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GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES ON OPTIMISM/PESSIMISM AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY



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A B S T R A C T

The present study was conducted to investigate the differences among adolescents, adults and old age subjects on Optimism/ Pessimism and Emotional Maturity. This study was administered on 600 subjects equally divided into Adolescents, Adults, and Old age subjects. The data was collected using quota random sampling and all subjects were matched on socio-economic status, and belonged to urban setup. Optimism/Pessimism attitude was measured using Optimism/Pessimism scale developed by Dr.D.S. Prashar (1998) to know the Optimistic Pessimistic attitude of the subjects. Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) constructed and standardized by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava (1990) was administered to know Emotional Maturity of the subjects. The result of the present study revealed significant generational differences on Optimism/Pessimism attitude. All the three groups were not found to be significantly different from each other on the level of Emotional Maturity.

Keywords; Optimism/Pessimism and Emotional Maturity

Human life is often divided into various stages. Broadly the four life stages are found to be important considering physical, psychological, social and emotional development of the individual. All these four stages of development affect the personality pattern of the individual showing remarkable changes in their behavioral aspect. Environmental factors and other developmental changes are reflected in their attitudes, adjustment pattern and temperament. Adolescence (latin *adolescere* = (to grow) is a transitional stage of physical and mental human development that occurs between childhood and adulthood.

Adult, According to Erik Erikson's stages of human development, first enumerated in *Childhood and Society* (1950) a young adult is a

person between the ages of 18 and 39. According to Erikson, the adult stage involves the personal need for intimacy and sex. Failure to achieve this need results in isolation, which is avoided, and as a result the young adult strives for love and compassion. The young adult learns that love and compassion may get him what he wants.

Old people have limited regenerative abilities and are more prone to disease, syndromes, and sickness than other adults. The boundary between middle age and old age cannot be defined exactly because it does not have the same meaning in all societies. In many parts of the world, people are considered old because of certain changes in their activities or social roles. Examples: people may be considered old when they become grandparents, or when they begin to do less or different work —

retirement. The development of personality is largely dependent upon environmental conditions. It is evident that social and environmental factors contribute in the development of basic attitudes which affect the behavioral pattern of individual in all spheres of life. Attitude is a mental position relative to a way of thinking or being: a learning toward that which you believe. Generally optimistic and pessimistic attitude are the two important determinant factors of behavioral aspect. Optimism is general tendency to expect always a good outcome. Optimist is the person one who is disposed for the best (Carver Charles and Scheier Michael 1985). Optimist function effectively with even a slightly enhanced view of themselves non-ignorance or delusion, just a polished reality. Optimist will never fail by his failure. They will rather, look to the next challenges and push on. Genuine optimist is not in denial, they will rather look for a healthy avenue to express and work through their real feelings.

Optimism has life transforming power. Bad news can turn into good news if we readjust our attitude toward the tough time. It means be optimist, be happy look for the brighter phase of life. Overcome sorrows and failures. Optimist dares to try, to take risk. Optimism lead people to cope more adoptively with stress whereas pessimism cause stress, anxiety and depression.

Pessimism is the general tendency to expect always bad outcomes. A pessimist is the person one who always looking to the dark side of the thing. (Carver Charles and Scheier Michael 1985). Pessimism, from the Latin *pessimus* (worst), is the decision to evaluate, perceive and view life in a generally negative light. Value judgment may vary dramatically between individuals, even when judgments of fact are undisputed. The most common example of this phenomenon is the “Is the glass half empty or half full?” situation. The degree in which situations like these are evaluated as something good or something bad can be described in terms of one’s optimism or pessimism respectively. Throughout history, the pessimistic disposition has had effects on all major areas of thinking. Optimism and pessimism defined as generalized positive and negative outcome

expectancies, respectively, are believed to represent important predictors of adjustment. Specifically, this investigator have argued that optimism is associated with and leads to incurring negative outcomes (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Consistent with this view, numerous studies have found that optimism associated with greater positive psychological outcomes, whereas pessimism is associated with greater negative psychological outcomes (for reviews, see; Scheier & Carver, 1992;), whereas pessimism has been found to be associated with greater depressive symptoms (Chang et al., 1997). Emotional maturity can be understood in term of ability of self-control which in turn is a result of thinking and learning (Singh and Bhargava 1990). Morgan and King Weisz and Schopler (1986) stated the view that adequate theory of emotional maturity must take account of the full scope of the individuality powers and ability to enjoy the use of his powers. It arouses through healthy perception of the surroundings and hence enables them to maintain a healthy equilibrium. Emotional maturity is important for healthy emotional development), it is a kind of processes make himself more mature in emotional condition.

The most outstanding mark of Emotional Maturity, according to Coleman (1944) is ability to bear tension. Emotionally mature person persists the capacity for fun & recreation, he enjoy both play, responsibility activities and keep them in a proper balance. Emotional maturity isn’t something that necessarily grows with chronological age, i.e. we don’t get more emotionally mature when we get older. Some adults are very emotionally immature; some have never matured emotionally. Emotional maturity is a measure of one’s capacity to create in a positive mental attitude. Emotions are our specific reactions to a particular event; they serve as a bridge between our thought and actions. Since negative emotion tend to make us diffused and unfocused, we attain better results when we act with joy, optimism, trust, and good mood when working with others. Considering the above facts present study was planned to know the tendency of Optimism/Pessimism and level of Emotional Maturity and compare them among three life cycle stages; adolescents, adults and old age.

The Specific objective To achieve main objective of the study following sub objectives were framed; 1. To identify difference between Adolescents, Adults and Old age on Optimism/Pessimism attitude, 2. To identify difference between Adolescents, Adults and Old age on Emotional Maturity and its dimensions.

Hypotheses

1. Adolescents will be significantly more Optimist followed by adults and old age. 2. Old age subjects will be significantly more Emotionally Mature as compared to adolescents and adult.

Tools used

§ **Optimistic-Pessimistic attitude Scale (Op/Pm)** - Constructed and standardized by Dr. D.S. Prashar (1998) to know the Optimistic Pessimistic attitude of the subjects. § **Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS)** - Constructed and standardized by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava (1990) to know Emotional Maturity of the subjects. It measures Emotional Maturity on five dimensions namely, Emotional Unstability, Emotional Regression, Social Maladjustment, Personality Disintegration and Lack of Independence.

Sample The total sample was consisted of 600 subjects equally divided into three groups (Adolescent, Adult, and Old age). All the subjects were matched on socio-economic status as all the subjects were belonging to middle income group. Quota random sampling was used to select the sample from the Dehradun Distt. Adolescents were selected from K.V (F.R.I) and Rajkiya vidhyalya, Selaqui, Adult and Old age subjects were selected from Sudhowala, Badowala, Thakurpur, Gujrara, Mansingwala and Dandalakand, Dehradun. Keeping in view the main objective of the study the sample was classified in to three groups (Adolescent, Adults and Old age) ranging between 14 to 65yrs (Adolescents 13-19yrs, adults 25-40yrs and old age 55-65yrs).

Procedure The subjects were contacted individually and requested to cooperate for the testing schedule. Good rapport was established with all the subjects and they were convinced that the result and the information they will give would be kept strictly confidential and will be used for research purpose only. The testing schedule was

conducted by administering the **Optimistic-Pessimistic attitude Scale**. It was used to study the level of Optimism and Pessimism. Then subjects were given **Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS)**. It was used to check the level of Emotional Maturity of the subjects. There were enough time gaps between the administrations of both the tests. Raw data was obtained by using respective manuals of the tests and inferences were drawn by calculating Means, SDs and Analysis of Variance (F values).

Result Keeping in view the main objective of the study Means, SDs and ANOVAs were computed which are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the Means and SDs of Adolescents, Adults and Old Age subjects on Optimism/Pessimism Attitude, Emotional Maturity, and their dimensions. The data revealed that Adolescents scored higher mean values followed by Old Age subjects and Adults on Optimism/Pessimism Attitude. Adults scored higher mean values on Total Emotional Maturity and their dimensions namely, Emotional Regression, Social Maladjustment, Personality Disintegration and Lack of Independence followed by Adolescents and Old Age People. On Emotional Unstability Adolescent scored higher mean values followed by Adults and Old Age People.

Table 1 also shows the F values for Optimism/Pessimism Attitude and Emotional Maturity signifying the generational differences. All the three groups were found to be highly significant on Optimism/Pessimism attitude. The obtained 'F' value was found to be insignificant for group on total Emotional Maturity. It reveals that Adolescent, Adult, and Old age subject do not differ from each other on Emotional Unstability. The Group was found to be non-significant on Emotional Regression dimension of Emotional Maturity since 'F' value was found to be very low it indicated that Adolescent, Adult, and Old age subjects do not differ significantly from each other on Emotional Regression. Only on Personal Disintegration dimension of Emotional Maturity significant F value was observed revealing that adolescents, adults and old age subjects differ from each other on the level of Personal Disintegration.

DISCUSSION OPTIMISM, PESSIMISM AND GROUP The first hypothesis was “**Adolescents will be significantly more Optimist followed by adults and old age**”.

To test the above hypothesis Means, SDs and F ratios were computed for Optimism/Pessimism. The obtained F- ratio shown in table number 1 for groups (adolescents, adults and old age) was emerged to be highly significant at .01 levels. It means that actual differences existed between adolescents, adults and old age subjects on the level of Optimism and Pessimism and this we can say with 99% confidence leaving 1% to chance factor only. It reveals that all the three groups of the study differ significantly from each other on the tendency of Optimism/Pessimism. Furthermore the observation of mean values of adolescents, adults and old age subjects on optimism/pessimism (Table-1) showed that adolescents obtained higher mean values followed by old age and adults. The findings stand in line with the earlier findings of Chang (2001) who also revealed that adolescents have higher level of Optimism than adults. Viven S. Husen et al (2006) also found that adolescents have high level of optimism as compared to their seniors (adult and old adults) The findings appeared to be in contrast to the previous findings of Biiling, A.G, and Moos, R.H (1985) who found that Italian adults have high level of Optimism as compared to older group.

Emotional Maturity and Groups

The second hypothesis was “**Old age subjects will be significantly more Emotionally Mature as compared to adolescents and adults**”. To test the above hypothesis Means, SDs and F ratios were computed for total Emotional Maturity. The obtained F- ratio (table 1) for groups (adolescents, adults and old age) was appeared to be insignificant. It means that no real differences existed between adolescents, adults and old age subjects on total Emotional Maturity or all the three groups of the study have similar level of Emotional Maturity. Mean values of adolescents, adults and old age subjects on total emotional maturity (Table -1) showed that adolescents obtained higher mean values followed by adults and old age subjects. Although this difference on mean values was not

found to be significant denoting that adolescents, adults and old age subjects possess almost similar level of Emotional Maturity or whatever the difference on mean values was observed that may be due to chance factor only. On the basis of obtained findings the proposed hypothesis was rejected claiming that no actual difference existed between all the three groups of the study on the level of Emotional Maturity. The obtained findings were found to be in contrast to the earlier findings of Jeffrey et al (1997) who revealed that young age group had a significantly greater level of immaturity than old age group.

On Emotional Unstability, the first dimension of Emotional Maturity the calculated F- ratio (table 1) was found to be quite insignificant. It showed that all the three groups have almost same level of Emotional Unstability or the groups do not differ on this dimension of emotional maturity. Adolescents obtained slightly higher mean value followed by adults and old age but all the three groups were not found to be significantly different from each other. It can be said that adolescents have insignificantly higher level of Emotional Unstability whereas old age subjects possess insignificantly lowest level of Emotional Unstability. The level of Emotional Unstability was moderate among adult subjects although insignificantly. On all other dimensions namely; Emotional Regression, Social Maladjustment and Lack of Independence the calculated F- values (table 1) were not found to be significant. It showed that adolescents, adults and old age subjects do not differ on these dimensions of Emotional Maturity. The mean values (table no: 1) for these dimensions of Emotional Maturity showed that adults obtained higher mean value followed by adolescents and old age but all the three groups were not found to be significantly different from each other.

Personality Disintegration, another dimension of Emotional Maturity the obtained F value (table no 3) was found to be highly significant at .01 level. It revealed that group difference existed on this dimension or adolescents, adults and old age subjects differ from each other on personality disintegration. Furthermore, the observation of mean values (table no 1) on this dimension showed

that adults obtained higher mean values followed by old age subjects and adolescents. It means that adults possessed significantly higher tendency of Personality Disintegration than old age and adolescent subjects. Old age subjects were found to have lowest level of Personality Disintegration whereas adults possess moderate level of Personality Disintegration. So it can be inferred that actual and true difference existed between adolescents, adults and old age subjects on this dimension of Emotional Maturity. This we say with 99% confidence leaving 1% to chance factor only.

The obtained findings clearly denoted that all the three groups of the study were found to be significantly different from each other on only one dimension of Emotional Maturity i.e., Personality Disintegration whereas on other dimensions no actual difference was observed. Therefore we reject the proposed hypothesis claiming that adults have significantly higher tendency of Personality Disintegration than adolescents and old age subjects.

Table 1 Means SDs and F values of adolescents, adults and old age subjects on Optimism/Pessimism Attitude and Emotional Maturity,

Variable / Dimension	Adolescents(n=200)		Adults (n=200)		Old Age(n=200)		F values
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Optimism/Pessimism Attitude	31.24	2.92	27.69	3.41	28.10	2.61	42.91**
Emotional Maturity (Total)	90.84	25.25	93.59	16.25	89.66	23.21	1.17
Emotional Unstability	19.58	6.21	19.22	6.10	19.16	5.97	0.30
Emotional Regression	20.18	5.95	20.22	6.21	19.41	3.21	0.89
Social Maladjustment	18.95	6.25	20.39	7.29	18.34	6.10	2-05
Personality Disintegration	16.24	4.29	18.07	5.33	17.22	4.93	4.68**
Lack of Independence	15.98	4.59	16.40	5.11	15.53	5.21	1.54

* Significant at 0.05 level; ** significant at 0.01 level

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