divergent thinking often results in variability in production (Cropley, 1999).Divergent thinking is one of the basic abilities required to produce innovative ideas and new solutions to scientific problems. Although there are many factors affecting development of divergent thinking ability in children, parental approval is one of the important factors in this regard. Parents play an important role in encouraging or discouraging divergent thinking ability of their children. By providing a variety of materials like books and games and indigenous materials and through such products, parents can encourage the child to try new methods through exploration and experiment with the novel and unusual. They provide opportunity by listening to the child's questions and

comments about her observations. They clarify what the child has observed by repeating what you have heard and ask further questions about the experience. It is the role of parents to help children see a variety of perspectives by generating several solutions to a problem or a question and give children choices. They respect the child's efforts and let them know that they have confidence in their ability to do. By creating an atmosphere where children understand that there is no one right answer for every problem, enthusiastically parents encourage children to develop more than one solution to any problem. Perhaps most importantly, Parents give children time to play, time to consider all the possibilities in a situation, and time to explore their own fantasy world. Since the attitude of family and parents have considerable significance in the emergence and development of creative thinking in children, investigators have linked this influence to the degree by which culture encourages or discourages creative thinking. Therefore, this extend into the way parents encourage or discourage creative personality characteristics as they develop in their children (Storm and Johnson, 1991; Mehrota and Sawers, 1989; Raina, 1980; Brusse, 1967; Torrance, 1965 and Mackinnon, 1962).

Parental approval and disapproval both carve the warmth dimensions of child-rearing. Parental warmth constitutes bipolar dimension behaviour where approval or disapproval stands on the other side (Rohner, 1980). Approving Parents are those who emphasize approving style to regulate the behaviour of children. They reinforce and accept children's activities, i.e. hobbies and trips, to make rearing of the child is main and devoted job, interested in child's plans and ambitious to give loving care and protection, interested in school progress encouraged to bring friends at home, to accept him as individual rather than as child, trust in, not to expect too much of child etc. On the other hand, disapproving parents are those who dislike, disapprove of or resent their children. In many cases they view child as a burden, and sometimes compare them unfavourably with the other children. Disapproval is manifested in two main ways, i.e. parental indifference and neglect (Rohner, 1975).

Although many studies have been conducted on children's convergent thinking skills, not many studies on divergent thinking ability among school children have been conducted in India. There is no such study available for school children in Jammu Province. Since parental behavior is also rooted in the cultural patterns, the present investigation was significant for understanding the parenting patterns in this regard in the selected context. Keeping this as background the present research was designed. This study will provide data about the level of development of divergent thinking among children and the role of parental approval /disapproval in this regard. The study is being conducted on aspect which has practical implications not only for policy makers, welfare workers but parents and school children themselves. In today's globalised world, there is an urgent need to use divergent thinking skills in a variety of situations. The data will help to provide new insights about this important aspect of thinking.

OBJECTIVES

The study was undertaken with the following specific objectives

1.To assess the divergent thinking ability of sample children in selected setting and analyse it with reference to gender and academic grades

2.To obtain data related to parental approval/disapproval in relation to parents of sample children.

3.To relate parental approval/disapproval with development of divergent thinking ability of sample children

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted to meet the objectives of the study is described below

Sample Description

The sample of the present study comprised 102 school children (51 boys and 51 girls) in the age group 6-9 years and their parents (either mother or father). The sample children were selected from different educational institutions of urban areas of Jammu (J&K) through random sampling technique. For the selection of sample, a list of schools was taken from Directorate of School Education, Jammu and from that list, 5 schools were picked randomly using lottery method. From these schools, the sample was selected randomly and selected parents of sample children were also included in the study.

Tools Used

The Major tools used for the study were Standardized Divergent Production Ability Test (DPAT) and Measure of Parental Approval test (MOPA).Standardized Divergent Production Ability Test (DPAT) devised by K.N. Sharma in 2006, was used to assess the divergent thinking ability of children who were in the age group of 6-9 years. The battery of Divergent Production Abilities contains six tests for measurement of the eight abilities which are Word Production Test (Word Fluency), Uses of Things Test (Ideational Fluency as well as spontaneous Flexibility), Similarities Test (Associational Fluency), and Sentence Construction Test (Expressional Fluency), Titles Test (Adaptive Flexibility as well as Originality), Sentence Completion Test (Elaboration).Parental Approval (MOPA) test devised by Tripathi and Ambast (1980) was used to obtain data related to parental Approval/disapproval of divergent thinking among parents of sample children. The major areas included in the parental behaviors were Approving Behaviors and Disapproving Behaviours

(a) Approving Behaviours: The items covered under approving behaviors were Moderate Autonomy, Encou raging Sociability, Positive Evaluation, Sharing, Expression of Affection, Encouraging Independent Thinking, Emotional Support, Equalitarian Treatment, Intellectual Stimulation, Child Centeredness, Possessive ness, and Protectiveness

(b Disapproving Behaviours covered the following items i.e. Intrusiveness , Suppression of Aggression ,Strictness, Punishment ,Control Through Guilt, Parental Direction, Nagging, Negative Evaluation, Irritability ,Rejection,

Neglect, Ignoring.

Procedure For Data Collection.

For data Collection, permission was obtained from the Heads of various schools of urban areas of Jammu. The purpose of the study was explained to the school authorities to obtain consent. For the selection of sample, student names were picked up randomly from the attendance register. After that Divergent Production Abilities Test which is one of the tools used to assess divergent thinking ability was administered on sample children. The test was applied on 3 children at a time after establishing rapport with them. It took on average about two and half hour to administer the entire battery on a child. 4-5 visits were made in each school to gather the desired data. Hindi language was used for giving instructions and interacting with children during the administration of tool. Another Measure of Parental approval/disapproval test was administered on parents of sample children. With the help of teachers, the tests (MOPA) for parents were sent to their respective homes by writing note on school diaries, and it was collected after a few days. The entire data collection was completed within a period of three months. The data obtained were subjected to both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background information about the respondents

A total of 102 children aged 6-7 years were selected as sample for the study. Equal number of males and females (n=17) were selected from each grade Ist , IInd and IIIrd. 36.3% sample children were in the age group of 8-9 years and 34.3% were between the age group of 6-7 years and 29.4% of them fall in the age group of 7-8 years. Total 102 parents of selected children are included as respondents; out of which there were 93 mothers and 9 fathers. Majority of the parents (67.6%) were in the age group of 30-35 years. 48% parents of sample children were educated upto graduation. 21.7% were postgraduates while 17.6% were educated upto 12th .

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation scores on factors of Divergent Production Ability Test

Indicators	Grade I		Grade II		Grade III	
	Males (n=17)	Females (n=17)	Males (n=17)	Females (n=17)	Males (n=17)	Females (n=17)
Word Fluency	17.82±3.46	18.52±3.20	19.11±4.34	17.58±4.40	20.94±2.86	21.05±4.94
Ideational Fluency	14.64±2.87	15.76±3.03	16.76±2.30	16.82±2.27	18.05±2.77	17.82±2.92
Spontaneous Flexibility	10.7±2.44	12.11±1.72	10.82±2.15	11.35±2.49	12.94±2.56	12.23±2.07
Associational Fluency	15.52±3.53	13.58±4.83	15.64±3.60	13.7±3.72	16.00±4.79	14.64±4.09
Expressional Fluency	2.94±1.34	2.41±1.06	1.94±0.96	2.05±1.24	2.23±1.03	2.35±1.27
Adaptive Flexibility	4.17±1.42	6.23±2.19	6.17±2.00	4.47±1.73	3.94±1.47	4.52±1.77
Originality	6.88±1.96	3.7±1.21	4.88±2.02	6.64±2.09	5.47±1.73	6.64±2.24
Elaboration	7.17±1.55	6.82±1.70	7.7±1.82	7.82±1.66	8.23±1.03	8.17±1.28

Table 1 shows the mean values and standard deviation calculated for various indicators of divergent production ability of sample children of academic grades Ist, IInd and IIIrd respectively. The mean value scores of word fluency, Ideational Fluency, Spontaneous Flexibility, Associational Fluency and Elaboration component of boys showed a progressive increase with advancing academic grades. Opposite results were found in the study conducted by Dhingra and Sharma (2012) on divergent thinking ability of school children which shows that mean value scores of Word Fluency, Ideational Fluency component of boys indicated a declining trend with an increase in academic grades. The mean value scores of Ideational Fluency, Associational Fluency, Originality and Elaboration among girls also showed an increasing trend with the advancement of academic grades. It was also seen that mean scores on indicators of Expressional Fluency and Originality among both girls and boys indicated a decreasing trend corresponding with an increase in academic grades. It was also observed that females of grade Ist and IIIrd scored higher on Word Fluency and Adaptive Flexibility while males scored higher on Associational Fluency and Elaboration component.

Table 2: Overall Mean Scores (Academic Grade wise) on factors of Divergent Production Ability Test (DPT)

Indicators	Grade I (n=34)	Grade II (n=34)	Grade III (n=34)
Word Fluency	18.17	18.34	20.99
Ideational Fluency	15.2	16.79	17.93
Spontaneous Flexibility	11.40	11.08	12.58
Associational Fluency	14.55	14.67	15.32
Expressional Fluency	2.67	1.99	2.29
Adaptive Flexibility	5.2	5.32	4.23
Originality	5.29	5.76	6.05
Elaboration	6.99	7.76	8.2

It was found that scores on various indicators i.e. Word fluency, Ideational fluency, Spontaneous flexibility, Originality and Elaboration increased with the advancement of academic grades. Opposite results were found in the study conducted by Torrance (1968) which revealed that divergent thinking scores of students significantly decreased around the fourth grade. It was also seen that there was a significant decline with academic grades in the proportion of scores of adaptive flexibility and expressional fluency. Overall, consistent increasing trends were observed in scores grade wise. Similar results were found in the study conducted by Stephens, Karnesa and Whortan (2001) which showed that divergent thinking trends in various components were consistent (Table 2).

Table 3: Creativity scores of Respondents (Academic Grade wise)

Percentile ranks	Grade I (n=34) (%)	Grade II (n=34) (%)	Grade III (n=34) (%)	Overall Total (n=102)(%)
Below 25th	10 (29.5)	9 (26.5)	8 (23.5)	27(26.4)
25th -50th	7 (20.5)	8 (23.5)	8 (23.5)	23(22.5)
51st -75th	9 (26.5)	8 (23.5)	9 (26.5)	26(25.4)
Above 75th	9 (26.5)	9 (26.5)	9 (26.5)	27(26.4)

Note: Insignificant difference calculated χ^2 =0.86; α = 0.05 , df=6; Table value=12.6

The table 3 describes the percentile ranks of children on the basis of creativity scores on factors of divergent production ability test in all the three academic grades. Results revealed that one fourth of the respondents (26.4) were having below 25th and above 75th percentile ranks. Equal number of respondents (26.5%) from all the grades scored above 75 percentile rank. Statistically, no significant difference was found on creativity scores of all the three academic grades.

Table 4: Parental scores obtained on Measures of Parental Approval

Scores	Grade I		Grade II		Grade III		Total (n=102)
	Males (n=17)	Females (n=17)	Males (n=17)	Females (n=17)	Males (n=17)	Females (n=17)	
Above213	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
171 – 213	1	-	2	4	1	3	11(10.7)
129 – 171	16	17	15	13	11	12	84(82.3)
87 -129	-	-	-	-	5	2	7 (6.8)
Below 87	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Majority of the parents of class I, II and III sample children fall in category of moderate approving behaviors as most (82.3%) of them scored between the range of 129-171 and very few respondents (10.7%) fall in high approving category (Table 4). It might be due to the reason that parents were more concerned about the future of their children. They want their children excel in all the areas i.e. curricular as well as co- curricular activities. None of the parent of class I and II students showed low, very low and very high approving behavior. But some of the parents (6.8%) of grade III children showed low approving behavior as they scored between 89-129.

Table 5: Mean values of males and females on Measures of Parental Approval Scores and creativity scores

Grade	MOPA Scores		Creativity Scores	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Ist	150.23	159.70	118.82	126.93
IInd	150.70	156.70	113.96	113.97
IIIrd	143.58	151.00	134.07	116.41

From table 5, it can be seen that in all the three grades Ist, IInd and IIIrd, female sample children had higher mean scores on measures of parental approval scale than males. It was also found that females of class Ist had higher mean creativity scores than males while males of IIIrd class scored higher as compared to females. It was also seen that mean scores on measure of parental approval for both males and females were decreasing with increase in academic grades. No consistency in creativity scores of males and females were found but the scores of I grade children were comparatively higher than both II and III grade children in females. In case of males, reverse trend was observed.III grade males had higher creativity scores than both I and II grade males.

Table 6: Correlation between the scores obtained on creativity and Measures of Parental Approval

Grade	*Correlation value*
Ist	0.283*
IInd	0.196*
IIIrd	0.291*

Significant at 0.05 level

It is evident from the data (Table 6) that there was a positive and significant correlation between the parental scores of sample children of class Ist, IInd and IIIrd with creativity scores, thus depicting that parental approval is positively related to divergent thinking ability of children.

CONCLUSION

It has been concluded that boys showed a progressive increase in mean value scores of Word Fluency, Ideational Fluency, Spontaneous Flexibility, Associational Fluency and Elaboration with increasing academic grades. Similarly girls also showed an increasing trend in some indicators of divergent thinking namely Ideational Fluency, Associational Fluency, Originality and Elaboration with an increase in academic grades. It was also seen that mean scores on indicators of Expressional Fluency and Originality among boys and mean scores of Expressional Fluency and Adaptive Flexibility among girls indicated a decreasing trend corresponding with an increase in academic grades. Overall, consistent increasing trends were observed in all the factors except Adaptive Flexibility and Expressional Fluency. Opposite results were found in the study conducted by Wu (2010) which showed that divergent thinking trends in various components were inconsistent. No consistency in creativity scores of males and females were found .Statistically, no difference was found on creativity scores of all the three academic grades. Similar results were found in the study conducted by Charyton and Snelbecker (2007) which showed insignificant differences in creativity scores. Majority of the parents of sample children showed moderate approving behavior towards their children. It was also seen that mean scores on measure of parental approval for both males and females decreased with increase in academic grades. A positive significant correlation was found grade wise between the parental scores of sample children and creativity scores. Based on the results of the study, it could be concluded that parental approval is one of the necessary conditions for the development of divergent thinking ability in young children. Thus it is recommended that parents must allow their children freedom to do activities with little or no assistance from them and should respect their children

efforts and let them know that they have confidence in their ability to do well so that the children will explore and enhance their creative abilities.

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