

Childhood Trauma, Emotional Maturity and Life Satisfaction among College Students

Ms. Mahima Singh^{1*}, Prof. (Dr.) Roopali Sharma²

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the challenging connection between emotional maturity, life satisfaction and childhood trauma in young adults. From neglecting abuse, childhood trauma can have a profound effect on an individual's emotional growth, and general well-being. Understanding how these factors can interact and impact one another is made possible by the distinct environment provided by the transitional phase of a college. First, the overview outlines the many types of childhood trauma and how they affect emotional control, and interpersonal connections in the long run. The idea of emotional maturity, which includes emotional control, empathy, and resilience is then discussed, along with how it protects against the negative impacts of trauma. Additionally, the research looks into how college plays a role in students' development as they go through a critical phase of emotional growth and identity building. This study delves into the complex links between childhood trauma, emotional maturity, and life satisfaction in 70 male and female college students. Age between 18-25 years. Using well-established measures such as Bernstein and Fink's Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), Singh and Bhargava's Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS), and Diener et al.'s Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), the study aims to determine how childhood trauma influences emotional maturity and life satisfaction within this specific cohort.

Keywords: *Childhood Trauma, Emotional Maturity, Life Satisfaction, College Students*

Childhood trauma can significantly impact emotional maturity and life satisfaction among college students. Experiences of trauma during formative years can affect one's ability to regulate emotions, navigate relationships, and cope with stressors effectively. Consequently, individuals may struggle with feelings of insecurity, anxiety, or depression, which can hinder their overall sense of well-being and satisfaction with life. In the college setting, where students are often faced with academic pressures and social challenges, the effects of childhood trauma can be particularly pronounced. However, it's essential to recognize that resilience and support systems play crucial roles in mitigating these impacts. Through therapy, self-care practices, and building strong connections with others, individuals can work towards healing from childhood trauma and cultivating greater emotional maturity and life satisfaction.

¹M.A Counselling Psychology Student, Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

²Professor, Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Amity University Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

*Corresponding Author

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CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Millions of people worldwide are impacted by the pervasive, and sneaky phenomena of childhood trauma which can have a lasting effect on their life. Experiences of the extreme stress or misfortune that arise in a child's early years are referred to as trauma. It involves many different things, such as seeing domestic violence, being abused physically or sexually, being neglected, experiencing natural disasters, and losing a parent or caregiver too soon. These incidents have the potential to inflict serious injuries on a developing person's mind, leaving lasting wounds that reverberate for the rest of their life. Studies on the prevalence of the childhood trauma in communities worldwide have shown this to be real. Almost two-thirds of young adults surveyed stated at least one adverse childhood experience, with one in six reporting four or more ACEs, according to the ground-breaking Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study done by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Kaiser Permanente. These results demonstrate how common childhood trauma can be and the terrible effects it has on individuals, families, and society.

EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Referred to as emotional intelligence or emotional competence, emotional maturity involves a host of skills and attributes that enable people to move through emotions, relationships, and challenges with resilience, flexibility, and wisdom. Though there is no universally agreed upon definition for emotional maturity, it is often identified by the capacity to recognize, understand and manage one's own emotions; along with this comes empathizing with others' feelings as well as communicating effectively while making responsible decisions. The essence of emotional maturity lies in deeply knowing oneself — including all emotions, thoughts, experiences — without being consumed or controlled by them. This self-awareness helps identify what we are feeling accurately by putting words on it; what makes us feel this way and how best can we handle these feelings towards achieving our desired ends? Additionally, emotional maturity requires the regulation or modulation of different kinds of emotive responses like anger, fear (anxiety) or even sadness which should be channeled positively instead of reacting on impulse defensively.

LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction, also known as subjective well-being or happiness, is the overall judgment and evaluation of individuals of the quality of their lives compared to the individuals' own standards, values, and aspirations. It reflects judgments by people about the quality of their lives as a whole and includes various aspects such as work, relationships, health, leisure, and personal achievement. Life satisfaction is the subjective perception of one's quality of life, which includes both positive experiences and feelings of satisfaction and negative experiences and feelings of discontent or distress.

Relation Between Childhood Trauma, Emotional Maturity and life Satisfaction:

The relation between childhood trauma, emotional maturity, and life satisfaction is complex and multifaceted, with each of these three constructs influencing and interacting with the other in various ways. Let's look into how these three constructs interact with each other:

The Effects of Childhood Trauma on Emotional Maturity

Childhood trauma can disjunctively the development of emotional maturity due to its impairment of individuals' ability to effectively regulate and manage their emotions. Traumatized individuals may have difficulties in recognizing, understanding, and expressing their emotions, which consequently leads to emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, and mood instability. Further, childhood trauma may undermine individuals' sense of self-worth,

identity, and autonomy, which may consequently impair their emotional development and interpersonal relationships. Trauma-related symptoms, such as hypervigilance, dissociation, and avoidance, may interfere with individuals' ability to establish secure attachments and to trust other people, which are integral components of emotional maturity. Individuals who have experienced childhood trauma may tend to use unhealthy coping mechanisms such as substance abuse, self-harm, and avoidance, which may further hinder their emotional development and resilience.

The Effects of Childhood Trauma on Life Satisfaction

Childhood trauma can have deep and long-lasting consequences for individuals' life satisfaction due to the fact that it weakens overall well-being and quality of life. Traumatized individuals may experience a lower level of life satisfaction due to psychological and emotional distress related to their traumatic experiences. Many studies have indicated the association between childhood trauma and a lower level of subjective well-being, happiness, and life satisfaction throughout the entire lifespan. Trauma-related symptoms such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, and difficulties in forming and maintaining relationships may be responsible for feelings of dissatisfaction, hopelessness, and despair. Moreover, childhood trauma may be related to various life domains including work, relationships, health, and personal fulfillment, consequently, further decreasing individuals' life satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A Sample is essential for both research and interpreting the findings. For this study a sample of total 140 college students was undertaken with the age range of 18-25 years. Further divided into 70 males and 70 females. Sample was collected from Delhi/NCR. Convenient sampling was used to choose the sample. The introduction and a brief explanation were given to the participants.

Instruments

Three measures were used in this study,

- **Childhood Trauma Assessment:** The Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ), developed by Bernstein et al. in 1994, is a widely used tool designed to assess the extent and impact of various types of childhood trauma experienced by individuals. The CTQ consists of 28 items that inquire about different forms of trauma, including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as physical and emotional neglect. Respondents rate the frequency of each experience on a Likert scale, providing researchers and clinicians with a comprehensive understanding of the nature and severity of childhood trauma endured by participants. The CTQ has been extensively validated and has demonstrated reliability in measuring the prevalence of childhood trauma across diverse populations, making it a valuable instrument in both research and clinical settings.
- **Measure of Emotional Maturity:** The Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS), developed by Singh and Bhargava in 1991, is a self-report measure designed to assess an individual's emotional maturity across various domains. Comprising 48 items, the EMS explores aspects such as emotional stability, empathy, self-awareness, and interpersonal relationships. Respondents rate the extent to which each statement describes them on a Likert scale. The EMS provides insights into an individual's ability to understand and regulate their emotions, communicate effectively, and navigate social interactions. Its comprehensive nature allows researchers and

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practitioners to evaluate emotional maturity comprehensively, aiding in the development of targeted interventions to enhance emotional well-being and interpersonal skills.

- **Life Satisfaction Measure:** The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), developed by Diener et al. in 1985, is a brief and widely used instrument designed to assess global life satisfaction. Consisting of just five items, the SWLS captures individuals' overall appraisal of their lives and subjective well-being. Respondents indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each statement about their life satisfaction on a seven-point Likert scale. The SWLS provides a simple yet reliable measure of life satisfaction, offering valuable insights into an individual's overall sense of fulfillment and happiness. Its brevity and ease of administration make it particularly suitable for large-scale surveys and research studies investigating subjective well-being across diverse populations.

Procedure

The main idea of the research was to see the influence of Childhood trauma on emotional maturity and life satisfaction among college students. The data was collected using questionnaires that were distributed to adults who were of 18 – 25 years of age range. The participants in the research were chosen using a convenient sampling method. Data was collected through childhood trauma Questionnaire, Life satisfaction measure and Emotional Maturity Scale standardized for Indian population. The adults received all the details regarding the questionnaire forms, and any questions were answered beforehand. Once all the data had been collected, it was imported onto an Excel sheet and scored in accordance with the guidelines. The scores were then subjected to an examination of the findings using SPSS.

RESULTS

Table-1: Correlation Between Childhood Trauma and Emotional Maturity Among College Students

Variables	N	(r)	p
Childhood Trauma	140	-0.40	Sig***
Emotional Maturity	140		

Table 1 This table presents findings on the relationship between childhood trauma and emotional maturity among 140 college students. A correlation coefficient of (-0.40) indicates a negative relationship between these two variables. In simpler terms, it suggests that as childhood trauma increases, emotional maturity tends to decrease among college students. This negative correlation implies that experiencing more childhood trauma is associated with lower levels of emotional maturity. This suggests that childhood trauma can have a significant impact on people's emotional development and maturity as they enter college.

Table-2: Correlation Between Childhood Trauma and Life Satisfaction Among College Students

Variables	N	(r)	P
Childhood Trauma	140	-0.30	Sig***
Life Satisfaction	140		

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Table 2 examines the relationship between Childhood Trauma and Life Satisfaction on sample of 140 college students. The correlation coefficient (-0.30). This shows that college students who have experienced more childhood trauma have lower levels of life satisfaction. The negative association suggests that people who have experienced more childhood trauma report lower levels of life satisfaction, emphasizing the potential impact of early unpleasant experiences on overall well-being during college the correlation is statistically significant on both.

Table-3: Correlation Between Emotional Maturity and Life Satisfaction Among College Students

Variable	N	(r)	P
Emotional Maturity	140	0.50	Sig***
Life Satisfaction	140		

Table 3 emotional maturity and life satisfaction among 140 college students. A correlation coefficient (+0.50) This shows that college students who are more emotionally mature have higher levels of life satisfaction. The positive association means that people with higher levels of emotional maturity are more satisfied with their lives. These findings highlight the importance of emotional maturity in predicting life satisfaction among college students. The findings suggest that emotional maturity have a significant impact on life satisfaction among college students.

Table-4: Mean, Standard Deviation and t Value for Childhood Trauma Among Male and Female College Students.

Groups	N	M	S. D	t	p
Male	70	30.75	13.11	1.54	Insig
Female	70	31.77	14.37		

Table 4 childhood trauma among male and female college students. The mean represents the average childhood trauma score for male and female students, the table compares childhood trauma levels between male and female college students, with mean male scores of 30.75 (SD = 13.11) and female scores of 31.77 (SD = 14.37), the t-value of 1.54 and the indicate that this difference is not statistically significant. As a result, the data suggest that childhood trauma among male and female college students was found to be insignificant.

Table-5: Mean, Standard deviation and t Value for Emotional Maturity among College Students.

Groups	N	M	S. D	t	p
Male	70	33.77	15.44	1.76	Insig
Female	70	34.89	16.57		

Table 5 shows a detailed statistical analysis of emotional development among male and female college students. The table compares the mean childhood trauma scores, standard deviations for male and female college students. Male students have an average childhood trauma score of 33.77 (SD = 15.44), whereas female students have a slightly higher mean of 34.89 (SD = 16.57). However, the t-value of 1.76 the difference is not statistically significant. These data indicate that, there is no significant difference in childhood trauma between male and female college students.

Table-6: Mean, Standard Deviation and t Value for Life Satisfaction Among Male and Female College Students

Groups	N	M	S. D	t	p
Male	70	38.66	16.33	2.35	Sig****
Female	70	36.87	15.47		

Table 6 This table compares the mean levels of childhood trauma between male and female groups, each comprising 70 individuals. The findings reveal that male college students have a slightly higher mean childhood trauma score of 38.66 compared to females, who have a mean score of 36.87. The t-value of 2.35 indicates that this difference is statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

Childhood Trauma, Emotional Maturity, and Life Satisfaction among College Students. The current study seeks to understand the complex connection between childhood trauma, emotional maturity, and life satisfaction among college students. To achieve gender balance and representation, the study recruited a carefully selected sample of 140 people, including 70 males and 70 females. The participants ranged in age from 18 to 25 years old, representing a vital developmental era in which childhood experiences can significantly impact emotional well-being and life perspectives. To extensively analyze these constructs, the study used well-established measuring techniques. Bernstein and Fink (1998) developed the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) to assess several types of childhood trauma, such as emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, as well as emotional and physical neglect. Salovey and Mayer (1990) established the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS), which was used to assess participants' emotional control, empathy, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving ability. Diener et al. (1985) also developed the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), which was used to assess participants' overall life satisfaction across multiple categories. Mean, standard deviation, t-scores, and correlation coefficients were used.

The current study found Childhood trauma has a negative correlation with emotional maturity among college students. Childhood trauma is negatively correlated with life satisfaction among college students. Correlation coefficient indicates a positive relationship between emotional maturity and life satisfaction among college students. Childhood trauma among male and female college students was found to be insignificant No significant difference on the level of emotional maturity was found among male and female. Significant difference was found among males and females on the level of life satisfaction.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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