

## The comparison of ambiguity, loneliness feeling and responsibility tolerance among the children of single child and multi child families

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**Abstract:** The aim of this study was to compare the ambiguity tolerance and sense of loneliness with responsibility of children in single and multi child families. The research method of this study was casual – comparative method. Statistical population is consisted of all secondary school female students of Tehran and the sample size is determined as 281 cases. To select the desire sample of students a multi-stage cluster sampling was used. Data collecting tool was the scale of responsibility questionnaire of Sanaei et al (1381), Asher loneliness scale of tolerance and the McLean's (1993) tolerance of ambiguity questionnaires, respectively. In this research, independent T and logistic regression was used to test the hypotheses. Results from T tests of a couple of independent groups showed that with 5 percent of confidence we can say that there is no significant difference between children tolerance of ambiguity components (role-taking complexity and unresolved issues) in single and multi child families. Also with 95 percent one can say that there is no significant difference between the loneliness feeling and responsibility scales in single and multi child families. And finally in response to the contribution of each variable to separate children of single and multi child families, logistic regression analysis showed that in the prediction equation only role taking among all other predictor variables is significant and is able to predict this issue.

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### 1- Introduction

Child development is affected by two major factors which include present and absent factors. A single child grows in a family where only adults live and there is no other child to communicate with him / her. Both of these factors play an important role in raising and developing a single child one (Mansouri, 1385). Children in a single child family compared to a multi child one are fully addressed and receive more affection. These factors cause the child to feel as an important person. Benefits of growing up in single child families are so that the child can say: "I like to be the only child in the family. There are no rival and no one to stimulate jealousy. There is no need to fight with anyone to own what I want. " those children who live in single child families feel more confident and enjoy more self-esteem (Sharifi Daramadi, 1386). Peiro (2004) in a study on 5 years old children came to this result that children who have brothers or sisters in comparison to children in the same age who are not single child have weaker social and communication skills and this issue increased the concerns. Another factor which affects on a child of a single child family is presence in a family that includes only the adults. These children begin to talk sooner than usual tie and have a stronger community spirit. They imitate their parents and behave like adults in a way that provokes admiration and surprise of others. Children of single

child families are often early maturing. Social maturity o these children may also be useful. They encounter with problems sooner than the others, problems that are inevitable in adulthood. They express their problems and ideas easily and are able to help their parents. They start working and economical activity sooner than other children and do not embarrass from working. These children begin maturity period with much experience and readiness (Mansouri, 1385). One of the disadvantages of being a single child is its impact on the child's development. These children do not have anyone to compete or and fight with him. They have no friend or partner at home, so do not experience some of the emotions and won't have any opportunity to control and manage them. A child who lives in a single child family is less likely to face with problems and does not encounter with failure, frustration and etc, and does not experience the necessary conditions of mental and psychological maturation. If parents don't allow their children to be confronted with uncomfortable and hard feeling or don't provide the possibility to show these kinds of emotions, they will weaken his/her strength against these emotions. Parents' tendency to protect their only child avoids their child to try his/her mistakes consequences and be responsible for his/her actions. They never put them in a position to criticize their children, they do not disagree with him and meet

his/her demands always to keep him/her feel happy. Several studies (styr, 2003, Hamasen, 2006) have proven the unlimited support of parents of single child families and believe that these families bring up their children in a sensitive and weak spirit. The more the parents support their only child the little is his power of ambiguity tolerance and so that are very fragile and vulnerable.

Ambiguity tolerance is the acceptance of uncertainty as a part of life, the ability to survive with little knowledge about the environment and the tendency to start an independent activity without knowing whether an individual will be successful or not (Andrylip, 2011).

The purpose of ambiguity tolerance is that how much an individual feel threat and hardship in his adaptation with the environment. When changes occur rapidly and unpredictably, data are inefficient and non-transparent. This is the point where the individual's differences affect on their reactions. Someone who has a high tolerance for ambiguity usually has a sophisticated understanding of events and follows the perception cognitive style in his interpretations. They transmit information better and generally are more sensitive than others in the workplace (Andrylip and Hakan, 2010). Individuals with high ambiguity tolerance are able to face efficiently with vague, incomplete, inconsistent, unorganized and opaque information and conditions and solve ambiguities in favour of themselves. Indeed, ambiguity leads to their incentive (Ma'asoumi, 1390). The power of tolerance for ambiguity is the result of features such as self-confidence, power of prediction, hope and actively dealing with phenomena. Ultimately individuals tolerate ambiguity situation to achieve the desired results (Hassani, 1386). Ambiguity tolerance is composed of three basic variables: 1- renewability which is related to the human's tolerance amount for new information and circumstances. 2- Complexity which indicates the tolerance amount for multiple distinct and irrelevant information. 3- Being unresolved that is related to the tolerance for difficult problems, hidden strategies, lack of access to the information and lack of association with each component of the problem (Ma'asoumi, 1390). Between this idea and the result there is a ladder called ambiguity tolerance which consists of emotion and excitement. Sometimes this ladder is affected by variables such as loneliness so that the owner of that idea cannot reach to the consequence (Lambourn et al, 2009). Katipo (2010) defines loneliness as follows: harrowing evidence which its target is to encourage someone to communicate. People who feel alone need to pay attention to this sign and take action to rectify this situation. If loneliness is not dealt with, it has the power to put a negative impact on your health.

Schwartz (2008) argues that unfulfilled desire for emotional connection causes many people to feel alone. Ladrer and Jackson (2011) noted that the strongest and most annoying loneliness feeling is that loneliness which begins with another one. When communication fails to fill the loneliness of a person, anger, bitterness and rejection feelings occur that can cause a greater sense of emotional loneliness (Ma'asoumi, 1390). Loneliness can cause to depression and self-destructive behaviours such as substance abuse or lack of personal responsibility. Karipo (2009, quoted by Sadeghi, 1389) believes that the people lose only confidence in others and therefore it is hard to themselves to make friends so that lightly fade from the social circle. This affects on the responsibility to fulfilling the tasks. On the other hand it must be said that trying to build family relationships provides proper background for ethical health and general welfare of a community. And one of the syndromes of this stabilization is the responsibility of children in a family. And it is the reason of critical importance of responsibility to every individual. This (responsibility) cannot be achieved at once but it is realized and fulfilled gradually and many factors involve in learning it. If it's true that the lack of pepper responsibility is interpreted as negligence it can cause to annoy relatives and consequently will lead to poor communication. The same can be said that several satisfactions of human's needs depend on the person's relationship and is rooted in the individual's responsibility. Responsibility is the key point of human's growth and perfection. What we are today and what we will be in the future, both are the effect of responsibility (Sanaei, 1384). In most research on children's responsibility moderator variables are assumed and tolerance ambiguity is one of them (Oskow, 2007). Therefore considering the above argument and conducted research the researcher sought to answer this basic question: how much contribution do ambiguity tolerance and loneliness on children's responsibility of single child families in comparison with multi child families?

## **2- The aim of this research**

To compare the ambiguity tolerance components (such as functionality, complexity and unresolved issues) and loneliness feeling with children's responsibility in single and multi child families.

## **3- Research questions**

1- Is there any difference between the ambiguity tolerance components (newability, complexity, and unresolved issues) of the children of single and multi child families?

2- Is there any difference between the children's loneliness of a single child family and a multi child family?

3- Is there any difference between the children's responsibility of a single child family and a multi child family?

4- What is the contribution of variables such as ambiguity tolerance, functionality, complexity, unresolved issues, loneliness feeling and responsibility on separating children of single and multi child families?

#### 4- Methodology

Research method of the present study is casual – comparative one. Statistical population consists of all secondary school female student of Tehran. Sample size is determined by the Morgan's table and 281 individuals were chosen. To select the desired sample from the female students a multi-stage cluster sampling was used. Instruments of data gathering were the following questionnaires:

##### 4-1: Responsibility questionnaire scale

This questionnaire is designed by Sanaei et al (1381) in Iran and is usable for adults and adolescents. This test can be executed in groups and there is no time limitation for its implementation. The test consists of 33 questions or statements. Grading method of this scale is to assign zero or one for every true or false statement respectively. High scores on this test indicate a good responsibility and low scores indicate poor responsibility. Using Cronbach's alpha the reliability of this questionnaire has been reported as 0/81 (Sanaei et al, 1381).

##### 4-2: Asher's loneliness scale

This test consists of 24 questions or statements and each part has a scale of 1 to 4 points. To answer each question, subjects can choose one of the four options of: great much (4), too much (3), somewhat (2), and never (1). Using Cronbach's alpha the reliability coefficient of this test has been found as 0.80.

##### 4-3: MacLean ambiguity tolerance scale

This scale has been provided by MacLean and David El (1993) and consists of 22 statements. In 2002 Curie has found the internal reliability of this scale as 0.83. To answer each question, subjects can choose one of the five choices of strongly agree (5), somewhat agree (4), uncertain (3), somewhat disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1). The reliability coefficient of this questionnaire using Cronbach's alpha is reported as 0.86. To analyze the obtained data of this study, the independent T and logistic regression have been used.

#### 5- Findings

The results of T test for a couple of independent groups between variables such as responsibility, loneliness feeling and three components in the scale of ambiguity tolerance (functionality, complexity and unresolved issues) among the single and multi child families are as follows:

**Table 1:** independent T test for comparison of variables of single and multi child families

	N	M	SD	SDE	T	DF	SIG
<b>Functionality index</b>							
Single child	121	27/661	4/452	0/404	-1/292	279	0/198
Multi child	160	28/375	4/686	0/370			
total	281						
<b>Complexity index</b>							
Single child	121	18/570	3/898	0/354	-0/583	279	0/560
Multi child	160	18/868	4/498	0/355			
Total	281						
<b>Unresolved problems</b>							
Single child	121	22/719	4/274	0/388	0/647	279	0/518
Multi child	160	22/375	4/512	0/356			
total	281						
<b>Loneliness index</b>							
Single child	121	53/900	12/117	1/101	-0/214	279	0/831
Multi child	160	54/218	12/488	0/987			
total	281						
<b>Responsibility index</b>							
Single child	121	47/115	3/958	0/359	-0/179	279	0/858
Multi child	160	47/200	3/871	0/306			
total	281						

First question: Is there any difference between the ambiguity tolerance components (functionality, complexity and unresolved issues) of children in single and multi child families? Since the obtained T in the ambiguity tolerance components (functionality,

( $t_{0b} = -1.292$ ), complexity, ( $t_{0b} = -0.583$ ), and unresolved issues ( $t_{0b} = 0.647$ )) is less than the T from the table with 279 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis is confirmed and the opposite

hypothesis stating there is a significant difference between the ambiguity tolerance components of children in single and multi child families is rejected. Thus, we can conclude with 95% confidence that there is no significant difference between children's ambiguity tolerance components (functionality, complexity and unresolved issues) in single and multi child families.

Second question: is there any significant difference between children loneliness feeling of a single child family with a multi child one?

According to the obtained T ( $t_{0b} = -0.214$ ) from the T table with 279 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis is verified and the opposite one stating that there is a significant difference between the loneliness feeling of children of single child families with that in multi child one is rejected. Thus, we can conclude with 95% confidence that there is no significant difference between the children's loneliness emotion of a single child family with that in a multi child one.

Third question: is there any significant difference between the children's responsibility of a single child family with that in a multi child one?

Since the obtained T ( $t_{0b} = -0.179$ ) is less than the T value of the table with 279 degree of freedom, the null assumption is verified and the opposite one stating that there is a significant difference between children's responsibility of a single child family with that in a multi child one is rejected. Thus, we can conclude with 95% confidence that there is no significant difference between children's responsibility of a Single child family with that in a multi child one.

Fourth question: what is the contribution of each variable including functionality, complexity, unresolved issues, loneliness feeling and responsibility to separate children of a single child family from those in a multi child one?

Table 2: logistic regression to distinguish between contribution of each variable between the children of a single child and multi child families.

**Table 2. Classification<sup>a</sup>**

Observed	Predicted		Percentage Correct
	Single child	Multi child	
Single child			
Multi child	20	101	
Overall Percentage	19	141	16.5
			88.1
			57.3

**A. THE CUT VALUE IS. 50**

	B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Responsibility	.014	.032	.186	1	.666	1.014
Loneliness	.004	.011	.176	1	.675	1.004
Unresolved problem	-.072	.041	3.044	1	.081	.930
Functionality	.127	.059	4.598	1	.032	1.135
Complexity	.109	.076	2.068	1	.150	1.115
Constant	1.197	1.964	.372	1	.542	.302

Using prediction table, based on these 5 variables which include functionality, complexity, unresolved issues, loneliness feeling and responsibility 16.5 percent can be seen to split into two groups of single child family and a multi child one. In the prediction equation only functionality variable among all predictor variables is significant.

**6- Conclusion**

The findings of Hosseini (1384) showed that children's responsibility in a single and three children families in both female and male sexes has no significant difference and are consistent with the results of this study.

The responsibility structure in the field of ambiguity tolerance is a personality variable that due to different understandings presented itself in several forms in the new psychology literature. In

fact, this can be evaluated in a more specific manner.

In reality, functionality is defined as the way that someone or a group is faced with acceptance of a function in the circle of unfamiliar ways and complex concepts. It is believed that a person with low ability to function normally may experience more stress and sometimes react in bad moment and try to separate himself from a vague driving (Bavarsad, 1387).

Those who cannot tolerate ambiguity when faced with an ambiguous situation, they move rapidly towards the close conceptual sense.

Conversely, people who have a high tolerance for ambiguity do not accomplish well in ambiguous assignments and seek for ambiguity and enjoy it or at least overcome it. Ice and csaron

(2001, cited by Bavarsad, 1387) reported that functionality has a negative relation with anxiety

In individuals and it has no difference in both sexes in single and multi child families.

Among the factors that affect on children's functionality are social factors. Social factors play an important role in the functionality of girl and son of a family. The most important of these factors include: social norms, teachers and schools, sisters and brothers, relatives and peers. In this context, peers play a major role.

Relationship with friends and peers provide an adequate model for the functionality of a person. People learn their role better from their peers. The child learns how to behave with the opposite sex or the same sex.

The mass media and mass communication tools with proper and informative programs also serve as effective instruments to develop functionality in children and adolescents. Another important social factor is educators and educational organizations.

This is so important since the primary school environment in the early years is the approximately same for both female and male sexes in single and multi child families. And therefore there is no difference between these two groups. Complexity is a variable that a person can deal with a situation successfully where its end is unclear. Those who have less tolerance for ambiguity typically fail in complicated assignments. While those with high tolerance for ambiguity do well in complicated tasks and enjoy it. Note that this component has no difference in single and multi child families.

Among the consistent research with this idea are the investigations of Krine and Gutamir (2007). They believe that when a person or group faces with non familiar, complex and obscure methods, the ambiguity is overcome. Durhime and Fostrer (2008) in a study found that the complexity is not a generalized personality feature, but is a particular content. Krine and Gutamir (2007) argue that the lack of complexity is a feature that is the basic characteristic of psychological states in adolescents.

They define complexity as the beliefs about worry, problem orientation and moving towards problem solving. And they believe that these three factors are related to the difficulty intensity in an individual and there is no difference in both groups (Hosseini, 1390).

Also previous researches (quoted by Ma'asoumi, 1389) are focused on unresolved issues of young children and found that the tolerance ambiguity amount play an important role in effectiveness of different behavioral states on people's performance in unresolved situations. Also

being a single child or multi child children had no difference in both groups. The important issue of unresolved problems is the concern of many researchers.

Researchers believe that people are supposed to face with problems, troubles and bother in the life, but they can be taught the proper way to act well in the face of such situations. Some people are not even able to fix and solve their daily problems and become nervous, distress, upset and agitated against the smallest problem or choice.

In contrast, there are another groups of individuals that solving a variety of problems and dealing with challenging and unresolved situations not only distract them but also bring them to the level of self consciousness so to the can identify their weakness and resolve them (Ma'asoumi, 1389).

The main reason for this success is that these people when faced with unresolved problems and making decision take a systematic and step wise approach while the first group lack this capability.

Every problem or decision essentially creates a stressful situation. As long as a person does not solve the problem correctly or does not make a good decision the stress intensity is increased and finally leads to activate unpleasant excitements.

As it was mentioned above one of the responsibilities of the school as a social factor is to identify and solve the children's problems. Problems with different forms ranging from simple to complicated which appear constantly in an individual's life. In this method, school without a loss of confidence helps them to think about their problems, find several ways and choose the best strategy to fix their problems. In addition, children learn to deal with their unresolved problems in such a manner that no anxiety or distress may be occurred. They learn to have a logical reaction against the possible failures and since this issue is related to the school periods the lack of difference between these two groups can be explained on this hypothesis. Wise (2003) believes that loneliness is related to the human need for intimacy in interpersonal relationships and arise from the painful awareness of the feeling of not having access to a good close relations with others. Adolescent is the first stage in human development where the loneliness sense is felt as acute and detectable phenomena. Loneliness resulted from social isolation is due to the lack of an attractive and interesting social network. This absence can be rectified only with the access of such network and social support.

Contrary to popular belief, the peak of loneliness is not the old ages. This feeling is most

common in adolescence and reaches approximately 80% (Ahadi, Gomhori, 1383). Loneliness reaches its peak in adolescence and decrease with aging. But it is not clear that its increment is in which period of adolescence. Regarding the third question of this study Moore (2007) concluded that children who are responsible internally and are responsible for their actions feel less loneliness than those who believes that have less control over their lives. He pointed out that when children reach to adolescent stage their social environment expands dramatically. Also, due to their mental abilities growth involve more in environment and some of their personality components such as responsibility are affected. They put new standard and face with new and complex problems each of which needs to accept responsibility for them. If he is prepared to tackle and eventually overcome these problems his personal meaning will be clearer, his self – esteem will be increased and his responsibility domain will be expanded. If the environment demand from them is sever, sudden and incomprehensible or a person does not prepare mentally, physically, socially and intellectual to deal with conventiaonal forces some crippling contradictions arise on the inside that prepare the context for the emergence of psychotic symptoms (including reduction in responsibility). And therefore regarding the environment impact on this variable one can concluded that there is no difference between single and multi child families for this variable because the environmental factors (school, peers,) are the same for both groups. Of consistent research with the fourth question of the study one can refer to the study conducted by Hosseini (1384). In his research, he concluded that the functionality of children is fulfilled according to their education and their relationship with their parents. In this case, the social statues of the family can be effective in the children functionality. The social class factor is defined typically based on one or more criteria of the following criteria: Parent's income, their education and occupational level. Social class alone helps us to determine the more specific causes of some effects that are associated with it. It is important, because although psychologists cannot change the person's social statue, but if they know what specific features of the environment play important role, they can find, modify and prevent problems associated with a particular class. Issues such as poor health care, poor nutrition, low parental education level, less intellectual stimulation at home.

Issues such as poor health care, poor nutrition, low parental education levels, less intellectual stimulation at home, the low value attached to education, more stereotypes about

gender roles, poor educational resources, less opportunities for outdoor activities and school, less interested parents in their job, and social events which are associated with low level classes (Today, Gibson, 2008) can impact on their accountability role.

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