

Does parental guidance affect the emotional maturity of a child?



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Emotional maturity depicts one's capacity to manage and to check his/her emotions, to evaluate others' emotional state and to persuade their judgment and actions (L. J. Saul, 1972). This study attempts to explore the role of parental guidance on the emotional maturity of a child. In specific, the emotional maturity levels of two sects' of children were measured. The sample groups targeted were between the age group of 14 to 16. Both the groups consisted of 30 children each. The first group compiled of children living with parents (exposed to parental guidance) and the second group complied of orphans living in orphanages. The participants were asked to answer the Emotional Maturity Questionnaire designed by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava (1990). The results later would be compared to check if there is a difference in the EM levels of children living with parents and orphans which would give us an idea whether parental guidance affects the emotional maturity of a child or not.

## INTRODUCTION

The study of emotions and their impact on humans has been around for thousands of years. The only change is in the approach to this investigation. For many years, investigations regarding emotions were neglected by researchers as it was seen as a part of the mind rather than observed through physiology, as emotion is usually considered to be a feeling or reaction to certain important events or thoughts. Emotions are psychophysical reactions to specific events (John Watson, 1919).

However, in the last few decades, researchers have widened their scope of studying emotions by investigating and conducting researches on humans'

emotional intelligence and emotional maturity (worldbook, inc. 1990). One's emotional age is the age of an individual, expressed in terms of the chronological age of an average normal individual showing the same degree of emotional maturity. It is similar to the concept of emotional intelligence as a metric (David B. Bohl, 1988). However there have been studies which stipulate the fact that cognitive and emotional abilities mature at different rates (Steinberg, 2009). Emotional maturity is a personality trait, the result of emotional development and the display of emotion appropriate to one's chronological age. It usually reflects increased emotional adjustment and emotional stability (Dr. Joe Kiff, 1989). Emotional Maturity implies controlling your emotions more willingly than letting your emotions to give you the orders. Emotional maturity depicts one's capacity to manage and to check his/her emotions, to evaluate others' emotional state and to persuade their judgment and actions (L. J. Saul, 1972). According to the teachings of modern dynamic psychology, emotional maturity is characterized by ability to become interested in things and persons; to things for their own sake, to give love to other persons. In other words, capacity for altruism is one fundamental characteristic of emotional maturity (Franz Alexander, 2005).

There have been tests carried out to determine if self-esteem is related to emotional maturity. The result showed that students high in self-esteem were found to be more emotionally mature than students low in self-esteem (Overbeek, Geertjan; Stattin, 1981). Further researches done on the role of parents suggested that a negative parent-child bond was indirectly related to low-quality partner relationships and dissatisfaction with life in adulthood (but not anxiety and depression) through conflictual parent-adolescent

communication and low-quality partner relationships in young adulthood (Klever and Phillip, 2007). The variables used in the present study are Emotional Maturity and Parental involvement. There hasn't been much of research done taking into account both these variables together. However, there were studies conducted which suggested that parent's socio-economic status has an effect on their child's emotional maturity and self actualization and it also proved that parental approval does not correlate highly with emotional maturity or self actualization (Sharma and Vaid, 2005). Orphans generally face issues like low social acceptance. Raising such a child in a family setting improves the social and emotional state of the child (Nickerson & Staff, 2006). Research showed that children who lived in institutions had significantly higher body mass indexes and scored higher in health and cognitive tests (Zela Chin, 2009). But, there were certain other studies which showed that health, emotional and cognitive functioning, and physical growth were no worse for institution-living than community-living orphans or abandoned children (OAC), and generally better than for community-living OAC cared for by persons other than a biological parent (Whetten, 2009).

The present study hypothesizes that Children living with parents have higher levels of emotional maturity than orphaned children living in orphanages. The uniqueness of this study lies in the fact that there has been no study been done so far on the emotional maturity quotient of orphan children. This study aims at proving that children who do not have family support have low levels of emotional maturity. It emphasises on the importance of the role of parents in a child's emotional and social development. The pivotal role that parents play in a child's development is undisputed. The guidance of parents

translate to differences in a myriad of outcomes, such as academic achievement, self-esteem, deviant behavior, autonomy, emotional maturity, and leadership ability, to name just a few. Orphans who lack parental guidance and support mostly tend to undergo traumatic grief, impaired cognitive and emotional development, less access to education and greater likelihood of being exploited as child labor. This justifies the study of how parents play a role in a child's emotional development and thus illustrates how children living with parents have higher levels of emotional maturity than orphans living in institutions or orphanages.

## THEORETICAL BASE

There have been many theories on emotions that have been put forward of which the first stated that emotions are felt by people only if aware of their own internal physical reactions to events, such as increased heart rate or blood pressure (James-Lange Theory, 1884). Further investigations suggested that emotions arose only when the Hypothalamus, a part of the brain, was stimulated and this was believed to be the "seat" of emotions (Cannon-Bard, 1927). Later, the two factor theory was proposed which claimed that the two factors that determine different emotions are physical changes in the individual's body and the reason that the individual gives for that change (Schachter-Singer, 1962). There are eight innate, primary emotions which are joy, anticipation, anger, disgust, sadness, surprise, fear and acceptance (Robert Plutchik, 1979).

## METHODOLOGY

The Emotional Maturity Questionnaire is used to measure the EM levels of children, designed by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava. The questionnaire is reliable and valid as its been used by many international researches. Random sampling method was used to pick out 30 children each for the two sample groups. The experimental design used was Independent group design: simple random assignment because the outcome measures of the experimental group and the control group was to be compared. The statistical measure used was T ratio as there was just one variable to be measured in both the sample groups.

## RELEVANCE

India is a country which gives the utmost importance to family culture, values and tradition. These are the pivotal attributes that entail a family which help in the mental development of a child. It's been studied that Orphans generally face issues like low social acceptance. Raising such a child in a family setting improves the social and emotional state of the child (Nickerson & Staff, 2006). This gives us a general idea of how important parental guidance is for emotional development. Off late, it's been a trend to adopt children. As these children get a secure future and parental support, it would definitely help them develop better.

Future studies carried out in this field could study the impact of parental guidance on emotional intelligence, self esteem, self confidence etc..