

Comparative Study

Influence of Environment on Individuals in Military and Civilian Families: A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

To better understand the mental health of children from military and civilian homes, this study proposes an additional concern: the influence of family upbringing/background. Children raised in military families have a very different experience than those raised in civilian families. This research examines the social and emotional development of children in military and civilian households, rather than the common view that children of all ages have greater rates of emotional outbursts, anxiety, and depression symptoms. Emotional Intelligence (EI) and perceived nominal stress (NPS) questionnaires were used to gather data on 131 individuals, 66 of whom were from military families and 65 of whom were from civilian families. There was no difference in how military and civilian children coped with stress in this direct comparison, even though the military child's experiences may have a positive effect on their mental well-being. The child's well-being may be better understood if the parenting techniques and styles of the family are well understood.

Keywords: *Psychological Well-being, Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Stress, Military Family, Civilian Family*

Understanding, managing, and harnessing one's own and other people's emotions is an important component of emotional intelligence (EI) (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004) (Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar, & Rooke, 2007) An empathic inference occurs when one tries to deduce what other people are thinking and feeling in order to better understand their own thoughts and feelings. The degree to which such commonplace efforts at mind reading are effective may be measured in terms of empathy accuracy (Ickes, Empathic accuracy, 1997) (Ickes, 2003). People who can successfully 'read' the minds of others are empathically precise perceivers, to put it another way. When it comes to emotional intelligence, precision in empathy is a must-have. It is a good human trait that manifests itself in a variety of ways. In the context of adaptability, EI may be seen as a tool for reducing damage and increasing profit (Mast & Ickes, 2007). People recognise that recognising and managing their emotions contributes to their overall well-being in daily life. (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010). A recent meta-analysis found a link between higher levels of EI and greater physical health (Goleman, 1996). For our conclusion, we will

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Received: August 31, 2022; Revision Received: November 28, 2022; Accepted: December 06, 2022

Influence of Environment on Individuals in Military and Civilian Families: A Comparative Study

look at: (a) studies published later; (b) studies in various languages; and (c) a full meta-analysis to verify the reliability and stability of the history of this field of study. Goleman strongly supported the Salovey and Mayer EI pilot idea. Skill models and mixed models may be used to categorise EI representations (Freudenthaler & Neubauer, 2005). The conceptual concepts and the preparatory tools used to test EI vary dramatically between ability and mixed models of EI. (Schutte, Malouff, Thorsteinsson, Bhullar, & Rooke, 2007). Four-branch EI theory argues (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004) that it focuses on the evaluation of emotions in individuals and others, emotional control and emotional management in the self and many others, and the application of emotions in issue assessment. Functions such as verbal and nonverbal assessment tactics, expressing and consuming emotions to motivate are grouped together under this umbrella as part of the use of emotions. The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Scale (MSCEIT) and its descendent, the Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS), were developed in accordance with this notion. Both of these tests were based on basic cognitive exams. Similar to the OCEAN model, EI has been seen as an individual characteristic.

In order to comprehend military family health inspections and service delivery, it is vital to grasp the definition of a family. Throughout their productive lives, police are supported by their families, according to the study's findings. However, despite changes in societal views and slight shifts in the concept and function of "family," much of this research upholds the old conventional ideas of family structure. In order to guarantee that military family studies are appropriate to contemporary military families, we must first better understand the composition of contemporary military families. (Gribble, et al., 2018)

Even while the effects of military service on veterans' mental health have been thoroughly examined, very few studies have explored how this impacts children over the long term. Toddlers of working parents are more depressed and anxious than their peers and display greater levels of mental dysfunction when their parents return from duty promptly. When it comes to military families, it's possible that the stress of frequent military moves is having a negative impact on children's mental health, and that other issues like worry, depression, substance abuse, and more frequently a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) are also at play (ATSD) (Flake, Davis, Johnson, & Middleton, 2009). It was shown that adult children of Australian soldiers who served in Vietnam were less mentally well-adjusted than their male counterparts who fought in the Australian army at the same time but have not been deployed in Vietnam. Anxiety and sadness were more common diagnoses and treatments, as were suicidal thoughts and attempts. In addition, they noted that mental health had begun to deteriorate at the last minute (Forrest, Edwards, & Daraganova, 2018).

An established paradigm in health research is the Sense Of Coherence (SOC) model. It was Antonovsky who first coined this term, describing it as an indicator of a person's attitude to life. (Antonovsky, 1987) We need an explanation for why some individuals can handle stress and yet cherish their health, while others get ill when the same conditions exist. Adaptation to stressful settings requires a high SOC, according to him. Because of this, you will be happier (quality of life). Psychiatric morbidity has been shown to be the primary indicator of low SOC scores; high scores represent more than an absence of psychopathology. Studies show that individuals' self-reported health and well-being may be somewhat influenced by stressful life events when they have high SOC scores. A few researches have shown these effects, however the number of studies is small.

Influence of Environment on Individuals in Military and Civilian Families: A Comparative Study

Children's social and emotional development developing a child's Emotional Intelligence is one way to connect the child's actions to their surroundings. Children's emotional and social development is intertwined, and it's important to discuss both at the same time. Social behaviour and emotional conduct go hand in hand, despite the fact that there are many different patterns. According to Bronfenbrenner, children's early development is impacted by several social and cultural factors, including family, educational environment and community as well as the broader society. (Carter, 2016) The military or "war machines" invented cinemas and movie goers. But how military family films are shown in the film, and how popular films, fiction and other media are related and sustainable to developing civil-military connections, are of particular interest. Civil-military tensions are often used to illustrate this point. To determine whether or whether a military family's social experience is appropriately shown in a film on the children of military men, we must look at the film itself. According to Harper, "military culture is a subject that is becoming more obscure to a wide range of people. (Ender, 2006)

Children's exposure to a broad range of war and evacuation stressors is well-known, but little research has been done on how these stressors affect their health. That was the conclusion of a recent Syria investigation. More than seventy-eight percent of youngsters report having gone through periods of intense sadness. (Ataullahjan, Samara, Betancourt, & Bhutta, 2020) Working women in nuclear families sometimes have to leave their children at home since they don't have enough time to care for them. When their children are unwell, working women find themselves in a quandary. Taking care of their children's well-being and affairs is a responsibility they must assume. As a result, it causes them a great deal of anxiety and exhaustion. It is common for working moms' children to be lonely at home, and they are more likely to grow overweight and self-centred as a result of their exposure to television and video games, as well as overeating. Being a working mother has various advantages, including the ability to support one's family financially, a keen interest in social activities, and a plethora of learning possibilities about one's own health and wellness. Non-working women, on the other hand, are able to spend more time with their children, resulting in a better mother-child bond and more sociable, responsible, ethical, and moral children. The outcomes of past investigations, on the other hand, have been mixed. It was decided to research if children of employed and non-working moms varied in their levels of depressive symptoms. (Dey, Bairagi, Sajjad Kabir, & Shahrier, 2013).

Concerns concerning military children's emotional and behavioural well-being have grown since 2001 because of the sudden influx of parents in the military. Children and spouses in the house experience heightened worry and risk as a result of repeated missions. Anxiety and depression are more common in children of all ages. Seconded parents' children are likewise more likely to have academic difficulties. Both parents and seconded parents bear the responsibility of the child's mental stress. In order to detect distress and send patients to therapy, military families need to be made aware of the prospect of new obstacles (McGuinness & McGuinness, 2014). Multiple large-scale deployments and the present high operational speeds of combat are unprecedented for all US military volunteer groups (Belasco, 2014) (Bruner, 2005) (Hosek, Kavanag, & Miller, 2006). Youngsters from military families are often left alone for long periods of time since their parents are often deployed. Over one and a half million children had at least one military parent in 2006. A total of 1.17 million people had parents with active components, whereas 713,000 had parents with replacement components (Chandra, 2010).

Influence of Environment on Individuals in Military and Civilian Families: A Comparative Study

Implementation may have both good and negative effects, including improved camaraderie, a feeling of family pride, and financial incentives. Concerned family members may face harsh repercussions. (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008) (Hosek, Kavanag, & Miller, 2006). Studies conducted before to Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF) of Iraq found a correlation between military and kid behaviour, particularly among males. Suggested a connection between the two (Hillenbrand, 1976). Findings from another research on the effects of unfolding parents on their children's learnt behaviours (emotions such as grief and fear or overcontrol) were similar (Jensen, Grogan, Xenakis, & Bain, 1989) (Levai, Kaplan, Ackermann, & Hammock, 1995) (Jensen, Martin, & Watanabe, 1996). A number of tiny, new research organisations are springing up to focus on child welfare concerns, such as the influence of OEF and OIF placements on raising stress levels, disclosing child abuse, and increasing difficulties in schooling. (Chandra, et al., 2010) (Jaycox, et al., 2009).

Rationale of the Study

Studying children from military homes, where they've learned about the dangers their parents face on the job, is necessary to see whether there is a difference in emotional IQ between those who come from civilian households and those who come from military families. The study's emphasis is on emotional intelligence (EI) and the individual's degree of stress. A parent's unusual parenting style, along with demanding job conditions, may have significant negative effects on a child's well-being. As a result of this research, we have discovered a significant vacuum in Indian behavioural research: the mental well-being of civilian and military families in India.

Objectives

Research goals include:

- To understand the major difference in EI and stress levels between persons from military and civilian households.
- To investigate the association between stress levels and EI in individuals from military and civilian homes.
- The following hypotheses were developed and experimentally verified in order to draw conclusions about the sample population.

Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant difference in the EI of participants from military and civilian family backgrounds

H₁: There is no significant difference in the levels of stress perceived by participants from military and civilian family backgrounds

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

Non-probable sampling was utilised in this research, and participants were selected based on certain criteria and reasoning. Purposive sampling was used to gather data for this investigation. Sixty-six of the 131 participants in this research are members of the armed forces, while the other sixty-five are civilians. From throughout India, 16-year-olds have taken part in the study. The following psychological tests were given to the participants using an online survey platform.

Inclusive criteria

The Army, Air Force, and Navy were represented, as were active-duty service members and their spouses and children who have served honourably in one or more of these services.

Exclusive criteria

Civilian representation was granted to paramilitary personnel.

Instruments

A. The Schutte Self Report EI Test (SSEIT): An EI test designed by Schutte et al., the Schutte Self-Report EI Test (SSEIT) has 33 items (1998). SREIS was developed to work with Salovey and Mayer's EI paradigm (1990). Measures four elements of emotional intelligence (EI): Emotional awareness, emotional usage, emotional control over relevant emotions, and emotional control over the emotions of others. Total score was calculated by summing the replies to each topic on a Likert scale.

B. Perceived Stress Scale: For evaluating stress perception, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is the most often used psychological measure in the field. How difficult your life circumstances are reflected in it. Using these questions, researchers were able to gauge how respondents felt about their lives. Direct questions concerning present stress levels are also included.

Procedure

The first step was to conduct a preliminary review of relevant studies. Following these studies, goals were established, and a study strategy was developed to investigate the hypotheses arising from these objectives. Following the selection of standardised questions, the web platform was used to give exams. A link to the Google forms was sent to each participant's e-mail address or phone number, which opened to a page containing their personal information, two scales, and directions on how to complete the form. Only English-language questions were employed since all participants were at least in their sophomore year of high school. It was a pleasure working with them, and we appreciate their willingness to assist us in any way possible. This will be kept anonymous, and findings will be shared with them at the conclusion of the research, they have been told. SPSS was used for the descriptive analysis, correlation, and t-test, since this was quantitative research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 131 samples were included in the research, including 66 individuals from military families and 65 people from civilian families. An independent variable test and comparison of dependent as well as independent Kendall correlation analyses were included in the data analysis.

Table 1: Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Demographic Variable Age

<i>Demographic Variable</i>	<i>Group</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<i>Age</i>	Military	19.12	2.277
	Civilian	20.37	2.950

N=131

Table 1 depicts the demographic variable age of the participants in the research, which was analysed using descriptive statistics. The participant's familial history is taken into account

Influence of Environment on Individuals in Military and Civilian Families: A Comparative Study

when calculating the mean and standard deviation of the demographic characteristic age (i.e., military & civilian). Both military and civilian families included participants with a mean age of $\bar{x}=19.12$ and $\bar{x}= 20.37$ years, respectively.

Data were analysed by family background (military or civilian) in order to better understand the correlations between independent, demographic, and dependent factors. The findings were then presented in the same way.

Table 2: Showing Mean and Standard Deviation of Number of Family Members Working in the Forces

<i>Demographic Variable</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Deviation</i>
<i>No. of Family Members Working in the Forces</i>	1.3788	0.90749
<i>N=66</i>		

There were 66 military families that participated in the research, and as shown in table 2 the mean and standard deviation values are computed to be $\bar{x}=1.3788$ and $SD=0.90749$, respectively, suggest that at least one member of the family served in the military.

Table 3: Showing the Frequency Distribution of the Participants Belonging to Military Family

<i>Demographic variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Sex</i>	Male	12	18.20
	Female	54	81.80
<i>Branch of Force</i>	Army	57	86.40
	Air Force	5	7.60
	Navy	4	6.10
<i>Whether Family Member was a part of War/Operation</i>	Yes	51	77.30
	No	14	21.20
<i>N=66</i>			

The demographic factors of individuals from military households are shown in the table 3 above. The variables branch of the force and whether or not a family member participated in a war/operation were also added to understand the influence it may have on a person's upbringing, in addition to the variable sex of the participant. A total of 54 of the 66 individuals from military households were female, while the other 12 participants were male. Eighty-six percent of those polled (54 of them) had a member of their family serving in the military, followed by 7.6 percent (7 of them) and 6.1 percent (four of them) in the air force and navy. 77.3 percent of those asked whether a member of their family had served in the military replied yes (51), while just 21.2 percent said no (14).

Table 4: Showing Kendall's Correlation of the Combined Scores of EI and Perceived Stress among Participants from Military Families

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Perceived Stress</i>
<i>EI</i>	-0.169
<i>N=66: p= 0.058</i>	

People from military households were asked to complete a non-parametric stress assessment to learn more about the relationship between stress perception and emotional intelligence

(EI). To determine whether or not the two variables are statistically dependent, the Kendall's test was used. It can be seen from table 4 that a negative correlation was established between stress levels and EI; however, it was not statistically significant at the $p \leq 0.01/ 0.05$ levels of significance.

Table 5: Showing the Frequency Distribution of the Participants Belonging to Civilian Family

<i>Demographic variable</i>	<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Sex	Male	31	47.70
	Female	34	52.30
Occupation	Business	23	35.40
	Government	29	44.60
	Private	9	13.80
	Self-Employed	4	6.20

N=65

For individuals from civilian households, the frequency distribution of demographic characteristics is shown in the above table 5. For the purpose of this study, we also included the variable gender of the participant, as well as the occupational sector of the parent. A total of 34 of the 65 civilian family members were female, while the remaining 31 participants were male. 44.60 percent of the participants' parents are employed in the government sector, followed by 35.40 percent parents employed in the private sector (29). The remaining 13.80% & 6.200% of participants have parents who are engaged in the private sector (9), while the remaining 4% are self-employed. (23)

Table 6: Showing Kendall's Correlation of the Combined Scores of EI and Perceived Stress among Participants from Civilian Families

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Perceived Stress</i>
EI	-0.119

N=65: p= 0.181

A non-parametric approach was used to examine the relationship between stress perception and emotional intelligence (EI) in civilian households. Using Kendall's test, researchers were able to determine whether the two variables were statistically linked. Stress and EI have a negative association, as shown in the preceding table 6, although this link was not determined to be statistically significant at levels of significance of $p \leq 0.01/ 0.05$.

Table 7: Showing the Independent Sample t-test of the Combined Scores of EI and Perceived Stress among the Participants from both Military and Civilian Family Backgrounds

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Groups</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
EI	Military	4.269	106.435	0.000	37.88392	57.497	0.000
	Civilian						
Perceived Stress	Military	3.200	129	0.002	1.54382	0.936	0.335
	Civilian						

N= 131

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Influence of Environment on Individuals in Military and Civilian Families: A Comparative Study

As shown in table 7 the independent variables t-test was used to assess the two hypotheses presented in the research. $F= 57.497$ at $P= 0.000$ ($p<0.05$) indicates that group variances should be viewed as not equal, giving us $t(106.435) = 4.269$, $p= 0.000$ results from Levine's test for an equal variance for EI. By rejecting H_0 , the hypothesis that participants from military and civilian households do not vary significantly in their degrees of emotional intelligence, the alternative hypothesis that they do differ significantly in their levels of emotional intelligence has been proven correct.

Levine's test for equal variance in perceived stress yielded a $F= 0.936$ at $p=0.335$ ($p>0.05$), which indicates that the groups' variances should be considered as equal, giving us a t score of $t(129) = 3.200$, which is statistically significant at the 0.002 level of significance. There is no substantial difference in the way people from military families and civilian households feel stress, which means that no matter where a person comes from or how they were raised, there will be no change in how they perceive stress.

CONCLUSION

The focus of this study is on the impact of military and civilian home situations on a child's mental health. Both EI and perceived stress were studied in this context. Children's upbringing has a significant influence on their emotional and behavioural health, according to this study's conceptual framework. The findings of this research challenge the widely held belief that children raised in a rigorous and well-disciplined (in this instance, military) household would adjust to having a firm grasp on their psychological health. The findings of the correlation study show that stress experienced by children in military or civilian homes has no connection to EI variables. While military and civilian families showed significant differences in EI, it was found that no matter where a person comes from, they all experience stress in the same way, which necessitates an individualistic approach with greater specificity in order to understand a child's well-being, regardless of where they come from. Having a firm grasp of the family's parenting methods and styles might also have important ramifications in the future.

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Influence of Environment on Individuals in Military and Civilian Families: A Comparative Study

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Influence of Environment on Individuals in Military and Civilian Families: A Comparative Study

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Acknowledgement

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Nikhil, C. G. & Aditya, S. (2022). Influence of Environment on Individuals in Military and Civilian Families: A Comparative Study. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 10(4), 896-905. DIP:18.01.086.20221004, DOI:10.25215/1004.086