

Emotional Maturity and Self Efficacy among Parents during Pandemic

Akriti Rao^{1*}, Tibiriseti Santoshi², Aksa Mary Jose³, Mamatha K⁴

¹⁻³I Sem MSc, Dept. of Psychology, Postgraduate Centre, St Francis De Sales College, Bengaluru, India

⁴Asst. Professor, Dept. of Psychology, Postgraduate Centre, St. Francis De Sales College, Bengaluru, India

DOI: [10.36348/sjhss.2021.v06i09.003](https://doi.org/10.36348/sjhss.2021.v06i09.003)

| Received: 26.07.2021 | Accepted: 02.09.2021 | Published: 11.09.2021

*Corresponding author: Akriti Rao

Abstract

The rapid spread of COVID-19 pandemic and the protective measures to mitigate its impact have drastically impacted the parents. Pandemic periods are significantly stressed by the many unexpected changes, losses, and uncertainties that kick parents out of their normal rhythm of life. To encounter this kind of situation there is a need to develop self-efficacy and emotional maturity which plays an important role to deal with such disasters. The objective of the study was to understand the relationship between emotional maturity and self-efficacy among parents during pandemic; to identify the prominent emotions among parents during pandemic; to understand the measures taken by parents to deal with pandemic and; to identify the suggestions given by parents to deal with emotions and social situations during pandemic. Results of Phase I shows that, there is a partial significant relationship between emotional maturity and self-efficacy. Thematic analysis of the study shows both positive and negative effects of pandemic. The positive side of it, brought families together, spend more quality time, increased the focus on physical as well as mental health, spending time evenly with relishing moments, taking part in all activities of their choices, learning new things and keep them updated. While the negative side of it speaks of the challenges faced by them every day, loss of loved ones, no human touch, sudden changes in life pattern, loss of job, taking care of the family, being cautious, managing various things at a time, psychological effects and financial crisis.

Keywords: Emotional maturity, self-efficacy, parents, pandemic.

Copyright © 2021 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization has classified the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a pandemic since March 2020. To slow the spread of COVID-19 pandemic, the government has taken drastic steps to reduce social interactions by closing public areas, stimulating people to keep a safe distance, staying at home and implementing "complete lockdown" in some countries. These social distancing steps created radical changes in daily life; various spheres such as family life, education, and work suddenly coincided, and people faced an unanticipated rise in hours spent together under the same roof. For some people, spending more time together during lockdown may bring them closer towards each other and foster a sense of well-being. However, several factors that are typical for the COVID-19 pandemic, such as financial insecurity, concerns about own and others' health, uncertainty about quarantine period, lack of social and physical activities, and boredom have all frequently been shown to negatively affect the mental well-being. These changes have wreaked havoc on the systems and structures that previously operated to both

support the mental health and well-being of people and mitigate the risks that contribute to health and social inequities.

The pandemic has drastically affected parents. During the pandemic, many parents have experienced increased pressures with implications for their mental health. Many parents expressed concerns about finances, social isolation, criticism from others, as well as emotional experiences of sadness and loneliness. The shutdown of schools and child-care centers around the world, as well as the lack of after-school programs, has increased parental pressure to manage obligations, including being the sole providers of supervision and education for their children, even while dealing with increased financial and emotional stress. However, these pressures disproportionately affect parents who experience health and social inequities, including fewer financial and social resources, crowded homes and limited technology. Added to conventional stressors of parenting, stressors caused by the threat or reality of parental unemployment, financial insecurity, low levels of social support, increased social isolation, lack of leisure time, lack of alone time characterizing

pandemic-related conditions, can amplify normative stress and trigger significant psychological distress (Brooke *et al.*, 2020; Parkes *et al.*, 2015; Sorkkila & Aunola, 2020). Similar research has shown that these quarantine-related causes may have significant and long-lasting effect on mental health outcomes like anxiety, depressive symptoms and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Therefore, Pandemic periods are significantly stressed by the many unexpected changes, losses, and uncertainties that kick parents out of their normal rhythm of life. Defending against a viral infection is a fight against an invisible attack era all times. To encounter this kind of situation there is a need to develop self-efficacy and emotional maturity that plays an important role during these tough times to deal with such disasters. Therefore, we focused on emotional maturity and self-efficacy of parents in our study.

According to Finley (1996), "Maturity is the capacity of mind to endure an ability to respond to uncertainty, circumstances or environment in an appropriate manner." Emotional maturity includes the ability to control one's emotions without overreacting in a given situation. According to Walter D. Smitson (1974), "Emotional maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-psychically and intra-personally."

Bandura (1986) defined self-efficacy as, "People's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances." Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, behave and motivate themselves. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes. These include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes.

As discussed above, the variables self-efficacy and emotional maturity do play a vital role in efficiently handling the new 'normal' through this pandemic. People in India and elsewhere, of all age groups do face a sense of aridity and a feeling of voidness as they are forced to adapt themselves to this self-confining living. The present study is focused on parents to see how effectively they are able to manage their self-efficacy and emotional maturity.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The extensive review of related literature suggests dearth of research done using self-efficacy and emotional maturity. People are struggling to sustain healthy mental and social health in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The following are few studies which helps to understand the variables in greater detail.

Spinelli *et al.* (2020) conducted a study to explore the effect of risk factors associated with the COVID-19 outbreak experience on parents' and children's well-being. Results showed that the perception of the difficulty of quarantine is a crucial factor that undermines both parents' and children's well-being. Quarantine's impact on children's behavioural and emotional problems is mediated by parent's individual and dyadic stress, with a stronger effect from the latter. Parents who reported more difficulties in dealing with quarantine show more stress.

A national survey was conducted by Stephen *et al.* (2020) to determine how the pandemic and mitigation efforts affected the physical and emotional well-being of parents and children. Results suggested that since March 2020, 27% of parents reported worsening mental health for themselves, and 14% reported worsening behavioral health for their children. The proportion of families with moderate or severe financial insecurity increased from 6% to 8%, employer-sponsored insurance coverage of children decreased from 63% to 60%, and 24% of parents reported a loss of regular child care. Worsening mental health for parents occurred alongside worsening behavioral health for children in nearly 1 in 10 families, among whom 48% reported loss of regular child care, 16% reported change in insurance status, and 11% reported worsening food security.

A study conducted by Ganie A.H., & Mahreen M. (2020) investigated the relationship between Emotional Maturity and Self-efficacy among Hostellers of Kashmir University. For the purpose of data collection General Self-efficacy Scale (Schwarzer and Jerusalem, 1995) and Emotional Maturity Scale (Singh and Bhargava, 1971) were used. The result revealed that there exists significant negative correlation between self-efficacy and emotional immaturity, emotional instability, emotional regression, personality disintegration and lack of independence whereas insignificant correlation was found between self-efficacy and social maladjustment. Further the results revealed that there was insignificant difference between self-efficacy and emotional instability, emotional regression, personality disintegration, social maladjustment and immaturity whereas significant difference was found between self-efficacy and independence.

A study conducted in India, by Joseph and Varma (2017) stated that emotional stability of the parents has become an increasingly serious societal issue but unfortunately, it is not given importance within the Indian context. To help address this problem, the study attempted to investigate the influence of perceived parental emotional stability on adolescents' psychosocial adjustment being mediated by parental bond, family relationship, and parental self-efficacy.

The results of the study found that the higher the participants' perception of their parental emotional stability, the more positive the perception of their family relationship, the higher the perception of their parental self-efficacy and subsequently, the higher is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. It also found that the higher the participants' perception of their parental emotional stability, the lower the perception of their parental bonding, the higher the perception of their parental self-efficacy and subsequently, the higher is their reported level of psychosocial adjustment. Understanding parents' and children's reactions and emotions, and identifying risk and protective factors, is essential to properly address their needs to tailor present and future intervention programs (Sprang and Silman, 2013).

METHOD

The present study was executed using mixed method research design.

Research questions

Phase I:

- What is the relationship between emotional maturity and self-efficacy among parents during pandemic?

Phase II:

- What are the prominent emotions identified among parents during pandemic?
- What are measures taken by parents to deal with pandemic?
- What are the suggestions given by parents to deal with emotions and social situations during pandemic?

OBJECTIVES

Phase I:

- To study the relationship between emotional maturity and self-efficacy among parents during pandemic.

Phase II:

- To identify the prominent emotions among parents during pandemic.
- To understand the measures taken by parents to deal with pandemic.
- To identify the suggestions given by parents to deal with emotions and social situations during pandemic.

Hypothesis

Phase I:

H0: "There is no significant relationship between Emotional Maturity and Self efficacy among Parents during Pandemic".

Operational Definitions

- **Self-efficacy:** Self-efficacy can be defined as a confidence to perform a particular action means capabilities to organize and execute the course of action.
- **Emotional Maturity:** Emotional Maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health, both intra-physically and interpersonally.
- **Pandemic:** Pandemic is an epidemic occurring worldwide or over a very wide area crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people.
- **Mixed study:** mixed methods research represents research that involves collecting, analyzing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon.

Inclusion criteria

- Parents with single child, two or more children.
- Parents residing in Andhra Pradesh, Bengaluru, Delhi and Kerala are considered for the study.

Exclusion criteria

- Parents, who are divorced, separated or single parents are excluded.

Sampling Technique

- Convenient and random sampling technique was followed for the study.

Sample

Phase I: Sample between the ages 20-60 years (N=134).

Phase II: Parents from Phase I would be selected for Phase II Interview (N=10).

Tools for the Assessment

Phase I

- **Emotional Maturity Scale:** It was developed by Roma Pal (1988) with an aim to measure emotional maturity. The scale contains 40 items. The maximum possible score is 200 and minimum is 40. Scoring pattern shows that more score indicates less emotional maturity. The reliability of the adjustment inventory was established by using split-half method, which was found to be 0.83. The investigator also ensured the validity of the tool by using content validity. The author of the tool also found the construct validity.
- **General Self-Efficacy Scale:** It is a 10-item psychometric scale that is designed to assess optimistic self-beliefs to cope with a variety of difficult demands in life. It was developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem in 1981. Internal reliability for GSE was measured by Cronbach alpha and its value ranged between .76 and .90.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale is correlated to emotion, optimism, work satisfaction. Negative coefficients were found for depression, stress, health complaints, burnout, and anxiety.

Phase II

- Open ended semi-structured interview questions developed by research scholars under the guidance and scrutiny of the experts.

Procedure

The study was conducted in II Phases.

Phase I: Consent was taken from the samples to be part of the study. Emotional Maturity and Self-Efficacy Scales were administered on parents. The collected data was scored according to the norms for further analysis.

Phase II: Consent was taken from the samples to be part of the study and also record the interview. The interview was felicitated by the research scholars among samples. Thematic and content analysis was executed for the recorded responses.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

- Phase I: Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics was used to analyze.

- Phase II: Thematic and content analysis was executed.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

The COVID-19 outbreak might increase parents' psychological difficulties, particularly stress both at the individual and the dyadic level, with a consequent negative impact on children's emotional and behavioral well-being (Dalton *et al.*, 2020). Since the onset of the pandemic in early 2020, almost all families have experienced a disruption in work and/or school schedules resulting from the pandemic and ensuing school, day care and afterschool program closures; the inability to work; job loss; and/or, shifts to remote learning and work (Gromada *et al.*, 2020). Parents who were able to work from home also face new challenges around establishing a new work routine and creating a workspace conducive to productivity while balancing child-care duties and online schooling. Parents now at home unable to work or having lost their jobs found themselves struggling to address new financial concerns and economic stressors related to their inability to work and/or job loss (Alonzo *et al.*, 2021). As a result, these restrictions could lead to increased tension, irritability, family disputes, and, in the worst-case scenario, domestic violence or child abuse. These challenges are further aggravated by anxiety around virus exposure during work and while travelling to reach their offices.

Phase I Quantitative Analysis

Table-1: Showing descriptive statistics of Self-Efficacy and Emotional Maturity

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Self-Efficacy	134	31.37	5.014
Emotional Instability	134	24.16	4.416
Emotional Regression	134	22.07	5.320
Faulty social adjustment	134	19.81	5.715
Lack of independency	134	22.24	4.715
Flexibility and Adaptability	134	23.81	4.189

Table I shows the descriptive statistics of samples on self-efficacy and five sub scales of emotional maturity. For this sample (N=134), self-efficacy (M=31.37, SD=5.01), Emotional Instability (M=24.16, SD=4.41), Emotional Regression (M=22.07,

SD=5.32), Faulty Social Adjustment (M=19.81, SD=5.71), Lack of Independency (M=22.24, SD=4.71), and Flexibility and Adaptability (M=23.81, SD=4.18).