

## Emotional Competence and Self-Esteem Amongst Young Adults Raised in Single and Dual-Parent Households

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### ABSTRACT

Emotional competency and self-esteem of young adults (N=60, aged 18-25) raised in single-parent versus dual-parent households were compared. Emotional competency and self-esteem impact relationships, psychological adjustment, and overall wellness. It was hypothesized that early experiences and family structure indirectly influence the development of emotional intelligence and self-concept. The Emotional Competency Scale evaluated emotion expression, regulation, augmentation, and ability to operate with emotions. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale assessed global self-esteem and confidence across domains like academics and social interactions. Age, gender, and socioeconomic status were controlled. Strong parent-child connections were thought to reduce group differences regardless of family structure. Results from t-tests showed young adults raised by single parents exhibited weaker emotion regulation abilities and reported lower global self-esteem. Dual parenting offers benefits for emotional intelligence and self-perception. Positive, warm parent-child relationships could counteract the risks of single parenthood. This study elucidates factors supporting resilience and healthy development independent of family structure. Future research directions and limitations are discussed.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Competence, Single-Parent, Dual-Parent, Self-Esteem*

Emotional competency and self-esteem are crucial for psychological adjustment and well-being, particularly during young adulthood (Arnett, 2000). Family structure during childhood, specifically single-parent versus dual-parent households, may profoundly impact socioemotional development (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000; Sigle-Rushton et al., 2014). Emotional competency refers to effectively identifying, understanding, expressing, and regulating emotions (Saarni, 1999). Self-esteem is one's subjective evaluation of self-worth and capabilities (Orth & Robins, 2019). Both contribute to resilience. Research suggests children raised in single-parent homes tend to display slightly more behavioral problems, poorer emotional adjustment, and lower self-esteem compared to dual-parent counterparts (Biblarz & Gottainer, 2000). However, outcomes vary substantially within family types, indicating complex, indirect effects. Social selection, parental relationship dynamics, and socioeconomic status may confound associations (Amato, 2001). According to attachment theory, caregiver relationships shape a child's working models of self and others (Bowlby, 1988). Sensitive parenting promotes secure attachment and positive

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**Received: April 18, 2024; Revision Received: May 12, 2024; Accepted: May 16, 2024**

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self-views, while inconsistent parenting may instill insecure attachment and diminished self-worth (McClelland & Judd, 1993; Booth et al., 2010; Khaleque, 2017). Family structure also indirectly impacts socioemotional development via household resources and environments (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994; Biblarz & Raftery, 1993).

This quantitative study examines emotional competency and self-esteem differences between young adults (18-25) raised in single-parent versus dual-parent households (N=100). The Emotional Competency Inventory (Sala, 2002) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) will assess emotional competency and self-esteem, respectively. Analyses will determine significant differences between family structure groups, controlling for demographics. It is hypothesized that young adults from single-parent families will show lower emotional competency and self-esteem compared to those from dual-parent families. Findings will clarify how family structure, family relationship quality, and social resources uniquely contribute to socioemotional development in young adulthood, guiding family support programs and interventions. Limitations include the correlational design and self-report measures. Future research should explore variability across diverse single-parent family subtypes.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Yang, et al. (2023) studied that various family circumstances will impact families with a single parent to varying degrees. To learn about the junior middle school students' self-evaluations of their present family and school performance, a number of them from single-parent households will be interviewed as part of this qualitative research project. The study's findings demonstrate the significant influence of family characteristics on teenagers from single-parent households. They want company and attention, are frequently sensitive, and have low self-esteem. Thus, the parent's company is paramount in a single-parent household.

Sun, J., et al (2022) discussed that for school-age children, the COVID-19 epidemic and the ensuing government-mandated shutdowns caused disruptions to their education, socialization, and family life in the spring of 2020. Behavior issues were substantially predicted by parent distress, meaning that children with behavioral issues also had more distressed parents. Regarding behavioral issues in children, no interactions were found between children's social-emotional skills and parent distress.

Garcia, et al. (2020) looked at the relationship between parenting philosophies (authoritative, indulgent, authoritarian, and neglectful) and the psychosocial adjustment of adults, as well as the generational differences in severe and loving parenting techniques. The results showed two distinct patterns of cross-generational parenting practices: a tendency towards parental strictness (parents use less physical punishment, verbal reprimands, and privilege revocation across generations) and a tendency towards parental warmth (parents use more affection and reasoning but less indifference).

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Aim***

To study the difference between emotional competency and self-esteem amongst young adults raised in single and dual-parent families.

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### Objectives

- To assess the differences in self-esteem among young adults from single-parent and dual-parent family families.
- To assess the differences in emotional competence among young adults from single-parent and dual-parent families.

### Hypotheses

- **H1.** There will be significant difference in emotional competency amongst single and dual-parent families.
- **H2.** There will be significant difference in self-esteem amongst single and dual-parent families.

### Sample

Equal proportions of young adults (N=60) aged 18 to 25, who were raised in single- parent and two-parent households were included.

### Variables

- INDEPENDENT VARIABLE- Family structure (single vs dual)
- DEPENDENT VARIABLES- Emotional competency and self-esteem

### Tools Used

1. **Emotional Competence Scale (ECS)** by Dr. Harish Sharma & Dr. Rajeev Lochan Bharadwaj (1998). It is 30 items, 5-point Likert scale that measures 5 dimensions of emotional competence with a reliability of 0.74 (test-retest), 0.76 (split-half), and validity of 0.64 (A), 0.69 (C)
2. **Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE)** by Morris Rosenberg (1965). It is 10 items scale (5 positive, 5 negative) to gauge self-esteem, with test-retest reliability of 0.85 - 0.88

## ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

### T-Test Independent Sample Test – EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

VARIABLE	N	t	df	P
<b>Emotional Competence</b>				
SINGLE	30	-1.480	58	
DUAL	30	-1.480	57.734	0.144

In the above table, the t-test suggests that there is no difference in emotional competence amongst single and dual-parent families ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

### T-Test Independent Sample Test- SELF-ESTEEM

VARIABLE	N	t	df	P
<b>Self-esteem</b>				
SINGLE	30	-.525	58	0.601
DUAL	30	-.525	43.698	0.602

In the above table, the t-test suggests that there is no difference in self-esteem amongst single and dual-parent families ( $p > 0.05$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected.

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The study aimed to examine the differences between emotional competence and self-esteem among young adults raised in single-parent and dual-parent families. Emotional competence refers to the ability to identify, understand, express, and regulate emotions effectively, while self-esteem is the subjective evaluation of one's worth and capabilities.

Previous research has presented mixed findings on the impact of family structure on psychosocial outcomes like emotional competence and self-esteem. Some studies suggest that children raised in single-parent families may be disadvantaged compared to those in dual-parent households (Sloan, 2020), while others have found no significant differences (Kensinger & McKenry, 2001). Lahiri and Verma (2023) highlighted that low self-esteem is one of the major impairments observed in children from single-parent families. Their review identified factors such as parental adjustment, economic status, parenting style, family conflict, custody arrangements, communication with stepparents, family functioning, and the availability of extended family support as influencing self-esteem in single-parent households.

The current study hypothesized a significant difference between emotional competence and self-esteem among young adults from both single-parent and dual-parent families. However, the findings revealed that differences in emotional competence and self-esteem between the two groups were found to be insignificant.

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### ***Acknowledgment***

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Dhingra, K. & Saxena, T. (2024). Emotional Competence and Self-Esteem Amongst Young Adults Raised in Single and Dual-Parent Households. *International Journal of Social Impact*, 9(2), 106-110. DIP: 18.02.014/20240902, DOI: 10.25215/2455/0902014