

# The Difference of Parental Investment Model Between Multi-child Family and One-child Family

**Luo Ke Jun Tao**

*School of Education, Kunming City University, Kunming 650021, China*

*\*Corresponding author: Luo Ke Jun Tao, E-mail: 2115763951@qq.com.*

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## Abstract

This study compared the parental investment patterns of multi-child families and single-child families. Through comparative analysis of the two family types, it is found that they have some differences in parental investment behavior. The results show that families with many children pay more attention to the cultivation of parent-child relationship, while families with only one child pay more attention to the cultivation of individual ability and independence. The research also found that the two kinds of families have differences in education investment, time investment and emotional investment, and different family types have their own characteristics and advantages in parental investment. These findings have important implications for understanding the differences in parental investment between different family types.

## Key words

multi-child family, Families with only child, Parental investment model, Family education, Resource allocation, Sibling relationship, Personalized investment, Social policy

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Research background

There are significant differences in parental investment between families with many children and families with only one child. Families with multiple children usually distribute resources equally among different children, and parents spend more time and energy to maintain a close relationship between family and children. On the other hand, one-child families may pay more attention to and invest in their single child, often providing them with more material and spiritual support. This difference is mainly due to the limited family resources and the different number of children, so it is worth further exploring the impact of this difference on the development and growth of children. Understanding the differences in parental investment between families with many children and families with only one child can help us better understand the influence of families on children, and provide a more scientific basis for future family education and family policy formulation (Shang et al., 2022).

### 1.2 Research purpose

The purpose of this study is to compare the parental investment patterns of multi-child families and single-child families and explore the differences between them. Families with multiple children often face

resource allocation challenges, and parents need to balance investments between multiple children. In contrast, one-child families may be more inclined to invest and pay more attention to their single child. In families with many children, parents may be more inclined to adopt an equal investment strategy, ensuring that each child has access to similar resources and attention. However, this can also lead to a scarcity of resources, leaving each child with less attention and support. On the contrary, one-child families may focus more resources and energy on a single child, providing more personalized and in-depth support. By comparing the parental investment patterns of families with many children and families with only one child, we can gain a deeper understanding of the impact of different family structures on children's growth and development. This will help the development of family education and social policies to better support the healthy growth of children from different types of families.

### **1.3 Research significance**

The study found that there are significant differences in parental investment patterns between families with many children and families with only one child. Families with many children tend to adopt a more diversified investment strategy, cultivating the talents and qualities of each child in different ways and approaches. On the other hand, one-child families are more inclined to concentrate investment, focusing more resources and energy on the only child in the hope that the child can get better education and growth (Yuan, 2021). This difference is not only reflected in the style of family education, but also reflected in the development of children. There is mutual influence and competition between brothers and sisters in a multi-child family, and they learn to share and cooperate in the process of growing up together. However, children from one-child families may be more inclined to be independent and lack experience in getting along with their peers. Therefore, it is of great significance to understand the patterns of parental investment in different family types for family education and family policy formulation. The government and society should formulate corresponding support policies according to the needs and characteristics of different family types, provide families with a better education and development environment, and promote the healthy growth of children.

## **2. Analysis of parental investment patterns in multi-child families**

### **2.1 Definition of parental investment and related theories**

Parental investment refers to all kinds of investment and support made by parents to their children in the process of growing up, including material support, educational training, emotional care and so on. According to the developmental stage theory of psychologist Erickson, family plays a crucial role in the growth of children, and parental investment is a variety of investment behaviors carried out by parents in the family in order to promote the healthy growth of children. In families with many children, parental investment patterns tend to be more diversified and differentiated. Parents need to make individualized investments based on the characteristics and needs of each child, such as in education, which may be tailored to each child's learning plan and tutoring style. At the same time, sibling relationships in multi-child families can also influence parental investment patterns, and parents may need to allocate resources equitably among their children.

### **2.2 Characteristics of parental investment patterns in multi-child families**

Multi-child families usually make differentiated investments in parental investment according to each child's personality, talent and needs (Wang, 2022). Parents will provide resources and support according to their children's interests and talents to promote their all-round development. In the allocation of resources, parents will meet the needs of each child as balanced as possible to ensure that each child can get enough attention and support. Parents in families with many children usually focus on cultivating a sense of cooperation and solidarity among their children, encouraging them to support and help each other. Parents teach their children how to deal with relationships and resolve conflicts, and train them to be responsible and empathetic people. In general, the parental investment model of multi-child families is more personalized and

detailed, focusing on the development of each child's strengths and potential, and developing them into independent, confident and caring individuals. Parents in families with many children need to spend more time and energy on their children's education, but they can also gain more happiness and a sense of accomplishment.

### **2.3 Influencing factors of parental investment patterns in multi-child families**

Family structure is one of the important factors affecting parental investment patterns in multi-child families. In multi-child families, parents need to deal with children of different ages and personalities, so they need to be more flexible in their educational investments. They need to consider how to balance the allocation of resources among their children to ensure that each child receives appropriate attention and educational support. Parents' education level also has an impact on parental investment patterns in multi-child families. Parents with a high level of education usually pay more attention to the all-round development of their children and will provide them with more learning resources and opportunities. They may choose to invest in a variety of educational training, such as music, fine arts, sports, etc., to meet the interests and talents of their children. Social environment and family economic conditions are also important factors affecting parental investment patterns in multi-child families (Yang & Zhang, 2022). If economic conditions permit, parents may choose to send their children to participate in various social activities and extracurricular classes to enrich their extracurricular life (Liang & Chen, 2022). In places where the social environment is more competitive, parents may pay more attention to their children's academic performance and invest more time and energy in tutoring them.

## **3. Analysis of parental investment patterns in one-child families**

### **3.1 Characteristics of parental investment patterns in one-child families**

The characteristics of the parental investment mode of one-child families are mainly reflected in the more resources and attention of parents. Since there is only one child, parents tend to put more energy and money into this child, hoping to give them the best education and training. They will spend more time with their children, participate in their learning and growth process, and strive to give the most comprehensive support and care. Children from one-child families are also often more likely to receive pampering and attention from parents, which may make the child lack independence and self-care ability. Compared with families with many children, children from one-child families may be more dependent on their parents and lack opportunities to compete and cooperate with their siblings, which affects their social skills and teamwork. In general, the characteristics of only-child families in parental investment are mainly reflected in parents' all-round attention and investment in their children, but there are also problems such as easy to be spoiled and lack of independence, which need parents' attention and guidance in the education process.

### **3.2 Influencing factors of parental investment patterns in one-child families**

For one-child families, family economic status is an important factor. Since there is only one child, parents bear all the education and growth expenses, which puts a certain pressure on the family economy (Xu & Xu, 2022). In contrast, families with many children can spread these costs and realize parental investment more easily. And one-child families often devote more resources to their child's education, which also adds to the family's financial burden. Social pressure is also an important factor affecting the parental investment pattern of one-child families. In the traditional concept, the only child is regarded as the hope and future of the family, and parents usually invest as much as they can for their child's future. At the same time, one-child families also face expectations and evaluations from society, leading parents to work harder to support their child's development. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the parental investment mode of single-child families and multi-child families, which also requires us to adjust and adapt to the education concept and family planning.

## **4. Difference analysis of parental investment patterns between multi-child families and only-child families**

### **4.1 Comparison of parental investment behavior**

There are obvious differences in parental investment patterns between multi-child families and single-child families. In multi-child families, parents need to balance attention and resource allocation for each child, so they usually spend more time and energy caring for each child. This includes involvement in the child's learning, life and interests to ensure that each child is adequately cared for and educated. In contrast, parents of one-child families usually pay more attention and invest in their only child because they only have one child to take care of. They may provide more companionship and affection to their children, and it is easier for them to meet their various needs. It is also easier for one-child families to provide better educational resources for their children, including good schools, training classes, etc. In general, there are obvious differences in parental investment behavior between families with many children and families with only one child (Liu, 2021). Parents in multi-child families need to balance the allocation of resources among multiple children, while parents in one-child families are more focused on their only child. These different investment patterns can also affect the growth and development of children.

### **4.2 Comparison of parental investment effect**

In families with many children, parents often have to deal with the education and development of multiple children, so they may pay more attention to equality and equity, and strive to ensure that each child receives adequate care and resources. This investment model may motivate children to compete with each other, increase their motivation to learn and promote their active social participation, and thus improve their educational achievement and mental health. In contrast, parents in one-child families may pour more energy and resources into one child, making it easier for that child to receive unique attention and care. This investment pattern may make children more focused and excellent academically, but it may also lead to a lack of interaction and competition with peers, affecting their social skills and adaptability.

### **4.3 Comparison of influencing factors**

There are some obvious differences in parental investment patterns between multi-child families and single-child families. Families with multiple children usually face more competition and distribution pressure, and parents often need to balance the distribution of resources among multiple children, which may lead to their difficulties in fully meeting the needs of each child in terms of education and care. In contrast, one-child families can focus more resources and energy on one child and have more opportunities to make deeper and comprehensive investments. Sibling interactions and competition in families with many children can also influence parents' investing behavior. There may be feelings of friendly competition or jealousy between siblings, which can affect parents' parenting strategies and decisions. The only child will not be affected by this, and parents can be more autonomous in accordance with the child's personality and needs to educate and cultivate.

## **5. Conclusion**

There are obvious differences in parental investment patterns between multi-child families and single-child families. Families with many children usually adopt the strategy of equal distribution of resources, focusing on the interaction and unity between siblings, but it may lead to the scarcity of resources. On the contrary, one-child families pay more attention to and invest in a single child, but there may be overprotection and lack of social skills. Factors such as family structure, parents' education level, social environment and family economic conditions will affect the formation of parental investment patterns. Understanding the difference in parental investment between families with many children and families with

only one child is important for family education and social policy formulation. The government and society should formulate corresponding support policies according to the needs and characteristics of different family types, provide families with a better education and development environment, and promote the healthy growth of children. At the same time, family education should pay attention to the balance of each child's personality and needs, cultivate their independence, cooperation and social ability, and provide theoretical support and guidance for their all-round development. This is of great significance for improving the quality of family education and building a harmonious society.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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