

Emotional Stability: A Study of Contributory Factors

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ABSTRACT

In this conceptual paper, an effort has been made to find out the factors responsible for emotional stability of the students who are in their late adolescence (18-21 years). Emotional stability is an important personality trait of an individual and also an essential part of mental health. Emotional stability refers to a person's ability to stay stable and balanced. In recent times the COVID-19 pandemic hits the whole world and people are going through a myriad of psychological problems. The mental health of the adolescents is affected a lot and they are unable to stay emotionally stable. The 'New Normal' added more challenges in their life in the form of online classes, less career opportunities, problems in adjusting to the current lifestyle, financial constraints and fear to virus disease (COVID-19), these challenges affected emotional stability. Based on literature review, few factors responsible for emotional stability have emerged in normal time as well as in the pandemic time. In addition, focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with behavioral scientists to validate the contributory factors. The important factors which have emerged as contributing to emotional stability are: gender, caste, family structure, age, working status of mother, socioeconomic status, emotional maturity, parent child relationship, remote online classes, fear of COVID-19, and uncertainty about future perspective of academics and career. Since the research is based on extensive review of literature, further it can be extended by collecting data through questionnaire and analyzing with the help of statistical tools. The findings will contribute towards developing a model of emotional stability for students.

Keywords: *Emotional Stability, Mental health, Adolescents, Gender, Working status of mother, Emotional Maturity, COVID-19*

Emotional stability comes under the umbrella of emotional intelligence. Emotion is "a strong reaction developed from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others." Emotions are responses to significant internal and external events. In today's turbulent environment full of challenges, it is important to maintain emotional stability for performing effectively in life. When we are showing balance and stable emotions in different circumstances of life is called emotional stability. Emotional intelligence has been defined, by Salovey and Mayer (2004), as "the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior". People with a higher level

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of Emotional Intelligence can adjust their emotions to adapt to their environment, manage them and put them to positive use. All these qualities make a person emotionally stable. According to the situations, an emotionally intelligent person can perceive and assimilate emotions of self and others which leads to better adjustment (Sharma Kanak, 2007). Young professionals who were in high category of EI and well-being were reported to be more competent, had positive attitude, better team players, more trustworthy and better in stress management as compared to their counterparts who were in low category of EI and well-being. (Gujral et al 2012)

Among seven factors of mental health emotional stability is of prime importance (Matheen, 2011). The calmness of mind and freedom from anxiety and depression are the signs of emotional stability (Hay and Ashman, 2003). According to Smitson (1974), emotional stability is the process in which the personality is constantly striving for a greater sense of emotional health, both intra-physically and intra-personally. It's been emphasized that the emotionally stable individual has the capacity to resist delay in satisfaction of needs, ability to tolerate a reasonable amount of frustration, belief in long-term planning and is capable of delaying or revising his expectations in terms of demand of the situation. An emotionally stable child incorporates a capacity to create effective adjustments with himself, members of the family, peers in the school, and also with society and culture. However, stability doesn't mean merely the capacity for such attitudes and functions, but also the ability to enjoy them fully. There are many characteristics like the capability of responding in gradation, ability to delay responses, especially negative emotions, freedom from unreasonable fears, the ability to commit mistakes without feeling disgraced etc. found in an emotionally stable individual. In today's competitive world, students work hard for quality of life, neglecting emotional pressure due to tough competition with their classmates in every sphere of life. Emotional stability can maintain one's emotional balance under stressful circumstances. It helps one to believe in his/her capabilities and to increase self-confidence, this will also create happiness and hope in one's life. So we can say that emotionally stable individuals are calm and happy, they are satisfied with their life; they deal with situations in the right way and solve their problems easily.

In recent times, one more factor COVID-19 disease which is address as a global pandemic emerged in the environment of an individual which impacted his emotional stability. The whole world is battling from CORONA virus since March 2020, after it declared the pandemic situation by WHO. The situation was worsened due to 2nd wave of the pandemic and was affecting the physical as well as mental health of people. The people are now living in 'New Normal' which includes wearing the mask, maintaining hand hygiene and physical distancing. During this time of the pandemic, although people understand the uncertainty of the situation, still embarrassing the new norms of living life. This uncertain reality creates lots of mental health issues like the fear of disease and loss of loved ones and increasing the level of stress, anxiety, depression and emotional instability related to the pandemic. At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic is also affecting the Emotional Stability of an individual.

Emotional stability is an important component of our mental health and a significant aspect of human life. In today's challenging and demanding life, many factors are contributing to our mental wellbeing so it is quite obvious that emotional stability is also affected by the number of personal and environmental factors. In the light of this, a large number of researches conducted, few factors which have emerged are gender, caste, age, family

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structure, working status of mothers, socio-economic status, emotional maturity, parent-child relationship and COVID-19 disease which affects the emotional stability.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several studies have been conducted to find out the effect of school setup on emotional stability. Pant & Joshi, (2016) conducted a study was to compare the emotional stability of visually impaired students at the secondary level of inclusive setup and special schools. Results showed that children studying in inclusive setup are more emotionally stable than the children studying in special schools. Bindu (2016) conducted a comparative study of Emotional Stability of adolescent students which was concluded that for adolescents' students of private and government schools in Gurgaon, the comparative difference between the emotional stability is negligible. Kaur (2013) conducted a comparative study of the emotional maturity of senior secondary school students and investigated the emotional maturity of adolescents of Chandigarh. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference between the students of govt. and private schools, in various areas of emotional maturity.

Several studies have been conducted on the emotional stability of an individual in context to gender and caste. Wani, et al., (2016) conducted a study to figure out emotional stability levels in students of Annamalai University, Tamil Nadu. Results revealed that the emotional stability is more in boys as compared to girls, also general category students are more emotionally stable than SC category students. Upadhayay, (2014) conducted a study on the adults (26 to 35 years) emotional instability as a trait of personality among different levels of employment status. The results indicated that female youth are less emotionally stable than male youth in general. Choubey, et al., (2017) conducted a study on emotional stability among the children of Sultanpur city and revealed that boys had extremely high emotional stability than girls. Upadhayay et.al (2003) conducted a study of emotional stability and academic achievement of boys and girls at secondary level and concluded that boys are significantly emotionally stable than girls, there is no significant difference between boys and girls in academic achievement and there is no significant relationship between emotional stability and academic achievement of the students. Hay and Ashman (2003) investigated gender differences connected with the development of adolescents' sense of general self-concept and emotional stability. Relationships with parents were important for male emotional stability, but not for females. Peer relations were more influential within the formation of adolescents' emotional stability than parental relationships. Aleem (2005) conducted a study among college youth and found that male students are more emotionally stable than female students. Khurshid (2018) conducted a study on emotional stability among college youth in reference to gender and the results showed a significant difference amongst male and female students as females are emotionally less stable as compared to males. Tarannum & Khatoon (2009) discovered that gender is a significant predictor of emotional stability, whereas Shaikh *et al.*, (2016) found no noteworthy difference between the levels of emotional stability among genders. Research conducted on Navigating COVID-19 with emotional intelligence revealed that during the present pandemic situation gender significantly impacted the emotional intelligence of faculty members of higher institutions (Baba M.M., 2020). Qureshi et al., (1998) unearthed that no significant differences were found between male and female leaders' emotional stability. In reference to caste difference, Dasgupta et. al. (2016) conducted a study to find out significant caste differences in behaviour and personality such that Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes. The result revealed that caste differences among several behavioural outcomes and personality traits impacted the overall well-being of an individual.

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Researches have also been conducted in the areas of neuroticism, emotional maturity and morality. Neuroticism describes the trait disposition to experience negative emotion and related processes; these include anxiety, depression, anger, self-consciousness, and emotional liability. On Neuroticism as measured at the Big Five trait level, women have been found to score higher than men as well as on most aspects of Neuroticism included in a common measure of the Big Five, the NEO-PI-R (Costa et al., 2001). In a research on students about emotional stability and emotional maturity significant difference was found between levels of emotional stability and emotional maturity (Zapata, 2015). Sumal et al., (1998) examined the connection between emotional stability and morality. It was observed that emotional stability was positively and significantly associated with morality. Subjects who were emotionally stable obtained higher scores on morality compared to those that were emotionally unstable. It was concluded that morality depends on emotional stability. A study conducted by Rodríguez-Ramos (2021) resulted that social desirability and global satisfaction positively associated with emotional stability and negatively connected to anxiety and depression. And also, there was no connection between anxiety, depression, and global life satisfaction.

Researches showed that the parent-child relationship is also one of the important factors which affect emotional stability Arora & Kaur (2014) found no significant relationship between protecting, loving, object reward and neglecting dimensions of the parent-child relationship and emotional stability. Jasoria et al., (2014) revealed that negligence in the parent-child relationship negatively affects the emotional stability of the child.

Several studies have been conducted to find out the impact of family structure on emotional stability. Singh, et.al (2014) conducted a study to find out the impact of family structure on the social and emotional maturity of adolescents. Results revealed that respondents from joint families were more personally, interpersonally and socially adequate and thus, socially mature than those from nuclear families. Similarly, they were significantly higher on emotional stability, emotional progression, social adjustment, personality integration and independence component of emotional maturity than those from the nuclear family. Social and emotional maturity were found to be significantly positively correlated across the type of family. Bhatia (2012) conducted a study of Family relationships in reference to the emotional intelligence of the students. The study showed the effect of family relationships on the emotional intelligence of the students. The findings revealed that healthy family relationships greatly influence the emotional intelligence of the students. Adolescents from joint families were more emotionally progressive, socially well adjusted, had adequate personalities and were independent than those from nuclear families (Rawat and Singh, 2017). Mogre and Batham (2011) investigated and found that the joint family system had a positive impact on the emotionality of girls as they were found to be stable in the joint family. A study by Sharma G. M. (2020) showed that concerning family structure (joint and nuclear) there was no significant difference found in the mean scores of personality and emotional intelligence of young adults. A recent study during the Covid-19 pandemic revealed that in managing play behaviours, sleep habits, television watching and other activities of children, joint families played more important and positive roles as compared to nuclear (Tiwari et al., 2020).

A study has been conducted to find out the impact of socioeconomic status on emotional stability. Kumar, (2013) assessed the socio-economic status and level of emotional stability of secondary school students studying in KV and public schools. The result showed that

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there was no significant difference in the emotional stability of students in relation to socio-economic status of students studying in KV and Public Schools.

The effect of the working status of the mother on emotional stability was also studied by many researchers. In two separate studies by Andrabi (1997) and Hoffman (1963), it was found that the children of working women experience more emotional adjustment problems along with issues in peer interaction. Khan (2012) conducted a study on the emotional intelligence of children of working and non-working women and found that children of non-working mothers are emotionally intelligent than children of working mothers. Hangal and Aminabhavi (2007) conducted a study on self-concept, emotional maturity and achievement motivation of the adolescent children of employed mothers and homemakers and concluded that the adolescent children of homemakers have a significantly higher self-concept. The study also uncovered that female children of employed mothers are highly achievement-oriented and children of employed mothers have high emotional maturity.

Many studies have been conducted to find out the effect of age on emotional stability. Jinalee and Singh, (2017), revealed that emotional stability isn't significantly related to age and work experience. It is something with the personal self. Being in a high position, aged or having many years of experience does not signify emotional intelligence and emotional stability. Fariselli, et.al (2006) conducted a study on age and emotional intelligence. The finding showed that emotional intelligence slightly increases with age. There is a positive significant but weak relationship between age and emotional intelligence. From this study, it can be often observed that older people are slightly more likely to be higher in emotional intelligence. The study suggests that emotional intelligence may be a developing ability and accumulated life experiences contribute to emotional intelligence. A study by Carstensen et al. (2020) revealed that even in the situation of constant stress, older adults demonstrated emotional resilience and relatively better emotional well-being.

To find out the effect of the global pandemic on emotional stability, many studies have been conducted by researchers in the year 2020-2021. One of the cross-sectional researches found that emotional stability and resilience were positively associated with each other (Kocjan et al., 2020). In a comparative study by Elmer et al. (2020) revealed that the stress, anxiety, loneliness, and depressive symptoms in students became worse, compared to measures before the crisis. COVID-19 specific worries, isolation in social networks, lack of interaction and emotional support, and physical isolation negatively affected the mental health of students. The students of lower income families have limited access to online classes due to lack of access to modern technology and digital dissimilarities as well as excessive internet cost is another reason to unable to access online-classes (Adam, Kave, & Habler, 2020). It is affecting the mental health of the students. During the pandemic due to online learning classes, students showed anxiety because parents who have low income, unable to buy essential resources for online classes and too many assignments create lots of mood swings as well as boredom (Irawan et al. 2020). Canet-Juric et al. (2020) found that in the long term, sustaining lockdown measures could have larger effect on the mental health. In a study, Rodríguez-Hidalgo (2020) revealed that women were found to be more fearful due to COVID-19 than men. Further the study also found that fear, stress and anxiety play an important role in the development of the symptoms of depression. In a different study Kausar et al. (2021) found the significant positive relationship between fear of COVID-19, stress, depression and anxiety. The fear of COVID-19, stress, anxiety and depression were high in women and younger adults (Huang and Zhao, 2020; Sandín et al., 2020). A study conducted on the students of New Jersey reported that high level of distress was associated

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with a number of academic difficulties and loss of employment and level of anxiety was high in those who spent more than an hour to looking the information on COVID-19 Kecojevic et al. (2020). A research study conducted by Bolger & Schilling (2020) showed that emotional stability and reaction towards stressful events were interrelated, people with less emotional stability react more strongly towards stressful events as compared to people with more emotional stability. A study by Hayes & Joseph (2003) explained the reason for this strong reaction is because, in emotionally stable individuals, the ability to control their emotions and cope with stressful situations in life is better than a less emotionally stable individual. The studies showed that during the COVID-19 pandemic, emotional stability was negatively related to the perceived threat, CORONA phobia, stress, depressive symptoms and anxiety (Lee & Crunk, 2020; Liu et al., 2020; Nikčević et al., 2020; Pradhan et al., 2020). Moreover, a comprehensive sampling study which includes 1,609 participants found that the people with less emotional stability paid more attention to information related to the COVID-19 pandemic, because of this they worried more about the consequences of the pandemic, and experienced more negative affect during the pandemic (Kroencke et al., 2020).

More emotionally stable people rely on coping strategies which do not involve other people such as problem-focused self-sufficient or emotion-focused coping strategies which help them to react with less perceived stressfulness to the pandemic (Carver, 1997; Zacher & Rudolph, 2021). A cross-sectional survey study found that lower emotional stability and higher extraversion were related to higher perceived stress during the pandemic (Liu et al., 2020). Moreover, the study found that higher perceived threat and lower feelings of efficacy intervened the relationship between emotional stability and perceived stress. A study conducted by Zacher & Rudolph (2021) during the initial period of the COVID-19 on the German population revealed that higher extraversion experienced an increased level of perceived stressfulness during the early stages (March'20- June'20) of the pandemic and in later stages (July'20- Sep'20) of the pandemic, there were overall declines in perceived stressfulness. The study found that although there were declines in the stressfulness of the COVID-19 pandemic, these changes were dependent upon individual differences in extraversion. People with Emotional stability experienced lower levels of perceived stressfulness.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main purpose of the study was to find out the various contributory factors which affect emotional stability. The factors have been zeroed down with the help of a review of the literature and informal discussion conducted with the experts in the field.

From the review, it is clear that gender is one of the biggest contributory factors in emotional stability. Most of the studies concluded that males are more emotionally stable than females. It is also perceived by investigators that females have more dominant negative emotions it makes them more anxious so they appeared less emotionally stable than males. Family structure (joint/ nuclear family) is also an important factor that affects the emotional stability of a child. Studies in this area revealed that children from joint families had adequate personalities, were emotionally progressive and socially well-adjusted also were independent than those from nuclear families. Children from joint families have too many people in their environment who all are living together and shared their responsibilities. When the children face challenges in life, with the help of family members they can easily overcome these challenges. On the other hand, the children of the nuclear family have fewer family members so they get fewer opportunities to share their views and also get less

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support from the adult family members. The reason could also be that in the joint family system, there are more members in a family wherein there are more chances of disclosure of pent up emotions and more adults are advising young ones during their stressful period whereas such intimacy is not found in the nuclear family, where the number of family members is very less. The third factor which affects the emotional stability of children is the working status of the mother. In comparison with the children of working mothers, the children of non-working mothers are more emotionally intelligent (Khan 2012). One of the studies also showed that the children of homemakers have significantly higher self-concept and children of employed mothers have high emotional maturity. The same study also revealed that female children of employed mothers are highly achievement-oriented (Hangal and Aminabhavi 2007). Based on a focus group discussion with behavioral scientists, concluded that the children of non-working mothers seemed to be friendly, sociable, helpful, and skillful in dealing with people around them. On the other hand, the children of working mothers are more responsible and independent so their emotional maturity level is high, they have a clear goal in life and have a more confident approach to achieve that goal. Emotional maturity and age are also the factors that influence the emotional stability of children. With age people are slightly more likely to be higher in emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is a developing ability and also accumulated life experiences contribute to emotional intelligence as well (Fariselli et al 2006). Neuroticism related to negative emotions also affects the emotional stability of people. If the person is emotionally unstable then there are chances that he/she can be prone to anxiety and stress.

In recent times the global pandemic emerges as an important factor and creates a situation that affects the emotional stability of the people around the world. The pandemic affects the life of every individual, forced to stay at home creates lots of frustration and anger issues. For young adults, who are continuing with their education it is more difficult for them due to increased screen time and missing on the physical experience of attending classes, peer group and campus life. They are facing many interpersonal issues with the family members also due to staying at home the whole day. Being a counselling psychologist of a renowned private higher institution author observed many behavior issues in the students of a different age group during the pandemic time. The level of frustration, anxiety, stress, depression and anger are high in the students due to the compulsion of staying home and not being able to meet with friends. All these reasons negatively impacted the emotional stability of young adults and they are facing many psychological issues. The number of counselling sessions increased and more psychological issues were discussed during these sessions. The emerged issues were: unable to maintain a daily routine, frustration, fear to lose the loved ones, share a depraved relationship with parents, stress due to uncertain situations, career-related stress, limited career opportunities, stress due to online classes, absence of human touch, lack of empathy, anger for unable to change the situation, communication gap between family members and friends, unable to express emotions, and unable to meet their loved ones due to fear of the CORONA virus. In the group sessions, the counselling psychologist suggested various coping strategies to overcome the situation like deep breathing, mediation, mindfulness mediation, yoga, walking, listening to music, avoidance, positive self-talk, practicing self-compassion, gratitude journal, acceptance of the situations etc. In this pandemic time, mental health experts are trying to support people to become emotionally stable so they can sail through the situation and live happy life. As the 'Normal' become the 'New Normal' for everyone with social & physical distancing, wearing the mask and maintaining hand hygiene the emotional connect has been lost in this difficult time. All the students who were CORONA positive, also revealed in the sessions that the second wave of the virus impacted mental health negatively and they faced lots of stress, depression and

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phobia. The level of stress increased when students observed that although the pandemic situation is not over yet and the level of risk is high then also people are starting to visit the tourist places to invite trouble for the whole country in the form of 3rd wave of COVID-19. They are unable to understand the risk involved which may impact communities. The situation may affect the mental health and erode the emotional stability of an individual due to home isolation and quarantine. According to the researchers, psychological reactions of home isolation and quarantine related to COVID-19 infection has been the most important key factors for affecting emotional stability (Serafini et al., 2020)

Earlier research shows that, some of the other factors like socioeconomic status, parent-child relationship and school setup (Kumar, 2013, Arora & Kaur, 2014, Bindu, 2016, Kaur, 2014) were found to be not significantly related to emotional stability. Although based on a focus group discussion with behavioral scientists, it is observed that socioeconomic status and parent-child relationship both can affect the emotional stability of a child. If the research is conducted on a large population with these factors, the result could show that both factors significantly affect the emotional stability of a child. Focus group discussion was conducted with the experts in the field of psychology and behavioral science. Most of the factors that emerged out of the discussion have already been mentioned in the literature review. Apart from these, few other factors like authoritative parenting style, physical illness, separation of parents, domestic and family violence and relationships also affect the emotional stability of an individual.

The present research is based on the review of literature and viewpoint of the experts in the area, further, the study can be extended to see the effect of the factors discussed with behavioral scientists, by collecting data through questionnaires and statistical analysis by SPSS. The finding will contribute towards developing a model of emotional stability for students which will help to understand more the psyche of young adults and further empowering them for personal and professional effectiveness.

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Conflict of Interest

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