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## **Emotional Intelligence of Children with Single Parent and Orphaned Children**

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### **Abstract**

The present study has been conducted to know the difference between the emotional intelligence of orphaned children and children with single parent. The importance of the role of parents in the development of emotional intelligence has been reflected in this study. The study shows that the emotional intelligence of children with single parents is higher in comparison to the emotional intelligence of children living in orphanage. It is obvious that the children living in orphanage have not had any kind of parental interaction and have difficulty in identifying and understanding their emotions. On the other hand are children with single parent, who live with either their mother or father and thus have some kind of emotional knowledge and understanding. The study was conducted on a sample of 50 children, out of which 25 were orphaned children while 25 were children with single parent.

**Keywords:** Emotions, Emotional Intelligence, Orphans, Single parent children.

### **Introduction**

The Oxford dictionary defines emotion as “any agitation or disturbance of mind, feeling, passion; any vehement or excited mental state.” According to Daniel Goleman emotion refer to a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states and range of propensities to act. “An emotion is a complex psychological state that involves three distinct components: a *subjective experience*, a *physiological response*, and a *behavioral or expressive response*.”(Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2007) According to some researchers emotion is a relatively brief conscious experience characterized by intense mental activity and a high degree of pleasure or displeasure. Buck (1985) has defined emotions as the process by which motivational potential is realized or ‘read out,’ when activated by a challenging stimuli. In other words, emotion is seen as a ‘read out’ mechanism carrying information about motivational systems.

*Emotional Intelligence* is a cluster of traits or abilities relating to the emotional side of life. Emotional intelligence involves understanding and managing emotions effectively to achieve better individual and relationship outcomes. Emotional Intelligence is the ability to carry out accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought (Mayer,et al, 2008). It is the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ emotions, understand and manage them and the use of this information to enhance social skills and social competence. Goleman defined Emotional Intelligence as ‘Understanding one’s own feelings, empathy for the feelings of other and the regulation of emotion in a way that enhances living.’ Emotional intelligence (EI), thus, perhaps is one of the most popular and the most researched psychological constructs of the 21st century (Ashkanasy, 2003; Bar-On 2006). According to Goleman there are five domains of Emotional Intelligence: 1) Knowing your emotions, 2) Managing your own emotions, 3) Motivating oneself, 4) Recognizing and understanding other people’s emotions, 5) Managing relationships. Emotional Intelligence enables one to learn to acknowledge and understand feelings in ourselves and in others and that we appropriately

respond to them, effectively applying the information and energy of emotions in our daily lives and work. Cooper and Sawaf(1997) define emotional intelligence as the ability to sense, understand and effectively apply the power and acumen of emotions as a source of human energy , information, connection and influence. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotions; the ability to access and /or generate feelings when they facilitate thoughts; the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge and intellectual growth. EI has been recognized as important for success in the workplace (Goleman 1998; Kirch, et al 2001; Rozell, et al 2002) which has resulted in calls for the incorporation of EI skills in curricula (Chia 2005; Holt & Jones 2005; Low & Nelson 2005). It is quite evident from empirical investigations that EI plays a significant role in determining life success of a person. The emotional Intelligence enables us to be aware of our feeling and those of others. This awareness is vital because we fail to behave rationally when we are overpowered by emotions.

### ***Importance of Emotional Intelligence***

We know that man cannot live in isolation and to progress in the world we must fit in with each other. As humans we constantly make judgments about people, about whether we like them or not. These judgments are mainly really emotional reflexes, of which we are rarely conscious but are nonetheless so powerful that they motivate many of our choices in life. When they are triggered we can either react to people and situations in a negative way or we can respond with awareness, sensitivity and balance. Being aware of these emotional reflexes and using them in a positive and healthy way can make the difference between an emotionally intelligent person and one who isn't. According to Goleman of all skills needed for success in life and business over 60% are emotional.

### ***Role of Parents in the Development of Emotional Intelligence***

It is believed that every person is born with a certain innate potential for balanced emotional intelligence. This innate intelligence can be either developed or damaged with life experiences, particularly by the emotional lessons learned during childhood and adolescence. Parents play a crucial role in the overall development of a child. The presence of parents, and the love and affection provided by them to the child, affects the child in a significant manner. Many children are blessed with both mother and father and a normal childhood. On the other hand there are several children who are unable to receive any kind of love and care from their parents, many times because such children have one parent i.e. either the mother or the father, or they are orphan. In all the three cases the emotional development of the child is affected deeply. And we know how important Emotional Intelligence is, in achieving success and happiness in life and also in having a stable life. The UN estimates that up to 8 million children around the world are living in care institutions (Pinheiro, 2006). Child rearing practices has a significant impact on the emotional as well as social adjustment of children. It has been observed in studies that for a child to start out with relatively low emotional intelligence, can be developed into a moderately high emotional intelligence person if the child receives healthy emotional modeling and nurturing. Most developmental theories (e.g., psychoanalytic theory, Freud in 1940; social-cultural theory, Vygotsky in 1978; social-learning theory by Bandura in 1977; attachment theory Bolwby 1958) emphasize the importance of early social-emotional experience and the opportunity to experience human relationships for typical social and mental development. Attachment theory, in particular, focuses specifically on early experience with a few warm, caring, and socially-emotionally responsive adults who are relatively stable in the child's life as the foundation of appropriate social-emotional development and long-term mental health (e.g., Ainsworth, 1979; Ainsworth, Bell, & Stayton, 1974; Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978; Bornstein & Tamis-LeMonda, 1989; Bowlby, 1958, 1969; Grusec & Lytton, 1988; Spitz, 1946; Sroufe, 1983; Sroufe, Carlson, Levy, & Egeland, 1999).

Theoretically, an infant with a warm, responsive caregiver develops an internal working model of expectations for nurturing, supportive reactions from that caregiver, whom the infant comes to trust and use as a secure base from which to explore the social and physical world. Such experiences in turn promote the development of a sense of worthiness and self-esteem and appropriate long-term social-emotional development and mental health. Without the early experience of a few warm, caring, emotionally responsive adults, long-term development may be compromised. Various researches have shown that children brought up by two parents are more intelligent - because they develop more brain cells. These children have more brain cells because they get more attention and stability and suffer less distress. As a result they are more emotionally stable in comparison to children brought up by single parent or orphans. Means they have better memories and learning ability and social skills, are more respondent to the emotional needs of people around them. Children who are brought up by two parents grow up to be cleverer than those raised by just one person, new research suggests. According to data published by the U.S. Department of State, approximately twenty thousand infants and children are adopted from abroad each year- a trend that has increased in 15 years.

Divorce occurring in a family in which minor children are involved brings to light an area of deep human conflicts. On the one hand there is a clash between the interests of the controlling parents, at least one of whom desires to liquidate the marriage. On the other hand, the children normally desire to preserve their home and live with both parents. In societies in which the percentage of divorce has increased in recent times a tendency may be noticed to subordinate the normal interest of the children to the personal wishes of the spouses. And children of abusive or neglectful parents can also grow up believing that they should never show their true emotions, for different reasons. Erik Erickson puts it in terms of a child learning 'basic trust or basic mistrust.' Many a times there are situations when either of the parents of the child dies and as a result the child is under the supervision of only one parent. The disruption of the family through involuntary causes (death) or voluntary causes (divorce-desertion), both make the child go through emotional trauma. As a result the child experiences stress, fatigue, depression, anxiety, mood swings, self absorption, low self esteem, low achievement, and/or negative behavior. Many children who are intellectually capable of succeeding in college have difficulties with a variety of non-cognitive competencies such as time and stress management, establishing positive relationships, and making wise decisions. They may adopt dysfunctional coping styles that can cripple their academic efforts. Each of these problems can be described as a lack of emotional intelligence. Others examining data from various campuses confirmed the studies that found that children with higher EI scores performed better academically (see, for example, Evenson, 2008; Song, Huang, Peng, Law, Wong, & Chen, 2010) and that the relationship between EI and better academic performance is applicable to children cohorts as wide-ranging as honors students to athletes (Jaeger, 2004).

Emotional intelligence is also about making choices. According to Byron Stock, one can use the emotional information about what one is feeling, to help one make effective decisions about what to say and do, and what not to say and do next. In all of this parents play a significant role in a child's life and their presence or absence in a child's life affects them in a significant manner, especially in the development of their emotional intelligence.

### **Purpose of the Study**

To assess and compare the emotional intelligence of children with single parent and orphaned children.

### **Hypothesis**

The emotional intelligence of children with single parent will be higher than the emotional intelligence of the orphaned children.

## Variables

**Independent Variable-** Emotional Intelligence

**Dependent Variable-** Having single parent or being an orphan

## Sample

The sample consists of 50 children between the age of 12 years to 17 years, out of which 25 are children with single parent and 25 are children living in orphanage.

## Tool Used for the Study

**The Emotional Intelligence Scale:** The scale is developed and standardized by Anukool Hyde, Sanjyot Pethe, and Upinder Dhar (2002). This scale consists of 34 statements. These statements are related to ten skills of emotional intelligence. These are self-awareness, empathy, self-motivation, emotional stability, managing relations, integrity, self-development, value-orientation, commitment and altruistic behavior. Each statement has a range of five alternative answers. Each statement is scored 5 for strongly agree, 4 for agree, 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree and 1 for strongly disagree. The children obtaining a score in the range of 52-84 on the scale may be considered as 'normal' in their emotional intelligence; those obtaining a score in the range of 85 and above on the scale may be considered as 'high' in their emotional intelligence and the those obtaining a score in the range of 51 and below on the scale may be considered as 'low' in their emotional intelligence. The reliability of the scale was determined by calculating reliability co-efficient on a sample of 200 students. The split-half reliability co-efficient was found to be 0.88. Besides face validity, as all items were related to the variable under focus, the scale has high content validity.

## Data Collection

The study is based on primary data.

The data for children with single parent has been collected by visiting a senior secondary school and identifying children with single parent (with the help of school authorities) and data for orphaned children was collected by visiting an orphanage.

## Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by using appropriate statistical method, such as T-Test, which is used to see the significant difference between the means of the two groups of children.

## Result and Interpretation

Table: Showing T-test between the means of the two groups, i.e. Orphaned children and children with single parent.

	MEAN	SD	SED	T	Df
Orphaned Children	45.76	10.70			
			4.695	7.3610	48
Single Parent Children	80.32	20.89			

## Inference

The above table shows the T-test between two groups of children, where one is the group of orphaned children and the other is the group comprising of children with single parent. The mean for orphaned children was calculated to be 45.76 . And the mean for children with single parent was calculated to be 80.32. The value of standard deviation denoted by 'SD' was calculated to be 10.70 for the orphaned children. While the standard deviation for single parent children was calculated to be 20.89. The value of standard error of difference, denoted by 'SED' was calculated to be 4.695 . The T-test value was computed as 7.3610 . And the degree of freedom was

48. When this T-test value was checked at 0.01 and 0.05 level, a significant difference was found between the emotional intelligence of the two groups of children.

### **Interpretation**

The purpose of the present study was to assess and compare the emotional intelligence of children with single parent and orphaned children. The sample consisted of total of 50 children out of which 25 were orphaned children and 25 were children who have only one parent, i.e. either only father or either only mother. The study was successfully completed with the help of the Emotional Intelligence Scale constructed and standardized by Anukool Hyde, Sanjyot Pethe, and Upinder Dhar. When T-test was calculated between the means of the two groups it was found that there is a significant difference between the emotional intelligence of the two groups of children. Thus our hypothesis that, the emotional intelligence of children with single parents will be more than the emotional intelligence of orphaned children, has been proved true and therefore has been accepted.

### **Conclusion**

Emotional intelligence has elicited great interest in people from all over the world. Therapists, educators, and parents want to know what they can do to help children develop their emotional intelligence. However, most of the research in this field has investigated adults' emotional intelligence. This study tries to add to the scarce research literature in the area of children's' emotional intelligence. It also tries to point the importance of parents in the development of the emotional intelligence of children. It is clear from the study that since the children living in the orphanage have not received any kind of parental interaction and love and there has not been anyone around such children who would help them understand themselves, their emotions and that of others, hence they have scored poorly on the Emotional Intelligence Test, and have a significantly lower emotional intelligence in comparison to children with single parent, who have received at least some kind of parental love and experienced emotional understanding of one self and that of others around them.

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