

## The Humanist in Making

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### ABSTRACT

The Humanist in making is a demonstration of an explorative, and an interactive sessions based in-depth study which aims at capturing the human vulnerabilities of the child, during the process of their social emotional learning. The study adopts the method of qualitative research based on case studies for the purpose of in-depth explanation and understanding, the significance of capturing the vulnerabilities of the children, also the ways of capturing their perspectives in early developmental years. There are adequate reflections in existing literature on early developmental years being the most crucial for children for diverse reasons. But the literature gap prevails in terms of accessibility of the practices which help us capture the vulnerable voices of children, limiting the potential of their unconditioned mind, and its role in assimilating and accommodating schemas and constructs related to well-being, during early years of development. In the way that the environment has a significant impact on the course of their life ahead, the methods to capture the vulnerabilities of children impacting their overall well-being, and its related practices must also be studied. Research indicates that well-being as a behavior is largely governed by observational learning, opportunities for self-expression, and psycho-emotional management for the learner at an early stage of his/her life. However, with decreased opportunities for self-expression, there is a high probability of their overall wellbeing to be impacted. The consequences of maladaptive practices adopted by parents, with context to self-care, self-regulation, and not addressing the prominent issues impacting one's well-being, also cannot be ignored for its deep rooted cognitive and behavioral implications among children. But facilitating positive adaptation, through capturing children's voices, and perspectives in time, teaching them to embrace their failures, and developing resilience simply by voicing out, how they feel, ensures the consciousness towards their own well-being, and develops their independence in maintaining their sense of well-being in the presence of adversities they encounter. Finally, through its research product, this study focuses on strategies which can be used to ensure well-being is a part of the planning and reflection process of the children.

**Keywords:** *Well-Being, Development, Conditioning, Maladaptive*

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *The significance of early identification of psycho-emotional concerns during early developmental years*

Early development years have been given much significance in establishing the overall development of an individual. These early years mark the pattern of development in all areas

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of a child's life. Research has shown that children will carry footprints of their experiences and learning throughout their life span development. In the same view, early detection of psycho-emotional conflicts or signs of a deteriorating mental health becomes vital. However, various standardized assessments for early detection of behavioral and clinical concerns are available, but literature gap prevails in terms of early identification of psychological, and psycho-emotional conflicts through natural methods.

### ***Reflections from literature gap***

There are accounts of studies which have emphasized on the relevance of the application of natural methods for screening psycho-emotional concerns for early developmental years. Therapies such as Integrative art therapy, Integrated Animal assisted, and plant assisted ecotherapies, have been beneficial in the treatment of psycho-somatic symptoms, and speech and language related concerns. But there is need to expand our knowledge in natural methods for early identification of red flags to eradicate variables affecting the child's overall wellbeing, at an early stage.

Present literature review indicates that, there is availability of screening tools but the domain of natural and general ways to identify psycho-emotional concerns accessible to all educators in a classroom, is another area which must be given more emphasizes.

Other studies have adopted a liner approach of screening children with or without behavioral problems without exploring other prominent areas which may result in intrapsychic conflicts during early development years. These studies have also emphasized examining possible relationships between mental health and different environmental factors, and personal protective risk factors.

### ***An attempt to look beyond clinical classification***

Existing literature has indicated that there are concerns related to Growth hormone deficiency as these children have more internalizing problems, and lower self-esteem. On the other hand, DSM 5, and ICD-11 make clinical classification of behavioral and emotional disorders much easier for mental health care professionals, but early identification is a process, which must involve educators at a general level too. For the same reason, there is a requirement to be receptive to natural methods, not limited to healing but also for early identification.

### ***Interrelationship between Psycho-somatic symptoms and Psycho-emotional concerns during early developmental years***

Several studies have emphasized that often psycho-somatic symptoms are associated with psycho-emotional concerns, and through natural methods of observation and identification, the screening of these concerns have a greater probability of early detection of psycho-emotional concerns.

### ***The significance of the 'Natural Instinct' of the child***

Research has shown that understanding of the natural inclinations of the child has answered various questions with context to their preferences, ideas, thoughts, behaviors, and motives. Play way is the most common method to elicit natural responses among early learners, also their conflicts through play-based methods.

### ***Moving forward; way of research ahead***

Moving forward, in the coming times, literature must move forward from the accessibility of standardized tools to function parallel with natural identification methods, which are

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accessible, not simply to mental health care professionals, but to a larger teacher-parent community to join hands in the process of early identification of psycho-emotional concerns. Considering that, educators in classrooms are primary receptors of a child's responses, and will always have firsthand access to their vulnerabilities, it is essential to equip the teaching community with methods which are natural in screening of psycho-emotional concerns.

### PROBLEM FORMULATION

This is a qualitative study based on inductive reasoning inspired by natural therapeutic approaches to identify psycho-emotional concerns during early development years. Evidences from research data, intensive observations reflected the relevance of applying natural screening methods to explore psycho-emotional concerns during early childhood.

In addition, considering that, the applicability of natural methods adopted for early identification should be given more significance for all educators, this study aims to bring into light, general screening methods for early identification, which may be used across classrooms. Objectives of the research work are focused to bring into light the relevance of early identification and advocacy. Furthermore, this research aims to engage its participants through experiential learning with context to natural methods used for identification during this study. Finally, the study acknowledges the role of primary care givers, their wellbeing practices, and their role in ensuring the wellbeing of children during their early developmental years.

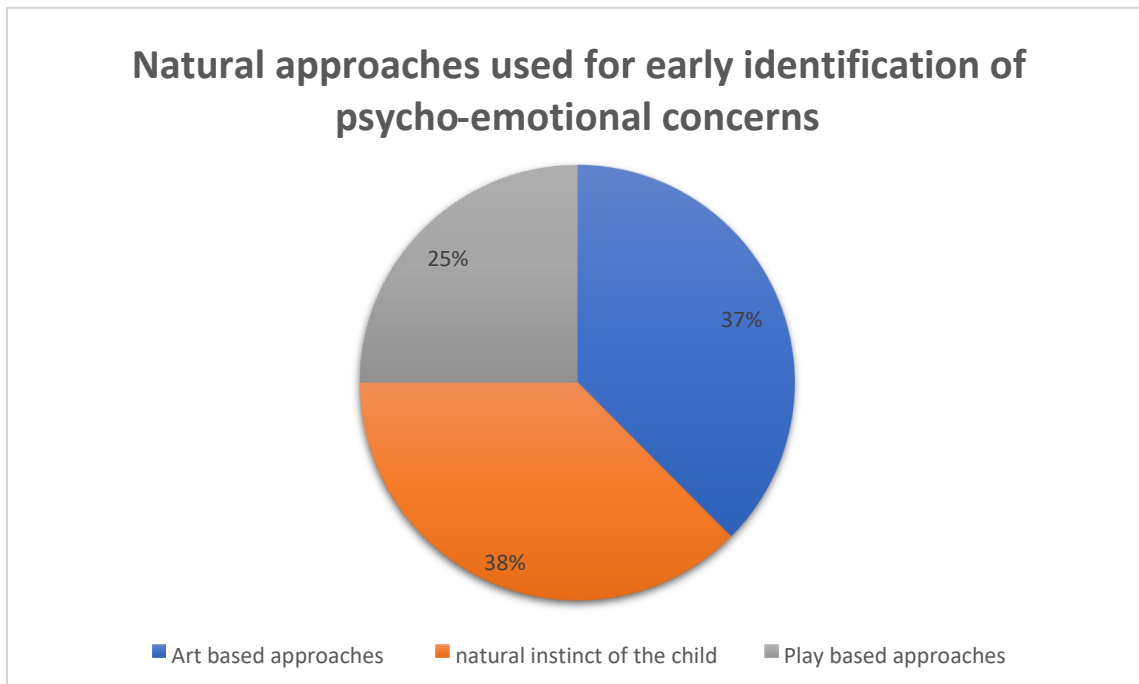
### OBJECTIVES

1. To advocate for the significance of capturing children's voices and their vulnerabilities at an early stage.
2. To explore the role of natural therapies in screening of those symptoms affecting the children's overall well-being based on the findings of the case studies.
3. To engage participants in experiential learning to provide them with a glimpse of the early detection of symptoms among children in the phase of early developmental years.
4. To advocate and explore the prominent role of healthy well-being practices among primary care givers, keeping in mind their impact on children and their overall wellbeing.

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts the method of qualitative research based on case studies for the purpose of in-depth explanation and understanding. The sample size of the study is 12 comprehensive case studies across primary school. Case studies were developed using intensive observations across settings, psychological interpretations of art-based samples, interactions, feedback, play based observations, and primary data collection.

## INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS



*Figure 1 Approaches used for early identification of psycho-emotional concerns during early developmental years.*

Data analysis indicates that, three prominent natural identification approaches for early detection of psycho-emotional concerns were applied during the research process. They are as follows-

**1. Art based approaches-** the art-based approaches were based on data elicited through artwork. These engagements during the process of research focused on exploring, thoughts, emotions, motives, and other psychological attributes related to the child. Art provided the children with a free space to express themselves. The nature of the session enabled conversations, which helped in the understanding of their current cognitions and perceptions about specific concerns, which were significant for them.

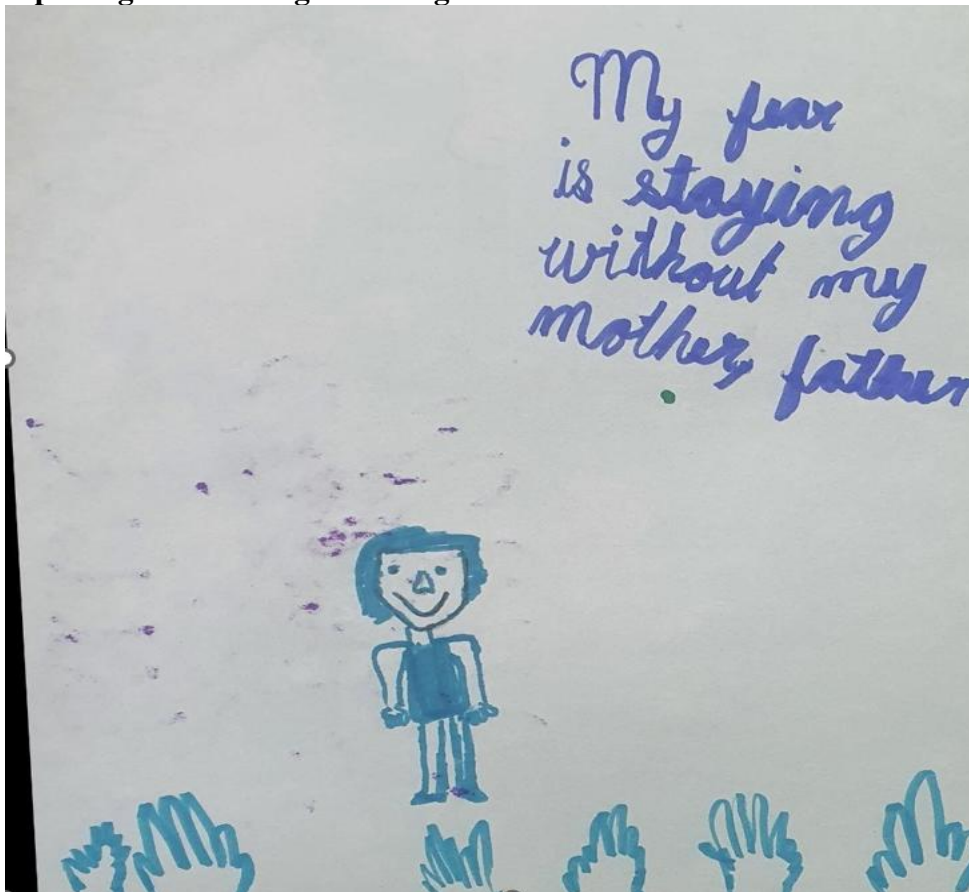


**Figure 2 Art based approaches used for early identification of psycho-emotional concerns**



*Figure 3 exploring cognitions through strokes.*

**Exploring fears through drawings**



*Figure 4 exploring anxiety and aggression; art-based approaches.*



*Figure 5 Exploring creations, and style of thinking.*

***Role of Instrumental Music during sessions, and its relationship with Neurological linguistic Programming***

These sessions were often paired with instrumental music acknowledging the significance of music in healing practices. Lyrical music was avoided to ensure that there is no direction of the brain towards the lyrics of the song, based on the principles of neurological linguistic programming.

**2. The study of natural responses of the child-** instinct of the child during his/her engagements related to art, play, interactions, choices, interests, and decisions during this study. Natural instincts of the child, which were also exhibited through their natural responses, without manipulation of environmental or psychological variables. This naturalistic approach to explore emotions, cognitions, and conflicts played a vital role in the identification of psycho-emotional concerns during research process. Instincts related to color choices, intensity of strokes exhibited through colors, energy flow during an engagement, variations in artwork, actions, choices, conversations, body language, reflexes, omissions, are a few examples of exploring the nature of the instincts of the child. This natural approach ensured authenticity in data which was later transcribed, and coded into different themes to explore, the nature of psycho-emotional concerns students are facing.

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**3. Play based approaches-**the nature of play based approaches and natural instincts observed a similar nature. Both methods ensured that there was no manipulation of the environmental and psychological variables related to the child. These methods were prominently based on naturalistic observation in naturalistic environment. Outdoor environment, school infrastructure, availability of various toys, manipulatives, objects present in the natural environment, a space to explore, and indulge in play was crucial in exploring emotions, cognitions, and aspects of well-being related with the child. In some cases, play facilitated communication, and language, which were not visible during other engagements which children participated in.



*Figure 6 Inviting my friends to dinner; identifying nature of social interactions through play way.*

These approaches used for early identification later elicited various psych-emotional, language related, behavioral, and cognitive concerns, which facilitated early.



*Figure 7 A fallen friend; understanding peer relationships through play way.*

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Identification. The nature of concerns which were identified through play, instinct, and art during this study are as follows-

1. **Aspects of Reciprocal communication not otherwise identified-** data analysis suggests evidences of reciprocal communication of the child by limited vocabulary, and adequate non-verbal cues for communication during play, which was not exhibited in other settings during engagements. This theme has been reflected 4 times in this study, which is the highest rate of occurrence, based on a comparative analysis with other elicited themes.
2. **Aspects of self-image, and self-identity-**children reflected, who they are across all engagements during this study. Preferences of engagements were largely based on their own personality characteristics. Natural approaches facilitated themes of selfidentity and self-image to emerge across all case studies based on research findings.
3. **Psycho-emotional themes-** related with fears, trauma, avoidance, and escape responses, conflicts, nightmares, tearfulness, fixations, etc.
4. **Psycho-social themes-** peer relationships, and preferences in social relationships, aspects of social interactions, such as leadership qualities elicited through natural methods during this study.
5. **Psycho-somatic symptoms-** research evidence from this study indicates towards data records of psycho-somatic symptoms, such as frequent stomach aches, specific pains, muscle tension, frequent micturition, and consistent physical complains reported by children, in the absence of a medical condition.
6. **Cognitive themes-** the thought process of the child was easily identified, through their creations, original work samples, energy levels, stroke intensity. In addition, variations in the artwork provided evidence of the changes in cognition over a period. color preferences, quotes etc. indicated towards the perceptual understanding of the child, which has significantly contributed to developing a future course of intervention for the children.
7. **Contextual Intelligence** – findings from a case suggested that a student was able to understand manipulation of objects preferred in his playing space and was able to apply knowledge to modify his route while driving his play, moving away from any obstacles. The response indicated the presence of contextual intelligence, where the child was able to demonstrate learning, and application of it, to adapt to his environment. This case observed various limitations such as delay of milestones of language development, which resulted in a disintegrated perspective on the child's overall abilities. But complicated aspects of his intelligence exhibited, when the child was provided with a natural environment, to explore himself through play approach.
8. **Coping mechanism-** in several cases variations in artwork, changes in quotes, colors, representations, tone and pitch of voice, facial gestures, aspects of both verbal, and non-verbal communication, play way, reflexes, behavioral responses, and changes in cognition during therapeutic practice during screening, contributed towards the understanding of coping mechanisms of the child.

*Table 1 Data Analysis; themes elicited during research process.*

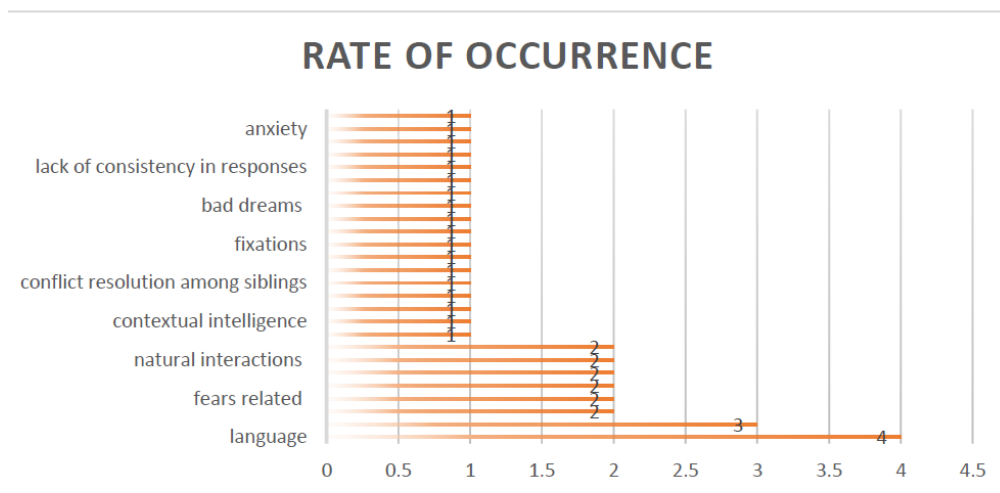
Themes elicited form Case Studies	Rate of occurrence
Language	4
negative automatic thoughts /cognitions	3
identification of preferences through play	2
fears related	2

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Themes elicited form Case Studies	Rate of occurrence
cognitive states	2
Coping	2
natural interactions	2
traumas and conflicts	2
reciprocity during engagements related with play	1
contextual intelligence	1
identification of leadership qualities	1
conflict resolution among siblings	1
increase in attention span	1
improved psycho-emotional state during settling	1
Fixations	1
energy flow	1
behavioral concerns	1
bad dreams	1
Tearfulness	1
Patterns	1
lack of consistency in responses	1
interpersonal relationships	1
state of self-expression	1
Anxiety	1
psycho-somatic symptoms	1

The table above illustrates the analysis of 12 cases, and the level of consistency of themes elicited across the research process.

**Table 2 Overview of consistency in themes**



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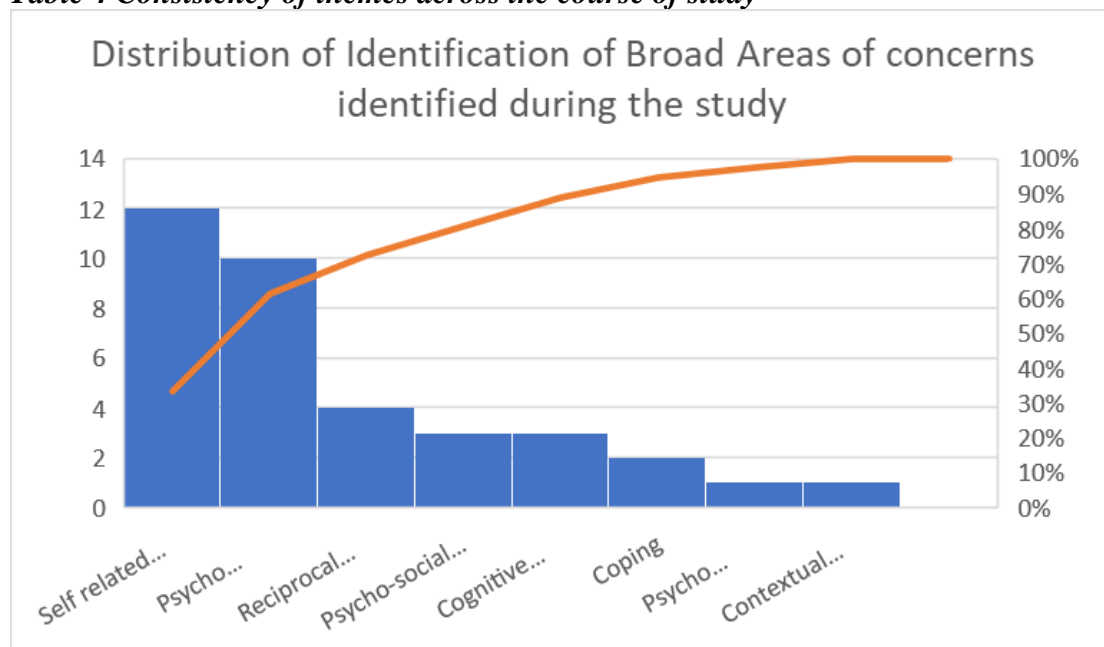
Interpretation of broad classification of psychological attributes elicited through **natural approaches during early developmental years.**

Later the data was classified into a broad domain of classification of identification. Based on tally analysis, it was found that identification of aspects related with self-image, and identity observed a rate of 100 % in the identification and screening process, during this study. The results imply that, natural methods of early identification applied during the study facilitated the screening of not only psycho-emotional concerns of the children, but also other related psychological attributes, such as reciprocal communication, psychosocial aspects, experience of psycho-somatic symptoms, cognitive aspects, contextual intelligence, and coping abilities of children during early development years. Table 3 illustrates the nature of concerns, and their consistency in emergence, identified through play way, art based, and observations of instincts of the children.

**Table 3 Broad areas of classification of domains related with identified concerns.**

Nature of concerns which were identified through Play, Instinct, and Art during this study	Tally
Reciprocal communication	4
Self related aspects	12
Psycho-emotional concerns	10
Psycho-social aspects	3
Psycho-somatic symptoms	1
Cognitive aspects	3
Contextual intelligence	1
Coping	2

**Table 4 Consistency of themes across the course of study**



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Table 4 depicts consistency maintained by domains of identification during the study. Domains related to self-concept, and psycho-emotional concerns observed highest probability of identification based on the results of the study, when natural methods of identification of psycho-emotional concerns were applied.

### DISCUSSION

Early developmental phase is a crucial stage in the life span of an individual. During this phase, reflexes, and responses of children towards their natural world and surroundings are largely governed by their genetic inheritance, observational learning, experiential learning, and contextual intelligence.

Research has also shown that wellbeing practices of primary care givers are inherited by children at an early age. Knowing that, this age is largely marked by observational learning, and modelling of responses of the primary care givers, it is vital that primary care givers set healthy examples of well-being practices, for their children, at an early stage.

Literature has recorded positive effects of natural therapies in healing practices, but there are very few accounts of natural methods, and their application during early identification of psycho-emotional concerns for children during their early developmental years.

Finally, research evidence from this study has shown that, not just are natural methods, such as, art, play, and the exploration of instincts of the child are effective methods to identify psycho-emotional concerns, but these approaches may elicit other forms of concerns related with overall development.

### CONCLUSION AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE WORK

The wellbeing of children is a global concern today. The role of early years of development in ensuring wellbeing of children in their later years of life span, also cannot be overlooked. Parents, and teachers, are always the primary witness to their vulnerabilities. Home room teachers being the primary observer of the child's psychological concerns, must also be empowered to identify psycho-emotional concerns, or any prevailing red flags with context to a child's wellbeing. Early identification through natural methods, will empower the teaching community to be able to capture a child's vulnerable voice.

This study has played a significant role in demonstrating the effectiveness of natural approaches in early identification of children's vulnerabilities. Future research should explore natural approaches further, and their role for educators around the world for early detection of psychological conflicts debilitating a child's overall wellbeing.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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