

Emotional intelligence and parental figures: Do the number and biological aspect of parents influence emotional intelligence?

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### Abstract

The aim of this study was to investigate the difference in emotional intelligence scores between females and males. It was also set out to examine the effects of the number of parents and number of which were biological in a household on emotional intelligence. This study consisted of 104 participants all over the age of 18 N=84 females and N=20 males. A questionnaire comprising of the Rotterdam Emotional Intelligence Scale was utilised to assess participant's emotional intelligence levels. It was predicted that females would have higher emotional intelligence than males, however results suggest that males overall scored higher  $p = .04$ . It was assumed that those with two biological parents and people with two parents in their household would score higher on the REIS. Surprisingly, there was no found impact of numbers of parents on the four factors of emotional intelligence; self-focused emotional appraisal  $p = .38$ , other-focused emotional appraisal  $p = .63$ , self-focused emotional regulation  $p = .37$  and other-focused emotional regulation  $p = .51$  and for number of biological parents  $p = .26$   $p = .61$ ,  $p = .42$ ,  $p = .84$ , respectively. Conclusions should be drawn with caution as the sample is not generalisable to the whole population. It was suggested that future research should test whether events that take place within homes effect emotional intelligence levels.

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## Introduction

A feeling can be described as described as a feeling is an emotional reaction to a stimulus which stems from the way one interprets the events taking place in themselves (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2012). Cognition refers to mental processes involved in acquiring knowledge and understanding experiences such as feeling (Solso, MacLin, & MacLin, 2005). Emotions are the fusion of the two. They are feelings that have cognitive components that effect behaviour (Ekman, 2004). It is the combination of both reaction and the understanding of such. To understand emotional intelligence (EI), one must consider both components of the term, therefore, understanding the logical crossing of feelings and thoughts (Peter, 2010). EI can be described as the ability to accurately understand one's own and surrounding people's emotions and use it to shape behaviour (Mayer, 2004). There are four principle aspects of EI; Perceiving emotions, Understanding emotions, Using emotions and Managing emotions according to the Salovey and Mayer's PUUM model. Perceiving emotions refers to the ability to identify emotions in one's self and in others. It also considers one's ability to express their emotion and differentiate between genuine and inauthentic emotions. Understanding emotions refers to understanding how emotions impact each other and what causes us to feel an emotion. It is also understanding how we can be in emotionally contradictory states. Using emotions to facilitate thought and redirect thinking based on corresponding feelings. Managing emotions is being open to different feelings. It is the monitoring of one's own and other's emotions (Mayer & Salovey, 1993).

Intelligence can be split into two categories as stated by Cosmides and Tooby (2002). Improvisational intelligence makes reference to the ability to devise solutions to new

predicaments. On the other hand, dedicated intelligence refers to the capability to fathom set of problems. Intelligence quotient (IQ) differs from emotional quotient (EQ) as it refers to a person's intelligence level rather than their intellect with feelings. Bhatia (2012) explains that that EI is beneficial for efficient work execution. Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in leadership skills, work life and career development (Piraino, 2019). A high IQ will be beneficial when applying for jobs, but EQ will be effective when looking for a promotion. Research suggests that contrary to popular beliefs, IQ only aids in achieving a successful life by 20% whereas the remaining 80% is dependent on EQ (Pool, 1997).

Males and females are found to have different average scores of emotional intelligences. A study carried out by Ahmad, Bangash and Khan (2009) found that female's average emotional intelligence score was lower than that of males. However, other research indicates contrary results. Experiments conducted by King (1999), Sutarso (1999), Wing and Love (2001) and Singh (2002) implies that females are more emotionally intelligent than males. Men and women exhibit distinct characteristics of emotional intelligence. Females tend to be more empathetic, emotionally aware and have higher interpersonal skills than males. Whereas males manage stress better, are more self-confident and more adaptable than females. Understanding differences in emotional intelligence will aid in educating those who lack emotional intelligence and understanding the reasons these differences may occur.

A Parent is a complex title that holds different meanings to people. Sclater, Bainham and Richards (1999) explains that there are social, biological and lawful ideas of parents. They demonstrate how parenthood is not one straightforward path. A chapter of their book concentrates on the changes of perceptions of the parenthood role overtime. Historically, mothers



were seen as the parent to raise the children psychologically whereas fathers were simply the breadwinner's and providers for the family. With the same ideology, it was believed that bad mothers bared bad children. Implying that characteristics of children can be traced back to their mothers. Parents were once considered to be merely mothers and fathers, however, as the beliefs that surrounds parenthood changes so does the varieties in which parents can form.

Bowlby found that parents do not need to be biologically related to children for them to form a healthy attachment. Likewise, being raised by adoptive parents or parents other than one's birth parents does not hinder the development of a child (Holmes, 2014). Regarding adoptive parents, the lack of blood bond was inconsequential if children were in a loving, nurturing home. This is contradictory to the traditional beliefs that biological parents are essential in the raising of healthy children (Hamilton, Cheng & Powell, 2007).

Several studies indicate that depression, stress, loneliness are symptoms of single parent children (Roseby & Johnston, 1997). One study compared family relationship quality and wellbeing of five different family structures; adoptive parents, two biological parent, single-mother, stepfather, and stepmother households (Lansford, Ceballo, Abbey & Stewart, 2001). The results from the study supported the researcher's hypothesis. It suggests that homes with adoptive parents faced more issues than those of two biological parent or stepmother homes. Results also suggested that families with two biological parents were the most ideal. Mothers in such homes reported less undesired behaviours from their children. Another study carried out by Hamilton, Cheng and Powell, (2007) compared adoptive families with other family structures. Their results indicate that, contrary to previous study, adoptive families were more advantageous. Although,

this response seemed to be due to the socioeconomic differences of families. Once controlled for, two adaptive parent households were found to be similar to two biological parent homes.

Parental figures refer to the people who take on the role of parents. A study investigating family relationship in relation to emotional intelligence of secondary school students found that good family relations positively impact emotional intelligence levels of the children (Bhatia, 2012). Results from this study also suggests that there is a relationship between EI and familial relations. Family relationship referred to attitudes' parents had towards their children and was considered on two main aspects, parental acceptance and parental avoidance. and a parental acceptance and a negative correlation between EI and parental avoidance. There was not however a significant correlation between EI and parental concentration. Usakli (2013) compared behavioural proclivities of children in one and two parent households. Results indicate that there was indeed a significant difference between the two groups. Children from one parent homes tended to be more aggressive and submissive and less assertive.

A significant amount of research has been done around emotional intelligence and relationships with one's parental figures. Yet, there is a lack of research focused on whether the type and number of parental figures one has influences their emotional intelligence levels. This study aims to target this gap. This study will research 0 and 1 vs 2 parent homes, biological vs non- biological parents and its influence on respective children's EI levels. Though there is no evidence of causation between number of parents in a home and emotional intelligence, past studies have found a relationship between the two (Amato, 2005).

Difference in results calls for further study to test which gender is more emotionally intelligent, if there is indeed a difference (Ahmad, Bangash and Khan, 2009) (King,

1999; Sutarso, 1999; Wing and Love, 2001 and Singh, 2002). Acquiring knowledge on this topic can inform future interventions in which directions to focus on more in relation to improving emotional intelligence. Pool and Qualter (2012), found that it is possible to develop emotional intelligence through teachable interventions. Past research indicates a difference in behavioral tendencies between children from one parent homes compared to that of two parent homes (Usakli, 2013). This suggests that the number of parental figures might influence oneself. This study is beneficial as it will show if number and type of caregiver one has will influence their emotional intelligence level. Knowing and understanding this information will be useful when trying to comprehend and predict one's emotional intelligence level. Future studies can develop from this research and investigate what exact components of one's caregivers influence EI. The reason for the difference in emotional intelligence levels between males and females can also be examined. In doing so, one can review the difference and understand what it is rooted in. From this understanding, future studies can implement this and try increase EI of the general public.

A study conducted by Vernon, Petrides, Bratko and Schermer (2008), supports the idea of emotional intelligence being a hereditary trait. After testing parents and their child's emotional intelligence levels, researchers found that there was a correlation between the two. They concluded that one's emotional intelligence levels can be accredited to genetics. In addition, the same researcher further their research to fully test whether emotional intelligence was due to nature or nurture. Vernon, Petrides, Bratko and Schermer tested 632 twin's emotional intelligence (2008). Results showed that monozygotic twin correlations were more than twice as large as dizygotic twin correlations. This supports the findings from their previous study that emotional intelligence levels are heavily due to genetics. In other words, people are susceptible to a certain level of emotional intelligence based on that of their parents. Vernon and colleagues

also tested emotional intelligence along with humour styles and the correlations with genetics and environmental factors and found similar results (2009). Results from their study assists the hypothesis that emotional intelligence is influenced by genetics as it was found in the case of their sample of 1,968 twin pairs. An ANOVA test ran on EI levels scores parents and their children demonstrates that mothers and students were more emotionally intelligent than fathers. Researchers found that there was strong correlation of emotional intelligence between mothers and their children (Guastello & Guastello, 2003).

### **Aims**

The current study aims to research whether females are more emotionally intelligent than males. It also intends to investigate the relationship between the type and number of parental figures in a household and the level of emotional intelligence of their youth. Parental figures will be asked about in a questionnaire. Emotional intelligence will be measured using the Rotterdam Emotional Intelligence Scale.

### **Hypothesis**

It is hypothesised that there will be a significant difference in emotional intelligence scores between females and males. Females are expected to score higher in the emotional intelligence test. The number and type of parental figures in a household is predicted to correspond to the level of emotional intelligence of the children of the household. More specifically, it is believed that those from two parent homes will be more emotionally intelligent than one parent homes and people from a two biological parent home to be score higher in REIS than their peers from one biological parent homes.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

The questionnaire received 176 responses, 104 of which completed it in its entirety. Partakers of this study consisted of 104 people over the age of 18. There was an unequal ratio of females (N = 84) to males (N = 20). Though there was no limit on maximum age, the oldest participant was 49 years old, while majority of participants were 20 years old (M = 21.10, SD = 4.399). Participants were recruited through convenience sampling. The survey was shared on social media platforms, sent through emails and forwarded as direct links. Using the snowball sampling technique, participants were asked to send the survey to their friends and family. This was a voluntary study and therefore was no deception used, or incentives offered to partakers. An exclusion criterion was set which excludes those under the age of 18, those with severe mental issues and those that do not understand English from participating in the study.

### **Design**

This was a cross-sectional, quantitative study. A cross-sectional design was used as it was the most suitable for the purposes of this research and the time allocated to it. An online questionnaire was used to collect data. The dependent variable in this study is emotional intelligence levels, the independent variables are gender and type and number of parental figures. This is a correlational design where the relationship between males, females, type and number of primary caregivers and number of which are biological was explored using statistical analysis through SPSS. Though a t-test would usually be sufficient to test for the difference between two groups, it does not allow for abnormal distributions. Therefore, due to the abnormal distribution of data from participants, the difference between males and females was tested using a non-

parametric test, Mann-Whitney U test. The two independent variables for hypothesis two are number of parents in one's household growing up and number of biological parents one had which were both divided into two groups (group 1: 0&1, group 2: 2). The dependent variables were the subscales of emotional intelligence; self-focused emotional appraisal, other-focused emotional appraisal, self-focused emotional regulation and other-focused emotional regulation. A two-way between groups ANOVA was employed to test for the effect of the independent variables on emotional intelligence.

### **Materials**

A survey was created for the purposes of this study. An information sheet which detailed what the study is about, possible risk of distress, participants' rights and the researchers contact information was provided (appendix A). Before commencing the questionnaire, partakers were given a consent form stating that they fit the inclusion criteria, understand their rights and are willingly participating (appendix B). Demographic based questions, prepared by the researcher, such as age and gender were asked at the start of the questionnaire (appendix C). Following this were a composition of questions aimed at parental figures. The Rotterdam Emotional Intelligence Scale (REIS) was employed in this survey to test for emotional intelligence. This test is in the form of a 28-item questionnaire on a Likert scale from 1 being totally disagree to 5, totally agreeing. This questionnaire focuses on testing four factors of emotional intelligence; self-focused emotion appraisal, other-focused emotion appraisal, self-focused emotion regulation and other-focused emotion regulation (Pekaar, Bakker, van der Linden & Born, 2018). This scale showed to be both reliable and valid for testing emotional intelligence. This scale scored moderate intercorrelations ( $0.19 < r < 0.45$ ). Each of the dimensions shown to be reliable, self-focused emotion appraisal ( $\alpha$

= .82), other-focused emotion appraisal ( $\alpha = .85$ ), self-focused emotion regulation ( $\alpha = .80$ ) and other-focused emotion regulation ( $\alpha = .82$ ). The REIS was compared to the WLEIS and showed to be valid in testing for the four aimed aspects of emotional intelligence. The total score of participants' emotional intelligence were calculated by adding the response score for each question. Low scores signify overall low emotional intelligence while high total scores indicate high levels of emotional intelligence. This scale was chosen over others to for the purposes of this study because it showed high reliability while taking only a short period of time to complete. Finally, those who completed the questionnaire were provided with a debrief form (appendix D). This form thanked participation, restated aims of study and provided contact details for those who may have experienced distress.

### **Procedure**

Participants were sent the survey through email, text or on social media platforms. All participants were given the same questionnaire and were all be treated with equal respect and fairness. Identities of partakers were kept anonymous. Once the link was opened, participants were first presented with the information sheet. After reading the brief, participants must click a box on the consent form signifying that they meet the inclusion criteria, have read and understood their rights and are willingly participating. If the waiver is not ticked it will be assumed that the person does not want to participate, in which case they will not be directed to the questionnaire and they will be able to exit the page. The next step consists of participants completing demographic questions followed by a series of questions targeted at asking about the parents they were raised by. Participants were asked to signify which category of parental figure they grew up with, either 0, 1 parent or 2 parents and either 0, 1 or 2 biological parents. It was

explained to participants that for the purposes of this study, a biological parent refers to one's birth parents only. After this, the REIS was presented to test for emotional intelligence.

Participants were asked to respond to the statements from the scale and signify how much they agree or disagree with each. A brief description precedes each section to make participants aware of what each section is aimed for. Lastly, participants were presented with the debrief form and offered contact details in case of distress. This whole process approximately ten minutes to complete in entirety for participants.

Ethical considerations were made with participants' wellbeing a prominent factor. Therefore, no deception was used in this study and no harm was intended. Participants were made aware of all possible risks they may face including emotional distress. As this study asks about the type and number of parental figures participants had growing up, this may lead to distress for some. Being asked about parents may trigger some emotions or memories that may cause distress. Participants may have experienced emotional distress if they are to think about parents that have passed away, are no longer in their lives or have a bad memory of them. People who have gone through traumatic experiences with parental figures may also experience emotional distress. Support services were advertised along with their contact details at the end of the questionnaire with the intent to help relieve distress caused by participation. Links to mindfulness sites to help relieve the stress were also advertised. To conclude, participants were asked to submit their responses to be recorded. The NCI ethical guidelines for procedures for research involving human participants were followed throughout this study. This study received ethical approval before commencing. Participation was completely voluntary and right of withdrawal with no consequences was made clear.



## **Results**

The Cronbach's alpha for the current study scored .88 for the questionnaire used for this particular sample. This score is an indication of good reliability of the study meaning there is good internal consistency of the scale employed.

### **Descriptive**

Descriptive statistics were analysed on the sample results. There was an outstanding difference between numbers of female participants compared to males. Females outnumbered males. Majority of partakers come from a two-parent home compared to a zero or one parents home. Partakers were predominately raised by two biological parents while few were raised with none or one biological parents (see table 1).

Emotional intelligence was tested on four sub-categories, self-focused emotional appraisal, other-focused emotional appraisal, self-focused emotional regulation and other-focused emotional regulation. There was an across the board moderate to high levels of other-focused emotional regulation. The lowest scoring sub-category was self-focused emotional regulation (see table 2).

Table 1. Categorical variables

Frequencies for the current sample of participants on each demographic variable (N = 104).

Variable	Frequency	Valid percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Females	84	80.8
Males	20	19.2
<b>Number of parents</b>		
0&1	37	35.6
2	67	64.4
<b>Number of biological parents</b>		
0&1	22	21.2
2	82	78.8

Table 2. Continuous variables

Descriptive statistics of all continuous variables.

	Mean (95% confidence intervals)	Std. Error mean	Median	SD	Range
Self-focused emotional appraisal	25.5 (24.5-26.5)	.511	26	5.2	7-35
Other-focused emotional appraisal	27.0 (26.1-28.0)	.488	27	5.0	9-35
Self-focused emotional regulation	25.0 (23.9-26.1)	.557	25	5.7	7-35
Other-focused emotional regulation	26.1 (25.1-27.1)	.492	26	5.0	14-35

## Inferential

### Mann-Whitney U

Results from study violated assumptions of normality but did not violate the assumption of homogeneity of variances and therefore, a non-parametric test was used to analyse the data. A Mann-Whitney test indicated that emotional intelligence was greater for males (mean rank = 65.0) than for females (mean rank = 49.5)  $U = 591.0$ ,  $p = .040$  and the standardised test statistic (z score) = -2.1 (see table 3 & 4).

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U test

Difference between genders on emotional intelligence.

	Gender	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Total emotional intelligence	Female	84	49.5	4161
	Male	20	65.0	1299
	Total	104		

Table 4. Test statistics

Test statistics of Mann-Whitney U test.

	Total emotional intelligence
Mann-Whitney U	591.0
Wilcoxon W	4161.0
Z	-2.1
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.040

## ANOVA

### Self-focused emotional appraisal

Though data was not normally distributed, an ANOVA is robust and allows for abnormal distribution and was employed to analyse data. A two-way between groups ANOVA was

conducted to investigate the impact of number of biological parents and number parents in a home on self-focused emotional appraisal. Partakers were divided into two groups according the number of parents in their home growing up (Group 1: 2 parents = 67; Group 2: 1 and 0 parents = 22) and the number of which are biological (Group 1: 2 biologicals = 82; Group 2: 1 and 0 biological = 22). The interaction effect between number of parents and biological parents was not statistically significant,  $F(1,100) = .067, p = .796$ . There was not a statistically significant main effect for number of biological parents,  $F(1,100) = 1.283, p = .260$  or for the number of parents in one's household,  $F(1, 100) = .780, p = .379$  (see table 5).

#### Other-focused emotional appraisal

A two-way between groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the effect of the number of parents and number of biological parents on other-focused emotional appraisal level. There was not a statistically interaction between the effects of number of parental figures and number of biological parents on participants' other-focused emotional appraisal,  $F(1,100) = .062, p = .805$ . Simple main effects analysis showed that there was no significant significance with number of parents,  $F(1, 100) = .229, p = .633$  or with the number of biological parents,  $F(1, 100) = .258, p = .612$  (see table 5).

#### Self-focused emotional regulation

A two-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted that examined the impact of the number of parents in a home growing up and the number of parents that were biological. There was not a statistically interaction between the effects of number of parental figures and number of biological parents on participants' self-focused emotional regulation,  $F(1,100) = .005, p =$

.947. There was no found statistical significance with either the number of parents in a home,  $F(1, 100) = .828, p = .365$  (see table 5).

#### Other-focused emotional regulation

A two-way between-groups analysis of variance was carried out to examine the effects of number of parents one was raised by and the number of which were biological had on partakers' other-focused regulation levels. There was not a statistically interaction between the effects of number of parental figures and number of biological parents on participants' self-focused emotional regulation.,  $F(1,100) = .074 p = .786$ . There was a statistically significant effect from the number of parents in one's household,  $F(1, 100) = .431, p = .513$  and number of biological parents,  $F(1,100) = .040, p = .842$  (see table 5).

Table 5. Two-way ANOVA

Group differences between groups of number of parents and number of biological parents for emotional intelligence.

Variable	Group	Catego- ries	N	M	SD	F	p
<b>Self- focused emotional appraisal</b>	Number of parents	0&1 2	37 67	25.9 25.3	5.7 5.0	.780	.379
	Number of biological parents	0&1 2	22 82	24.6 25.7	6.1 5.0		
<b>Other- focused emotional appraisal</b>	Number of parents	0&1 2	37 67	26.9 27.1	4.6 5.2	.229	.633
	Number of biological parents	0&1 2	22 82	27.4 27.0	3.6 5.3		
<b>Self- focused emotional appraisal</b>	Number of parents	0&1 2	37 67	24 25.6	6.0 5.5	.828	.365
	Number of biological parents	0&1 2	22 82	23.7 25.4	4.8 5.9		
<b>Other- focused emotional appraisal</b>	Number of parents	0&1 2	37 67	26.5 25.9	4.8 5.2	.431	.513
	Number of biological parents	0&1 2	22 82	26.1 26.1	5.4 5.0		

### Discussion

The aim of this study was to test whether females would score higher in emotional intelligence than males. It was also to investigate whether the number of parents in a home and the number of which are biological parents would influence emotional intelligence levels of their children. It was hypothesised that females would score higher in the REIS than males. It was also expected that those from a two-parent home and those who were raised with two biological parents would have higher levels of emotional intelligence than their peers from one parent and one biological parent homes.

Since data was not normally distributed, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed to test the difference between gender in relation to emotional intelligence. It was found that contrary to the hypothesis, males were more emotionally intelligent than females. Results from the two-way between groups ANOVA suggests no effect on the four areas of emotional intelligence by the number of parents one had in their home growing up or the number of biological parents in a home, again differing from the hypothesis. This implies that no difference exists between those with 0, 1 or 2 biological parents and those raised by 0, 1 or 2 parents in relation to self-focused emotional appraisal, other-focused emotional appraisal, self-focused emotional regulation and other-focused emotional regulation.

The discrepancy between hypothesis and results may be due to the sample used in the study. Majority of participants were females and therefore there was not a fair representation of the male population. The result from the Mann-Whitney U test is similar to those of Ajmal, Javed and Javed (2017), who also found males to score higher in emotional intelligence than females in prior study. The findings are useful as it can lead to further study to understand why this difference exists between genders. It is also useful to inform the work field that require certain emotional intelligence skills. As we develop, more businesses and employers understand the benefits of having employees with a good emotional intelligence skillset especially for leadership roles (Goleman, 2011). Emotional intelligence is growing to become a crucial aspect for success (Jain, 2018). It has been previously found that people with high emotional intelligence levels are high performers as they are able to motivate themselves and reach goals (Jain, 2018). Further research has found emotional intelligence to be a predictor of job satisfaction (Adil & Kamal, 2016). Therefore, understanding the difference between genders in EI levels can influence employers' decisions when hiring for specific roles.

Findings from this study can impact therapy sessions in regard to the way they approach males and females. Deep comprehension of the conclusions can lead therapies in the right directions with what to focus on. As was mentioned by Pool and Qualter (2012), emotional intelligence can be strengthened through interventions. Knowing that there is a difference between genders can allow for specific targeted regimes for each. A study aiming to investigate whether increasing emotional intelligence is possible found that teaching interventions significantly increases the EI levels of university students. After eleven two-hour classes, partakers emotional intelligence and self-efficacy levels drastically increased (Dacre & Qualter, 2012).

Due to the several stressors young people face through day to day life, especially those that are emerged in social media, it is easy to develop feelings of sadness or depressive symptomatology. Past research indicates that young adults who spend long periods on social media are more likely to develop depression than those who rarely use them (Lin et al, 2016). It is advantageous for schools to be more understanding of emotional intelligence and make it a point of action to train students on being aware and increasing their emotional intelligence. In particularly those with smartphones and access to social media. As stated by Bhatia (2012), emotional intelligence enables one to be able to express and control emotions appropriately. Wolfe (2019) found that students with low EI levels who attended short Emotional Intelligence classes had increased levels of EI. Therefore, the findings from this study can direct schools to pay more attention to emotional intelligence of their students and aiming to help increase it.

Past studies found a relationship between parents' relationship and the outcomes for their children and the whole family unit (Amato, 2005). Similar to the present study, Amato



investigated the difference between children with two biological parents and those with one (2005). He explains that those raised by two biological parents are less likely to face negative outcomes in life including low emotional intelligence levels. The conclusions drawn from this research can inform parents and childcare services on how to best cater for the children's' emotional needs. This can enlighten them on the family structure for children. As mentioned by Amato, children raised in a two-parent home are less prone to facing stressful events throughout their life and tend to have better quality of life than their peers from a one parent home (2005). Therefore, parents should be mindful and considerate when planning on having, adopting or fostering children. To increase chances of success in the workplace, avoiding stressors and developing high emotional intelligence, a two-parent home is crucial.

### **Limitations**

A possible flaw of this research study is the nature of the questionnaire used to collect data. a self-report analyses of one's emotional intelligence was employed for the purposes of this study and this may have resulted in undependable results from participants and contributed to the results found. Though the sample had equal variance, unequal numbers of males and females make the results of the current study not generalisable as it is not a fair representation of the population. There were also uneven numbers between different parent groups which could be the reason for the lack of statistical significance.

Confounding variables were not accounted for during this research. This study failed to account for different circumstances of partakers family structure. A one parent home where the parents have been divorced compared to a one parent home due to the death of a parent could yield different results in emotional intelligence of children of the household. In addition, this

study assumed that it is solely the presence of these parental figures that influence emotional intelligence levels rather than experiences one may face in the household such as divorce, bereavement or being in foster care.

## **Conclusion**

Results from this study oppose the hypotheses. Males were found to have higher emotional intelligent scores than females, contradictory to what was predicted. There was no observed effect of number of parents and number of which are biological on EI levels.

This study filled the gap in the literature by focusing on the number of biological parents and number of parental figures within a home. However, results should be interpreted with caution as there are shortcomings of this study. The abnormality of distribution could negatively affect the conclusions drawn from the current study. It cannot be generalised to the population as it does not fair depict the whole population.

Future studies should consider testing people from different forms of family structures such as blended families, those who have been through the loss of a parent, those in foster care, those who witnessed divorce and those who were raised with one or two parents throughout their upbringing. An investigation should be carried out to find whether it is the presence of parents or the events one goes through in their home that affects emotional intelligence. A longitudinal test could be used to track the emotional intelligence of people throughout their lifetime and compare those who had negative experiences in their homes with those who did not. More longitudinal studies focusing on the fluctuation of emotional intelligence levels with age.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. Information sheet

#### Emotional intelligence and parental figures

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

#### WHO I AM AND WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT?

My name is Aliyah Oroyinyin and I am conducting this study to examine the effects of parental figures on emotional intelligence. The aim of the study is to investigate if the number and type of parental figure one has influences one's emotional intelligence level. This study is also interested in discovering whether there is a difference between females and males in their emotional intelligence levels. This research study is being carried out as part of my undergraduate psychology degree.

#### WHAT WILL TAKING PART INVOLVE?

Taking part in this study will require participants to complete an online emotional intelligence test and state the number and type of parental figure they have. Participation is estimated to take 15 minutes in total.

#### WHY HAVE YOU BEEN INVITED TO TAKE PART?

College or university students between the ages of 18 and 25 are needed for the study. People who suffer from mental disabilities including learning disabilities will not be able to partake.

#### DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART?

Participation of this research is completely voluntary. Participants have the right to refuse participation and refuse further questions. Participants also have the right to withdraw from study at any time before submission. However, please note that after data is submitted there is unable to withdraw data as it will be unidentifiable. There will be no consequence from withdrawing from study before submission.

#### WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

Taking part in this study can possible lead to emotional distress if participants are reminded of traumatic or undesired memories about parental figures. However, there will be a list of contact details of support services and physicians to help ease emotional distress if it should occur.

#### WILL TAKING PART BE CONFIDENTIAL?

Questionnaires will be confidential and anonymous. Questions about personal identity will not be asked. Participants will have the opportunity to opt for receiving result from emotional intelligence score, in which case an email address will be required. However, once results are sent to those who opted to receive them, emails will be destroyed. A consent form stating participant fits inclusion criteria must be ticked before taking part.

#### HOW WILL INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE BE RECORDED, STORED AND PROTECTED?

Information received from participants will be stored unidentifiable on a laptop until the end of the research when all data will be destroyed. The only person with access with the data will be the researcher. Data will not be shared with any other researcher or research companies.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY?**

The results from this study will be used in the research for submission as part of my undergraduate psychology course.

**WHO SHOULD YOU CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION?**

For further information please contact researcher.

Researcher.

Aliyah Oroyinyin,

x17303641@student.ncirl.ie

Supervisor

matthew.hudson@ncirl.ie

Thank you in advance for your participation and contribution.

Appendix B. Consent form

**Participant consent form**

I have read and understand the information sheet provide in relation to this study. I agree to the terms of this study and will answer all questions honestly. I fit the inclusion criteria for participation of this study. I understand that there is a risk of emotional distress following this study. I am willingly participating in this study.

Do you wish to participate in this study?

Yes

Appendix C. Questionnaire

**Demographics**

**Age**

**Gender**

Female

Male

Prefer not to say

**Parental figures**

How many parents were in your household growing up?

0

1

2

How many years has this been the case?

What is the gender of parent 1?

Female

Male

What is the gender of parent 2?

Female

Male

How many of your parents are your biological parents?

0

1

2

**Rotterdam Emotional Intelligence Scale**

**REIS**

**Self-focused emotion appraisal**

1 I always know how I feel.

2 I can distinguish my own emotions well.

3 I am aware of my own emotions.

4 I understand why I feel the way I feel.

5 I know which emotions I experience.

6 Mostly, I am able to explain exactly how I feel.

7 I can judge well if events touch me emotionally.

**Other-focused emotion appraisal**

8 I am aware of the emotions of the people around me.

9 I know which feelings others experience.

10 When I look at other people, I can see how they feel.

11 I can empathize with the people around me.

12 I understand why other people feel the way they feel.

13 I can distinguish well between other people's emotions.

14 I can judge well if events touch others emotionally.

**Self-focused emotion regulation**

15 I am in control of my own emotions.

16 I can suppress my emotions easily.

17 I do not let my emotions take over.

18 I only show my emotions when it is appropriate.

19 Even when I am angry, I can stay calm.

20 If I want to, I put on my poker face.

21 I adjust my emotions when necessary.

**Other-focused emotion regulation**

22 I can make someone else feel differently.

23 I can alter another person's emotional state.



- 24 I can boost or temper the emotions of others.  
25 I have great influence on how others feel.  
26 I know what to do to improve people's mood.  
27 I know how to influence people.  
28 I am able to calm others down.

#### Appendix D. Debrief sheet

##### **Experiment Debrief Information**

##### **Emotional intelligence and parental figures**

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Please note, once submitted, you will not be able to withdraw your responses. This is the last opportunity to withdraw from participation.

This study was conducted to examine the effects of parental figures on emotional intelligence. The aim of the study is to investigate if the number and type of parental figure one has influences one's emotional intelligence level. This study is also interested in discovering whether there is a difference between females and males in their emotional intelligence levels. Previous research suggests a positive correlation between family structure and emotional intelligence. Past studies show that there is a difference between females and males emotional intelligence level although results are not consistent.

The results from this research will be submitted as part of my undergraduate psychology coursework.

In case of severe distress, please seek professional assistance.

Contacts for further questions:

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Supervisor

Matthew Hudson

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Contacts in case of distress:

Samaritans

(01) 671 0071

Mindfulness

<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>

<http://www.freemindfulness.org/download>

