

Personality Factors as Correlates of Emotional Maturity among Adolescents

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Emotions play an important role in the life of an individual and one requires a higher emotional maturity to lead an effective life. We need to study the emotional aspects of adolescents as they go on with their normal lives. The current study was planned to analyse the relationship between emotional maturity and personality factors. The sample consists of 110 adolescents studying in class XI and XII taken from a private school. Further, the association of emotional maturity with personality dimensions of these adolescents was analyzed. 'Emotional maturity scale' was administered on the selected sample to assess emotional maturity and 'NEO- FFI (Form S)', was used for measuring various personality dimensions of these adolescents. . The results showed that (i) Neuroticism has a significant negative correlation with emotional maturity (ii) Agreeableness and Conscientiousness have significant positive correlation with emotional maturity, (iii) Openness and Extroversion doesn't show any significant relation with emotional maturity and (iv) Stepwise regression analysis revealed two predictors of emotional maturity i.e. Agreeableness and Neuroticism, jointly account for 19% of variance in emotional maturity.

Keywords: Emotional Maturity, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Openness, Adolescents.

In the present world, adolescents, in addition to daily rigors of life, are facing enhanced difficulties due to fierce competition, peer pressure, parental expectations, and so on. These difficulties are giving rise to many psychosomatic problems such as anxiety, tensions, frustrations and emotional upsets in day to day life. Emotions are great motivating forces throughout the span of human life; affecting aspirations, actions and thoughts of an individual. Adolescence is a period when the behavior getting influenced highly by the emotions. A healthy emotional development leads to emotional maturity. Emotional maturity can be understood in terms of ability of self-control which, in turn, is a result of thinking and learning.

Emotional maturity and social maturity are vital for attaining success and happiness in life. Social maturity is a term commonly used in two ways with reference to the behavior that conforms to the standards and expectations of the adults and secondly, with reference to the behavior that is appropriate to the age of the

individual under observation. Botcheva et al. (2002) stated that adolescents reported decline in optimism, relative stability of depression and problem behavior because of the improvement in social maturity. The psychosocial context of adolescents is markedly different to that of children and adults. Relationships with peers, family and society go through distinct changes during this time. Adolescents begin to assert more autonomous control over their decisions, emotions and actions, and start to disengage from parental control. At the same time, the school context involves an intense socialization process during which adolescents become increasingly aware of the perspectives of classmates, teachers and other societal influences (Berzonsky & Adams, 2003). It can be assumed that while emotional maturity enables adolescents to make better decisions for life, good social adjustments determine, to a large extent, his social attitude throughout the adult years. In other words, it can be said that at the end of the adolescent period, the adolescent is

expected to be socially and emotionally mature.

A person can be called emotionally mature if he is able to display his emotions in appropriate degree with reasonable control (Manoharan and Doss, 2007). According to Menninger (1999), "Emotional maturity includes the ability to deal constructively with reality". Singh (1990) stated that Emotional maturity is not only the effective determinant of a personality pattern but also helps to control the growth of an adolescent's development. A person who is able to keep his emotions under control, to brook delay and to suffer without self-pity might still be emotionally stunned. Skinner (2001) defined emotional maturity as "the degree to which the person has realized his potentials for richness of living and has developed his capacity to enjoy things, to relate himself to others, to love and to laugh, his capacity for whole heartedness. Thus, emotional maturity, in short, may also be defined as the ability of the person to assess a situation or relationship and to act according to what is best for oneself and for the other person in the relationship.

According to Walter (1976) emotional maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-psychically and intra personally. Nelson (2005) in his research related to "Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Maturity" says that if we want our children to be emotionally mature, we must focus on their early childhood education, which affects certain level of social and emotional maturity.

A study by Hiremani, Khadi, Gaonkar and Katarki (1994) indicated that destitute girls were emotionally unstable due to socio-cultural and parental deprivation. Kumar (2012) found that there is no significant difference between the Emotional Maturity and Life Satisfaction of male and female college students of Education. In another study by Jha (2002), it was found that self-confidence and emotional maturity were positively associated with vigilant style of decision making in case of executives. Mankad (1999) observed that the personality of emotionally mature and immature adolescents differs significantly. Emotional maturity was a

major factor especially as a predictor of success in essay tests among medical students.

In the Indian context, a number of studies have explained the relationship between emotional maturity and other related variables i.e. physical health, academic achievement and mental health. In a recent study by Kohli and Malhotra (2008), it was found that there was a significant correlation between Type A behavior pattern and total maturity scores in patients indicating emotional immaturity as compared to healthy controls and also CHD (Chronic Heart Disease) patients had more emotional instability, emotional regression, personality disintegration and lack of independence as compared to healthy controls. Singh (2010) in his doctoral dissertation found that emotional maturity showed no significant relationship with academic achievement of high school girls and the total sample. In a recent Indian study by Singh (2013), it was concluded that there exist a significant positive correlation between emotional maturity and self-esteem; emotional maturity and mental health. So, the study of emotional maturity is now gaining recognition.

Adolescence introduces a period of significant transition in family and social role expectations, coupled with increases in the range and intimacy or social relationship (Buhrmester & Furman, 1987; Selman, 1980). During early adolescence, the emergence of autonomy is an important developmental task (Allen, Joseph, Stuart, Kathy & Thomas, 1994). Adolescence is the stage where extreme emotions are expressed or experienced with the intensity of adulthood but devoid of adult perspective. At no stage this emotional energy is as strong and dangerous as in adolescence. It is very difficult for an adolescent to exercise control over his emotions. The sudden functioning of sexual glands and tremendous increase in physical energy makes him restless. Moreover, adolescents are not consistent in their emotions. Emotions during this stage fluctuate very frequently and quickly. It makes them moody. Sometimes, they are very happy and at another time they are extremely sad and all this happens in a very short time. So there is too much uncertainty in the nature

of their emotional states.

Aleem and Sheema (2005) have reported a significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on emotional stability and further found that female students are emotionally less stable than male students. On the other hand, in a study by Sharma (2008) girls were reported to be emotionally more mature than boys. Nanda and Asha (2005) has reported that familial variable, family type and personal variable, age had an impact on emotional maturity of urban adolescent girls. In relation to emotional maturity and intelligence, Anju (2000) investigated that there exists a positive and significant relation between emotional maturity and intelligence of students which implies that the more intelligent the person is, the more emotionally mature he is.

A study by McNairs (2004) found that students with a high level of dedication, commitment, desire and emotional maturity can make effective learning and learn as much as they want. A small number of studies emphasize on whether criminals differ from the general population in emotional maturity. In another study, Stephen (2002) examined the neuroticism and emotional maturity among college female students and found that the individuals who scored higher neuroticism were having a low level of emotional maturity.

Emotional maturity is not only the effective determinant of personality pattern but it also helps to control the growth of adolescent's development. Considering adolescence stage as a crucial stage for emotional development because of number of changes that are taking place in adolescents, and reviewing the above findings that the role of various personality factors on emotional maturity of adolescents is not unidirectional, present study was conducted to examine the relationship between personality factors and emotional maturity in adolescents as well as it focused on predictors of emotional maturity.

Objectives:

1. To study the relationship of five personality factors with emotional maturity among

adolescents.

2. To explore whether personality factors significantly predict emotional maturity.

In the present research the following hypotheses were proposed:

1. There would be a significant association between personality factors and emotional maturity.
2. Some personality factors would significantly predict emotional maturity.

Method

Sample:

The sample for the study consisted of 110 students studying in class XI and XII taken from a private school of Rohtak district from Haryana, India. The age range of the subjects varied from 16 to 18 years. Both male and female participants (54 males & 56 females) were taken in the sample.

Tools used:

Emotional maturity scale (Singh & Bhargava, 1991). It was used to assess emotional maturity of adolescents. The scale has a total of 48 items under five different categories: Emotional Instability, Emotional Regression, Emotional Maladjustment, Personality Disintegration and Lack of Independence. EMS is a five point standardized scale and items of the scale are in question form. The scale was standardized for adolescents and the interpretation of scores were established as (50-80)-Extremely stable, (81-88)-Moderately stable, (89-106)-Unstable, and (107-240)-Extremely unstable. Reliability of the scale was determined by test retest reliability which was 0.75 and internal consistency for various factors ranged from .42-.86.

The NEO-FFI was developed and validated by Costa and McCrae (1989). NEO-FFI consists of only 60 items and takes 10 to 15 minutes to complete. It is a concise measure of five broad dimensions of personality (Costa & McCrae 1992). The five dimensions are- Neuroticism (N), Extraversion (E), Openness (O) and Agreeableness (A) and Conscientiousness (C). The NEO-FFI is available in two versions: Form

S is for self-reports, and Form R is for observer, peer, or significant other ratings. Form S items parallel those in Form R but are written in the third person. The NEO-FFI can be administered to men and women of all ages, most appropriately between 16 and 65 years. The alphas across the five subscales for present study are .74 for Neuroticism, .61 for Extraversion, .50 for Openness to Experience, .62 for Agreeableness, and .77 for Conscientiousness.

Procedure:

The participants were contacted individually and requested to co-operate for the testing schedule. Good rapport was established with participants and they were convinced that the result and the information they will give would be kept confidential and will be used for research purpose only. The testing schedule was conducted by administering the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS). It was used to check the level of Emotional Maturity of the subjects. Later on, NEO-FFI was administered to assess various personality dimensions of the subjects. In order to collect the data, the scales were administered individually. Responses on both emotional maturity scale and on NEO-FFI from both genders were taken. Data of all the subjects was collected by applying the same procedure and were scored as per the scoring patterns prescribed by their authors and/or manuals.

Results and Discussion

The present study was conducted to find out the correlation between five factors of personality

and emotional maturity; and to find out the predictors of emotional maturity. Correlation matrix shows that there is significant relationship between personality and emotional maturity dimensions. The significant correlations between personality factors and measures of emotional maturity have range between $-.28$ and $.38$.

Stepwise regression analysis was applied to the data as the objective of the study was to obtain the predictors of emotional maturity among adolescents. The analysis revealed that two significant predictors of emotional maturity with an overall multiple R of $.47$.

Correlation reveals that Neuroticism is negatively associated with emotional maturity. Thus, results show that neuroticism personality dimension and emotional maturity are negatively and significantly related (Table 1). This suggests that there is likelihood that emotionally labile shall have low emotional maturity. The result obtained from this study shows that individuals who scored high on neuroticism have low level of emotional maturity (Stephen, 2002). Regression analysis (Table 2) revealed, Neuroticism a potent predictor which entered at step two and multiple R is $.43$. Results indicate that 4.6% of variance in the criterion variable i.e. emotional maturity is explained or accounted by Neuroticism personality dimension. The beta value showed that neuroticism has a significant negative relationship with criterion variable.

Correlation also reveals that Agreeableness showed a positive and significant relationship

Table 1. Intercorrelations between five factors of personality and measures of emotional maturity (N=110).

Personality	Neuroticism	Extroversion	Openness	Agreeableness	conscientiousness
Emotional maturity	$-.28^{**}$	$.032$	$-.032$	$.38^{**}$	$.27^*$

$^{**}p < .01$ $^*p < .05$

Table 2 Summary of Stepwise Regressive Analysis Dependent Variable: Emotional Maturity

Step	Predictors	Multiple R	R ²	R ² Change	B	F	p <
1	Agreeableness	$.38$	$.141$	$.141$	$.38$	16.02	$.001$
2	Neuroticism	$.43$	$.186$	$.046$	$-.22$	5.43	$.001$

with emotional maturity in current study (Table 1). The results can also be interpreted in other way i.e. individuals who are high on Agreeableness personality dimension are tended to be more emotionally mature and vice-versa. From regression analysis, Agreeableness comes out to be the most pertinent predictor of emotional maturity, as it entered the equations at step one (Table 2). The R value for this variable equals to .38. Results indicate that "agreeableness" accounts for 14% of variance in criterion variable (i.e. emotional maturity) among adolescents. The beta value showed that Agreeableness has a positive significant relationship with emotional maturity.

From the results it seems clear that agreeableness and neuroticism have a significant relationship with emotional maturity and these two variables significantly predict adolescent's emotional maturity. Both personality factors (agreeableness and neuroticism) jointly account for near about 19% (14.1% + 4.6% respectively) of variance in the criterion variable (i.e. emotional maturity).

Further, there is significant and positive relationship between conscientiousness and emotional maturity among adolescents (Table 1). Although conscientiousness has a positive and significant relationship with emotional maturity (Table 1) yet it does not comes out as a predictor of emotional maturity. We also find out that the correlation between extroversion & openness with emotional maturity is not significant i.e. neither the extroversion nor the openness is related to emotional maturity of adolescents (Table 1). A lot of research has been done on relation between emotional maturity and variables like health, academic achievement and mental health but a few studies have been published that emphasized the relation between personality and emotional maturity. The present study was an attempt to study the emotional maturity in relation to big five personality factors such as Neuroticism, Extrovert, Openness, Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. Research in the area of personality and emotional maturity has suggested that personality factors identified

among youths may fit within the framework provided by the five factor model of personality (Markey, Markey & Tinsley, 2004). Stephen (2002) found that the individuals who scored higher neuroticism are having a low level of emotional maturity. In Indian context, Sharma, Sharma and Yadava (2006) who found a negative association between personality factors e.g. extraversion, conscientiousness and emotional stability and dimensions of health. In the current study, there is a significant relationship between emotional maturity and personality; and two predictors (agreeableness and neuroticism) of emotional maturity come out. So from these results our both hypotheses have been accepted.

Implications

Findings from the present study are applicable to the selection of employees in the institutions where persons required being emotionally mature need to be screened for low neuroticism and high agreeableness. The present study would have long term educational as well as practical implications. It may help teachers and counselors in understanding the relation between personality and emotional maturity and also in identifying emotional immature students. The counselor can have deep insight in various areas of emotional maturity and if required, can identify the causes of emotional immaturity. The teacher can provide adequate environment in the school by focusing on early childhood education that will contribute to a stronger and more stable personality structure in the adult which may affects certain level of social and emotional maturity and can take the help of counselor to guide the parents to make the students emotionally mature so that they can achieve the maximum from their capabilities and strengths. Therefore, different ways and practices should be devised inside the classroom as well as outside the school to foster the desired environment.

Conclusion

From the above obtained results, it is very clear that there is significant correlation between emotional maturity and personality dimensions. With reference to previous studies,

the present results are similar in the manner that Neuroticism has a significant negative relation with emotional maturity. Extroversion and Openness personality dimensions don't found to have significant relation with emotional maturity while Agreeableness and Conscientiousness found to have a significant positive relation with emotional maturity. Stepwise regression analysis revealed two main predictors i.e. Agreeableness and Neuroticism (explained near about 19% of variance in emotional maturity). These two dimensions significantly predict adolescent's emotional maturity.

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