

Emotional Intelligence of Adolescents; Living with their Families and those Living in Institutions

Htar Htar Khin *

Abstract

This is a comparative study dealing with emotional intelligence between adolescents living with their families and that of those living in institutions. The purpose of this study is to find out any difference between two groups of adolescents with regard to emotional intelligence (EI). General Trait Emotional Intelligence Inventory (GTEII) was adapted from the original long form of Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) constructed by Petrides, K.V and his colleagues (2001). GTEII consists of the six dimensions: well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability, adaptability, and self-motivation. For analysis, the subjects were formed into two groups. Group (1) comprises adolescents living with their families, and Group (2) comprises adolescents living in institutions. The participants for this study were 258 adolescents, 130 were living with their families from No. (3) BEHS, South Dagon Township and 128 were from living in institutions, namely Kyaik Wine Boys' Training School, Malikha Girls' Training School, Mayangone Church and Insein Church. The finding of the present study showed that adolescents living with their families have higher scores on general trait EI than that of those living in institutions. In addition, the finding showed that, there were significant differences in well-being, sociability, adaptability and self-motivation between two groups of participants. However, the finding of the present study showed that there were no differences in self-control and emotionality between two groups of participants. The analysis of this study indicated that there were differences in emotional intelligence between two groups of participants.

Key words: adolescents, trait emotional intelligence, families, institutions

Introduction

Adolescent is a period of the life cycle between childhood and adulthood with some unique characteristics connected with development and marked by dramatic challenges that require adjustment to changes in self, in the family and peer group. (Santrock, 2004) In terms of changes in self, the adolescent experiences physical growth, sexual maturation, intense emotional, social, cognitive and personal development. This developmental period is described as a time of storm and stress; conflict and crises of adjustment and a stage of alienation from adult society. (Hall, 1904, 1923) If a young person can develop adaptive ways of responding to the stresses of life, while avoiding health-damaging behaviour, he or she is likely to continue to respond in these ways in adulthood. Adolescents experience frustration, self-doubt, stress, pressure and feelings of rejection and failure as they go through the physical developmental stages and the search for self. (Hahn and Payne, 2001)

According to De Anda and Smith (1993), adolescence is a transitional period that involves a recapitulation of earlier familiar patterns of interaction and added that individuation in adolescence requires a normative regression which involves returning to the previous set rules or less advanced ways of behaving. To him, regression to earlier ways of behaviour is normal in adolescence although parents may misinterpret this regression as irresponsibility or immaturity engendering turmoil, volatile behaviours and anxiety in adolescent. If it is unmanaged, it may result to use of defence mechanisms such as withdrawal, secrecy, fantasy and compensation. It may also lead to adolescent problems of drug abuse and addiction, crime and school dropout.

* Associate Professor, Department of Psychology, Dagon University

If adolescents cannot receive timely guidance from school authorities, teachers, parents or their caregivers, or timely concern from their peers or siblings, then their unstable emotions may result in behavioural disorders.

Researchers and psychologists have been attempting to understand the role of emotions, what causes them, what their purpose is and what their consequences are. According to Jenkins, Oatley and Stein (1998), emotions are central to human life; they are subjective and are made up of short-term emotions, long-term emotions and very long term emotional dispositions of personality. Emotional Intelligence is a part of human personality, and personality provides the content in which emotional intelligence operates. Emotional intelligence is a form of intelligence relating to the emotional side of life, such as the ability to recognize and manage one's own and other's emotions, to motivate oneself and restrain impulses, and to handle interpersonal relationship effectively. (Danel Goleman, 1995) Mayer and Salovey (2004) defines emotional intelligence (EQ) as a form of intelligence "that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thoughts and actions".

According to Mayer and Salovey (1997), intelligence and emotion are combined because the ideation that emotion provoked makes thinking more intelligent or thinking intelligently about emotions. Emotional intelligence is also a critical part, of social intelligence, and is not necessarily related to academic aptitude. Being highly intelligent in academic study cannot guarantee the success in life. The people who are quite bright intellectually but have poor leadership skill, insufficient motivation or low personality cannot be successful in life. However, emotionally intelligent people usually have a higher self-awareness. They can manage their emotions without hijacking by overwhelming depression, anxiety or anger. They can delay gratification in pursuit of long-range rewards, rather than being overtaken by immediate impulses. Their empathy enables them to read others' emotions. They handle others' emotions skilfully, knowing what to say to a grieving friend, how to encourage colleagues, and how to manage conflicts well. Simply said, they are emotionally smart, and thus they often succeed in careers, marriages, and parenting where other academically smarter (but emotionally less intelligent) people fail. From this point of view, a person with these abilities is considered to be well-adjusted and emotionally skilled; the lack of these abilities renders a person socially and emotionally handicapped. According to Liau *et al* (2003), the lack of balanced development of emotional intelligence in children could be associated with a variety of internalizing and externalizing problem behaviour in adolescent years.

This study stresses trait emotional Intelligence (trait EI) of adolescents. According to Petrides and Furnham (2000), trait emotional intelligence (or "trait emotional self-efficacy") refers to "a constellation of behaviour dispositions and self-perceptions concerning one's ability to recognize, process, and utilize emotion-laden information". In trait EI models, emotion-related self-perceptions have been repeatedly shown to form four interrelated factors: well-being (traits pertaining to dispositional mood), self-control (traits pertaining to the regulation of emotions and impulses), emotionality (traits pertaining to the perception and expression of emotions) and sociability (traits pertaining to the interpersonal utilization and management of emotions (Mikolajczak, *et. al.*, 2007; Petrides, Pita and Kokkinaki, 2007)).

Well-being factor describes the overall well-being of a person. It is made up of three facets. They are happiness, optimism and self-esteem. Self-control factor describes how well a person regulates external pressure, stress, and impulses. It is made up of three facets. They are emotional regulation, impulse control and stress management. Emotionality factor describes your capacity to perceive and express emotions and how you use them to develop and sustain relationship with others. It is made up of four facets. They are empathy, emotional perception,

emotional expression and relationships. Sociability factor describes the capacity to socialize, to manage and to communicate with others. It is made up of three facets. They are emotional management, assertiveness and social awareness. In addition, trait EI includes the facets of adaptability and self-motivation. Adaptability measures how flexible one is in his or her approach to life. It reflects how he or she can adapt to new environments, conditions and people, and how he or she can deal with changes. In self-motivation, research shows that individuals are motivated by many different things in their work. These include financial rewards, status, praise, and social interaction. (Petrides & Furnham, 2001) Petrides and Furnham (2001) identified via content analysis 15 distinct components common to more than one salient EI model. Table 1 present a brief description of these components.

Table 1. Common Facets in salient models of EI

Facets	High scorers perceive themselves as
Adaptability	flexible and willing to adapt to new conditions
Assertiveness	forthright, frank and willing to stand up for their rights
Emotion expression	capable of communicating their feelings to others
Emotion management (others)	capable of influencing other people's feelings
Emotion perception (self and others)	clear about their own and other people's feelings
Emotion regulation	capable of controlling their emotions
Impulsiveness (low)	reflective and less likely to give in to their urges
Relationship skills	capable of having fulfilling personal relationships
Self-esteem	successful and self-confident
Self-motivation	driven and unlikely to give up in the face of adversity
Social competence	accomplished networkers with excellent social skills
Stress management	capable of withstanding pressure and regulating stress
Trait empathy	capable of taking someone else's perspective
Trait happiness	cheerful and satisfied with their lives
Trait optimism	confident and likely to 'look on the bright side' of life

Materials and Methods

Objective : To find out whether there are any differences between adolescents living with their families and those living in institutions with regard to emotional intelligence and life adjustment.

Hypotheses : The emotional intelligence of adolescents living with their families is higher scores than that of those living in institutions.

There are differences in six sub-dimensions of general trait emotional intelligence between the adolescents living with their families and those living in institutions.

Participants : In this study, two hundred and fifty eight adolescents studying in the 9th, 10th, and 11th grades were used as subjects. The ages ranged from 13 to 18 years old. The mean age was 14.66 (SD-1.25) years. In present study, 50.4 percent of the samples were adolescents who were living together with their families, from No. (3) BEHS, South Dagon Township, (N=130), the remaining 49.6 percent were from living in institutions, namely Kyeik Wine Boys' Training School, Malikha Girls' Training School, Mayangone Church, and Insein Church, (N=128).

Instrument : Trait Emotional Intelligence Inventory was adapted from the original long form of Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) constructed by Petrides and his colleagues (2001). It consisted of six dimensions that were

made up of 15 facets. Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire measures four interrelated factors: (well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability). There are also two independent facets, which do not contribute to a factor: adaptability and self-motivation. The Myanmar version of TEIQue was a 4 point scale ranging from "not at all", "somewhat", "moderately so" and "very much so". The scores were 0, 1, 2, 3 for positive items and 3, 2, 1, 0 for negative ones. The instruction printed on the cover of the questionnaire provided necessary information for each respondent.

Procedure : Data collectors went to No. (3) B.E.H.S, South Dagon Township and Kyeik Wine Boy's Training School, Malika Girls' Training School, Mayangon Church and Insein Church to collect data for General Trait Emotional Intelligence Inventory. It took about 15 minutes to answer the questionnaire. Demographic data, such as age, gender, living with their family or living in institutions were printed on the cover of the questionnaire. The subjects were instructed to answer all questions and not to omit any item or to discuss with others during the measurement session. They were also instructed to choose one option from four possible answers and do not leave any item blank. The participants were also informed that all responses were confidential.

Results and Discussion

This section describes the results, analysis of data and discussion the findings. The aim of the study is to find out whether there is any difference between adolescents living with their families and those living in institutions with regard to emotional intelligence. Descriptive method and 't' test are used for hypothesis testing.

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation obtained by the participants on GTEII

Variables	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
- General Trait EI	58.39	14.57	19.00	96.00
Well-Being	16.21	4.94	1.00	24.00
Self-Control	9.75	3.36	0.00	18.00
Emotionality	5.53	2.12	0.00	9.00
Sociability	11.44	4.03	0.00	21.00
Adaptability	9.85	3.62	0.00	15.00
Self – Motivation	5.62	2.25	0.00	9.00

N = 258

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviations obtained by the participants on general trait EI. According to this table, the mean and standard deviation for general trait EI were 58.39 and 14.57. With regard to well-being, the mean score of the sample was 16.21 with a standard deviation of 4.94. In self-control, the mean score of the sample was 9.75 with a standard deviation of 3.36. Mean and standard deviation for emotionality was 5.53 and 2.12. Similarly, mean and standard deviation for sociability were 11.44 and 4.03. In adaptability, the mean score of the sample was 9.85 with a standard deviation of 3.62. In self-motivation, the mean and standard deviation of the sample were 5.62 and 2.25 respectively.

Table 3. The comparison of General Trait Emotional Intelligence between adolescents living with their families and those living in institutions

General Trait EI	Background	N	Mean	SD	t value	df	p
	Families	130	62.84	14.18	5.18	256	.000
	Institutions	128	53.88	13.59			

Table 4 shows the comparison of general trait EI between adolescents living with their families and those living in institutions. According to this table, in general trait EI, adolescents living with their families obtain $M=62.84$, and their $SD=14.18$, and those living in institutions obtain $M=53.88$, and $SD=13.59$. The t value of the general trait EI between two groups of participants was 5.18, which is significant at 0.01 level. According to the findings shown in table 2 and 3, adolescents living with their families had higher scores than their counterparts from institutions on emotional intelligence and the difference between two groups was positively significant. Therefore, the findings also support the hypothesis 1.

The present research study found that adolescents living with their families had higher scores than their counterparts from institutions on emotional intelligence and the difference between two groups were positively significant. It is possible to say that adolescents living with their families have more parental warmth and secure attached than that of those living in institutions. This finding was consistent with the results of Mayer, Caruso and Salovey (1999) found that higher emotional intelligence correlated significantly with higher parental warmth and attachment style.

Table 4 The comparison of six sub-dimensions of General Trait Emotional Intelligence between the adolescents living with their families and those living in institutions

Sub-Dimensions of Trait EI	Background	Mean	SD	t value	p
Well-Being	Families	17.72	4.92	5.22	.000
	Institutions	14.66	4.48		
Self – Control	Families	10.08	3.38	1.63	.105 NS
	Institutions	9.41	3.31		
Emotionality	Families	5.75	1.93	1.65	.100 NS
	Institutions	5.31	2.28		
Sociability	Families	12.25	4.08	3.29	.001
	Institutions	10.63	3.82		
Adaptability	Families	11.00	3.23	5.44	.000
	Institutions	8.67	3.64		
Self – Motivation	Families	6.04	2.07	3.06	.002
	Institutions	5.19	2.34		

Families (N = 130) Institutions (N = 128). Note: N.S = not significant

Table 3 shows the comparison of six-dimension of general trait EI between adolescents living with their families and that of those living in institutions. This table presents the summary of means and standard deviation calculated for adolescents living with their families and those living in institutions and 't' value which emerged from this analysis.

According to this table, adolescents living with their families scored higher than those living in institutions on well-being, $M=17.72$, $SD=4.92$ Vs $M=14.66$, $SD=4.48$, $t=5.22$, $p<0.01$. According to "t" analysis, there were no significant differences on self-control $M=10.08$, $SD=3.38$, Vs $M=9.41$, $SD=3.31$, $t=1.63$ and emotionality $M=5.75$, $SD=1.93$. Vs $M=5.31$, $SD=2.28$, $t=1.65$ in the means for adolescents living together with their families and those living in institutions. Means and standard deviation for sociability was significantly different between the two groups of adolescents. $M=12.25$, $SD=4.08$ Vs $M=10.63$, $SD=3.82$, $t=3.29$, $p<.001$. Similarly, means and standard deviation for adaptability was significantly different between the two groups. $M=11.00$, $SD=3.23$ Vs $M=8.67$, $SD=3.64$, $t=5.44$, $p<.001$. In self-motivation, the mean and standard deviation obtained by adolescents from their families were 6.04 and 2.07 and those from institutions were 5.19 and 2.34, 't' value was 3.06 which is significant at .002 level. According to table 4, adolescents living in their families had higher scores than their counterparts from institutions on well-being, sociability, adaptability and self-motivation. Therefore, the findings partially support the hypothesis 2.

This research paper revealed that adolescents living with their families had higher scores than their counterparts from institutions on well-being, sub-dimension of EI. The findings showed that well-being between two groups of participants differ significantly. It is possible to say that adolescents living with their families have more secure and psychologically well. This finding was consistent with the results of Videon's (2005) report that parental (mothers and fathers) relationship with adolescents have a lot of influence on the adolescents' psychological well-being. This tends to suggest that adolescents who were accepted in their homes are psychologically well.

Moreover, the finding of the present study showed that there was no difference between two groups of adolescents on self-control. The reason is that both the adolescents living with their families and that of those living in institutions were also the teenagers. It could be concluded that they are equal in self-regulation skill (i.e. self-control, behavioral competence and coping).

Also, the finding of the present paper reported that there was no difference between two groups of participants on emotionality. The reason is that two groups of participants in this study were adolescence, beings with a growth spurt that heralds the period of sexual maturation, puberty and ends with the achievement of adult independence. Depending on how other people react, early or late maturation can influence adjustment. (Arnett, 1999) In addition, Erik Erikson (1963) theorized that a chief task of adolescence is solidifying one's sense of self-one's identity. For many people, this struggle continues into the adult years as new relationships emerge and new roles are assumed.

According to this study it was found that, in sociability, adolescent living with their families have better sociability than that of those living in institutions. The finding shows that sociability between two groups of adolescents differs significantly. It is possible to say that adolescents living with their families have more secure attachment and therefore they have more socially competent than that of those living in institutions. This finding was consistent with prior research findings that secure attachment buffers the stressful transition to high school (Papini & Roggman, 1992) and, during their first year of college, securely attached adolescents see themselves as more socially competent, and report less psychological distress than their peers, even if they are anxious regarding separation. (Kenny & Donaldson, 1991) Moreover, adolescents and young adults with insecure attachment style (i.e. poor communication and trust, combined with feelings of alienation and disengagement from the attachment relationship) are rated by their peer as more hostile than individuals in other attachment groups (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Koback & Sceery, 1988).

The finding of the present study showed that, in adaptability, adolescents living with their families have better adaptability than those living in institutions. The finding show that adaptability between two groups of adolescents differs significantly. It is possible to say that adolescents living with their families are more secure and thus they are willing and able to adapt to new environments and conditions. This finding was consistent with the results of Mikulincer, (1995) and reported that secure individuals are able to acknowledge both positive and negative self-attributes, and have been shown to have a coherent, well organized self-structure. In addition, adolescents who report a positive relationship with their parents, and who feel comfortable turning to them for support, have been found to have a greater sense of mastery of their worlds (Paterson, Pryor, & Field, 1995) and to experience less loneliness (Kerns & Stevens, 1996).

The finding of the present paper showed that, in self motivation, adolescents living with their families have higher self-motivation than those living in institutions. The finding show that self-motivation between two groups of adolescents differs significantly. It is possible to

say that adolescents living with their families are driven by a need to produce high quality of work. In addition, they have a strong sense of achievement. This finding was consistent with Belsky, Garduque, & Hrnecir (1984) stated that securely attached youngsters are not any more intellectually competent, on average, than their insecurely attached age-mates; instead, they are seemed more eager to apply their competencies to the challenges they encounter. So, children apparently need the "secure base" provided by a loving, responsive parent to feel comfortable about taking risks and seeking challenges.

Conclusion

The finding of the present study showed that adolescents living with their families have higher scores on general trait EI than those living in institutions. More specifically, adolescents living with their families have more psychologically well, socially competent and able to adapt new environments, conditions, people and change and motivation by many different things in their work.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Hla Htay, Rector of Dagon University, and Dr. Aye Aye Tun, Pro-Rector of Dagon University, for giving permission and encouragement in conducting this research. I also would like to acknowledge my gratitude to Professor U Aye Kyaw, Head of the Department of Psychology, Dagon University who give me encouragement to do this study. Finally, I also wish to mention my gratitude to all students who participants in this study.

References

- Arnett, J.J., (1999), "Adolescent storm and stress, reconsidered", *American Psychologist*, **54**, 317-326
- Bartholomew, K. & Horowitz, L.M., (1991), "Attachment styles among young adults: A test of a four category model", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **61**, 226-244
- Belsky, J., Garduque, L. & Hrnecir, E., (1984), "Assessing performance, competence, and executive capacity in infant play: Relations to home environment and Security of attachment", *Developmental Psychology*, **20**, 406-417
- De Anda, D. & Smith, M., (1993), "Differences among adolescent, young adult and adult callers of suicide helpness", *Social work*, **38**, 421-28
- Erikson, E., (1963). "Childhood and Society", 2nd Ed., Norton, New York (Original work published 1950)
- Goleman, D., (1995), "Emotional Intelligence", Bantam Books, New York
- Hahn, D.B. & Payne, W.A., (2001), "Focus on Health", 5th Ed, McGraw-Hill, New York
- Hall, G.S., (1904, 1905), "Adolescence: Its psychology and its relations to physiology, anthropology, sociology, sex, crime, religion, and education", Vol. 1, Prentice-Hall, Englewood (liffs) NJ
- Jenkins, K., Oatley, K. & Stein, N.L., (1998), "Human Emotions: A Reader Introduction", Malden, Massachutes: Blackwell
- Kenny, M.E. & Donaldson, G.A., (1991), "Contributions of parental attachment and family structure to the social and psychological functioning of first-year college students", *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, **38**, 479-486
- Kerns, K.A. & Stevens, A.C., (1996), "Parent-child attachment in late adolescence: Links to social relations and personality", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, **25**, 323-342
- Kobak, R. & Sceery, A., (1988), "Attachment in late adolescence: Working models, affect regulation and representations of self and others", *Child Development*, **59**, 135-146
- Mayer, J.D. & Salovey, P., (1997), "What is emotional intelligence?", In P. Salovey & D.J. Slyter (Eds.), *Emotional development and emotional intelligence: Educational implications*, Basic Books, New York
- Mayer, J.D., Caruso, D., & Salovey, P., (1999), "Emotional intelligence meets traditional standards for an intelligence", *Intelligence*, **27**, 267-298

- Mikolajczak, M., Luminet, O., Leroy, C., & Roy, E., (2007), "Psychometric properties of the trait emotional intelligence questionnaire: Factor Structure. Reliability, construct, and incremental validity in a French-speaking population", *Journal of Personality Assessment*, **88**, 338-353
- Mikulincer, M., (1995), "Attachment style and the mental representation of the self", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, **69**, 1203-1212
- Papini, D.R., & Roggman, L.A., (1992), "Adolescent Perceived Attachment to Parents in Relation to Competence, Depression, and Anxiety: A longitudinal Study", *Journal of Early Adolescence*, **12**, 420-440
- Paterson, J., Pryor, J., & Field; J., (1995), "Adolescent attachment to Parents and Friends in relation to aspects of self-esteem", *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, **24**, 365-376
- Petrides, K.V., & Furnham, A., (2001), "Trait emotional intelligence : Psychometric investigation with reference to established trait taxonomies", *European Journal of Personality*, **15**, 425-448
- Sadock, J.B., & Sadock, V.A., (2003), "Synopsis Psychiatry: Behavioural Sciences/Clinical Psychiatry", New York
- Santrock, J.W., (2004), "Educational Psychology", 2nd Ed., Mc Graw-Hill, New York
- Videon, T.M., (2005), "Parent–child relations and children's psychological well-being. Do dads matter?" *Journal of family issues*, **26**(1)