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ESTABLISHING ASSOCIATION BETWEEN MATERNAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MOTHERING

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Abstract

Working mothers are twice as laden with both managing work outside the home as well as inside the home. Irrespective of their employment status they are the predominant caregivers to their children across all age groups. The present research explores the level of maternal emotional intelligence, assesses the mother-child relationship in families with preschoolers and adolescents and; also assesses the relationship between maternal emotional intelligence and her mothering. The sample of the present study comprised of 120 working mothers (60 mothers of preschoolers and 60 mothers of adolescents) selected randomly from 28 government schools of Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir. Tools used for gathering the data were a standardized Parenting Relationship Questionnaire (Kamphaus and Reynold, 2006) and Emotional Intelligence Scale (Chadha and Singh, 2003), supported by on spot observation. Results reveal that majority of the sample mothers had high emotional intelligence. Statistically significant differences were noted in the emotional intelligence of mothers with preschoolers and adolescents, with mothers of the later group having higher levels of it. Component wise most sample working mothers showed moderate emotional sensitivity and emotional maturity and higher level of emotional competency. Comparatively, working mothers of adolescents had higher emotional sensitivity and emotional competency than the mothers of preschoolers. Analysis of the mother-child relationship reveals that most mothers shared average to above average attachment, below average to average discipline practices, average involvement, average to above average parenting confidence and average to below average relation frustration with their children. There were significant differences in parenting of working mothers of preschoolers and adolescents on four dimensions namely, attachment, discipline, involvement, and relation frustration. Results also highlight that maternal emotional intelligence and its components failed to have significant correlation with various dimensions of mother-child relationship, highlighting that other factors apart from emotional intelligence may potentially influence mothering.

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INTRODUCTION

Parenting is a complex phenomenon and has different connotations associated with it. The role of parents in the development of children is paramount at all stages of life. Parents besides being the primary caregivers are also responsible for the socialization of children and their integration into the social system. Though the role of both the fathers as well as the mothers tend to be of importance, yet the role mothers play is greatly acknowledged. In cultures like ours the mothers are associated with the enduring role of a caretaker and as being responsible for

providing love and affection to children. On the other hand the fathers are usually seen as a breadwinners and provider, with negligible role in development of children. However, with the change in the socio cultural milieu, more and more women are getting educated and hence have joined the work force outside the family, leading to subtle changes in mothering.

Researches have highlighted the influence of maternal employment on the subsequent relationship she shares with her children. Working status of the mothers is especially beneficial in families where there are financial problems as it ensures better facilities and material resources (Brooks-Gunn et al, 2010; Lucas-Thompson, 2010). It is also suggested that mother's employment status affects the quality of emotional support she gives the children as well as the quantity of time she spends with them, factors which play a large role in children's development (Sphancer et al, 2006). Developmental theories and parenting research suggest a relationship exists between the level of emotional support provided in the home, and child behavior problems (McCarty et al, 2005).

Maternal emotional intelligence has been pointed by few studies as an excellent predictor of the parenting success they may experience. Alegre (2011) reported four main dimensions of parenting which are identified to be relevant to the study of emotional intelligence: parental responsiveness, parental positive demandingness, parental negative demandingness, and parental emotion-related coaching. Parental responsiveness, parental emotion-related coaching, and parental positive demandingness are related to children's higher emotional intelligence, while parental negative demandingness is related to children's lower emotional intelligence. Thompson (1998) indicates that children learn emotions from their parents' speeches and enhance their emotional intelligence through the bond they attach with their parents (Raikes & Thompson, 2006). In a research by Chen et al. (2005) on attitudes of parents and children's social adaptation, it has appeared that supportive parenting attitude is influential on development of children's social adaptation. Child raising attitudes of parents also affects the emotional environment of the family (Lopez et al, 2001). It was found that excessively authoritarian attitude of parents is associated with the low empathy level of child while inductive attitude is associated with high empathy level. It appears that authoritarian parents limit their child further (Marr & Ezeife, 2008). Parenting styles associated with poor child emotion regulation, dismissive and disapproving responses to displays of emotions (Gottman 1997) found dismissive parenting was associated with poorer emotion regulation and increased aggressive behavior in preschoolers. Denham (2000) found a similar relationship, and concluded that dismissive parenting may be worse for children with more difficult temperaments.

With this as background the present study was designed to assess the mother-child relationship in families with preschoolers and adolescents; assess the level of emotional intelligence of the sample mothers; and explores the relationship between maternal emotional intelligence and her mothering.

METHODOLOGY

Sample Description: The total sample for the present study consisted of 120 working mothers in the age group of 25-45 years. Of these mothers, 60 working mothers were those who had at least one preschool aged child and rest 60 working mothers were those who had at least one adolescent child. All selected mothers were government teachers and belonged to middle socioeconomic status families. Also all sample mothers belonged to joint families and were at least graduates.

Sample Locale and Sampling Technique: The entire sample was selected from urban areas of Jammu city, J&K. Since all the sample mothers were school teachers therefore their selection was done on the basis of their schools.

The entire sample was selected randomly through multi-stage sampling. In the first stage, one zone of the Jammu out of four i.e. East, West, North and South was selected by lottery method. In the second stage, a list of government schools located in selected zone of Jammu city namely Jammu east was obtained. A total of 28 schools were identified for sample selection. Each of the school was visited personally and the principal was contacted. They were required to provide the list of teachers who matched the sampling criteria. Then finally interactions were held with the working mothers (Teachers). They were explained the objectives before the process of data collection. Any confusion in the minds of the working mothers were laid off before data was collected.

Tools used for Data Collection:

On spot observations were used along with *PRQ (Parenting Relationship Questionnaire)*, instrument designed by Kamphaus and Reynolds (2006). This questionnaire is designed to capture a parent's perspective of the parent child relationship. It assesses traditional parent- child dimensions such as attachment and also provides information on parenting style, parenting confidence, stress and satisfaction with the child's school.

Emotional Intelligence Scale: The scale developed by Prof. N.K. Chadha and Dr. Dalip Singh (2003) was used to assess the emotional intelligence of the sample working mothers. The scale measures three psychological dimensions such as **emotional sensitivity, emotional maturity and emotional competency**. This test has been standardized for professional managers, businessmen, bureaucrats, artists, graduate students, and adolescent's

population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study along with their discussion are presented as follows:

1. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF WORKING MOTHERS

The emotional intelligence of the sample working mothers with preschoolers and adolescents as assessed by the use of a standardized scale is presented in the following sections.

1.1. Emotional Intelligence of the Working Mothers

Table 1 reveals data on the level of emotional intelligence of sample working mothers. Majority of the sample working mothers 57.5% (61.7% mothers of preschoolers and 58.3% mothers of adolescents) had high emotional intelligence, followed by 45% who had moderate emotional intelligence. Another 19.1% (5% mothers of preschoolers and 30% mothers of adolescents) mothers had extremely high emotional intelligence. This indicates that the mothers having higher emotional intelligence outnumbered those having low levels of it.

Comparatively statistically there was significant difference in the emotional intelligence level of the mothers of the two groups. 30% mothers of adolescents as compared to only 8.3% mothers of preschoolers exhibited extremely high emotional intelligence.

Table 1
Emotional Intelligence of the Working Mothers

Levels	Mothers of preschoolers		Mothers of adolescents			Total	
	N	%	N	%	n	%	
Ex. High	5	8.3	3	8.3	8	19.1	
High	37	61.7	32	58.3	69	57.5	
Moderate	17	28.3	10	16.7	27	45	
Low	1	1.7	-	-	1	1.7	
Ex. Low	-	-	-	-	-	-	
T o t a l	60	100	60	100	120	100	0

X^2 for the emotional Intelligence of working mothers of preschoolers and adolescents=10.525*, df= 3 table value= 7.81, *significant at 5%

1.2 Emotional Sensitivity of Sample Working Mothers

Table 2
Emotional Sensitivity of Sample Working Mothers

Levels	Mothers of preschoolers		Mothers of adolescents			Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Ex. High	8	13.3	3	16.7	11	8.1	5
High	3	5	15	25	18	15	
Moderate	40	66.7	29	48.3	69	57.5	
Low	9	15	6	10	15	12.5	
Ex. Low	-	-	-	-	-	-	
T o t a l	60	100	60	100	120	100	0

X^2 for the emotional sensitivity between mothers of preschoolers and adolescents = 10.576*, df= 3, table value=7.81, *significant at 5%

Table 2 indicates the level of emotional sensitivity among working mothers of preschoolers and adolescents. Overall, most mothers (57.5%) had moderate emotional sensitivity. Group wise most (66.6%) of the working mothers of preschoolers had moderate emotional sensitivity, followed by 15% having low emotional sensitivity. On the other hand most sample mothers of adolescents also had (48.3%) moderate emotional sensitivity. 25% had high, 16.7% had extremely high emotional sensitivity.

Calculation of X^2 reveals that there was a significant difference in the emotional sensitivity of mothers of preschoolers and mothers of adolescents, as comparatively more mothers of adolescents showed high and extremely high emotional sensitivity.

1.3 Emotional Maturity of Working Mothers

Table 3

Emotional Maturity of Working Mothers

L e v e l s	Mothers of preschoolers		Mothers of adolescents		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Ex. High	-	-	-	-	-	-
High	10	16.7	19	31.7	29	24.2
Moderate	42	70	34	56.7	76	63.3
Low	8	13.3	7	11.7	15	12.5
Ex. Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	60	100	60	100	120	100

X^2 for the emotional maturity of working mothers of preschoolers and adolescents= 3.702, df= 2, table value= 5.99, insignificant at 5%

Emotional maturity refers to the ability to understand, and manage emotions. On the whole, majority, 63.3% sample working mothers (70% and 56.7%) showed moderate emotional maturity. Another 24.2% scored high on this dimension while 12.5% scored low on emotional maturity. None of the working mothers scored extremely high and extremely low level of maturity. There was statistically no significant difference in the emotional maturity of the two groups of mothers, indicating that most of them had average emotional maturity and hence were able to understand and manage emotions well.

1.4 Emotional Competency of the Working Mothers

Table 4

Emotional Competency of the Working Mothers

L e v e l s	Mothers of preschoolers		Mothers of adolescent		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Ex. High	8	13.3	32	53.3	40	33.3
High	23	38.3	17	28.3	40	33.3
Moderate	28	46.7	14	23.3	42	35
Low	1	1.7	-	-	1	1.7
Ex. Low	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	60	100	60	100	120	100

X^2 for the emotional competency of working mothers of preschoolers and adolescents=18.486*, df= 3, table value=7.81, *significant at 5%.

Result reveals that most (35%) sample working mothers (46.7% and 23.3%) scored moderate on emotional competency. Another 33.3% working mothers showed high emotional competency and 30.8% showed very high emotional competency. None of the working mother scored extremely low on emotional competency.

Calculation of X^2 indicates that there was highly significant difference in the emotional competency among sample working mothers with preschoolers and adolescents. Data shows that more working mothers of adolescents had extremely high levels of emotional competency than the mothers of preschoolers.

Results of section 1 indicate that most mothers had high level of emotional intelligence and average to high level of emotional sensitivity, emotional maturity and emotional competence. Statistically differences were found in the emotional sensitivity, and emotional competence of mothers with preschoolers and adolescents. Adolescent's mothers outnumbered mothers of preschoolers in scoring higher on most components of emotional intelligence.

2. MOTHER-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

The mother child relationship was assessed on five dimensions namely attachment, discipline practices, involvement, parental confidence, and relation frustration. The results obtained are discussed as follows:

2.1 Attachment between Working Mothers and Children

Table 5

Attachment between Working Mothers and Children

Levels	Mothers of preschoolers		Mothers of adolescents		Total
	n	%	n	%	
Lower extreme	-	-	-	-	-
Below average	10	16.6	-	-	8.3
Average	32	53.3	21	35	44.2
Above average	18	30	35	58.3	44.2
Upper extreme	-	-	4	6.7	3.3
Total	60	100	60	100	120

X^2 for attachment between working mothers of preschoolers and adolescents = 21.736*, df= 3, table value= 11.3, *significant at 5%.

Table 5 shows the level of attachment between the mothers and their children. Overall 44.2% each, of the mother on the whole had average or above average attachment with their respective children. Most mothers of preschoolers shared (53.3%) average attachment with their preschoolers. Another 30% scored above average and 16.6% of them scored below extreme; whereas in case of mothers of adolescents most of them 58.3% scored above average and 35% scored average.

Statistically there was significant difference in the attachment pattern of mothers of preschoolers and adolescents as more mothers of adolescents showed above average attachment with their children. The results point to the fact that probably with the age the mother- child relationship becomes stronger and attachment grows stronger.

2.2 Discipline Practices of the Working Mothers

Table 6

Discipline Practices of the Working Mothers

Levels	Mothers of preschoolers		Mothers of adolescents		Total
	n	%	n	%	

Lower extreme	-	-	2	3	3	2	1	7
Below average	22	36.7	40	66.7	62	51.7		
Average	38	63.3	18	30	56	46.7		
Above Average	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Upper extreme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	60	100	60	100	120	100		

X^2 for discipline practices among working mothers= 14.369*, df= 3, table value= 9.21, *significant at 5%

Table 6 depicts the levels of discipline practices, which reflect a general sense of the parent in the establishment of rules. Majority of the sample working mothers 51.7% (36.7% of mothers of preschoolers and 66.7% of mothers of adolescents) scored in the below average category on discipline. Another 46.7% scored average on discipline practices (63.3% of mothers of the preschoolers and 30% of the mothers of adolescents). None of the working mother scored above average or in the upper category of discipline practices. This indicates that most mothers were not very strict disciplinarians with their children.

Statistically there was significant difference in the discipline practices of mothers of adolescents. Comparatively more mothers of adolescents had below average and lower extreme discipline than mothers of the other group who showed average discipline practice. Probably with young children the mothers had to use discipline to teach them few rules of life, where as with adolescents harsh discipline was not required.

2.3 Involvement of Working Mothers with their Children

Table 7

Involvement of Working Mothers with their Children

Levels	Mothers of preschoolers		Mothers of adolescents		Total	
	N	%	n	%	n	%
Lower extreme	-	-	-	-	-	-
Below average	18	30	5	8.3	20	
Average	41	68.3	31	51.7	60	
Above average	-	-	22	36.7	22	18.3
Upper extreme	1	1.7	2	3.3	3	2.5
Total	60	100	60	100	120	100

X^2 for involvement among working mothers= 31.07*, df= 3, table value= 7.81, *significant at 5%

As far as involvement with children was concerned most mothers (60%) showed average involvement. Between the mothers of the two groups though most showed average involvement however more mothers of adolescents fell in the above average and upper extreme categories of involvement than the mothers of preschoolers. This highlights that probably with the young children the mothers used other supports and hence showed lesser involvement. However, as their children reached teenage they showed more involvement. Calculation of chisquare also indicates statistically significant difference in the level of involvement of mothers of the two groups.

2.4 Parenting Confidence

Table 8
Parenting Confidence

L e v e l s	Mothers of preschoolers			Mothers of adolescents			Total
	N	%	n	%	n	%	
Lower extreme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Below average	9	15	4	6.6	13	10.8	
Average	36	60	43	71.7	79	65.8	
Above average	15	25	12	20	27	22.5	
Upper extreme	-	-	1	1.7	1	0.8	
Total	60	100	60	100	120	100	

X^2 for parenting confidence among working mothers=3.877, df= 3, table value= 7.81, insignificant at 5%

Table 8 depicts the level of parenting confidence, which refers to parents feeling of comfort, control and confidence when making parenting decisions. Most of the sample mothers (65.8%), of which 60% mothers of preschoolers and 71.7% mothers of adolescents had average parental confidence. Apart from these 22.5% mothers (25% mothers of preschoolers and 20% mothers of adolescents) scored significantly above average in parenting confidence.

Analysis of parenting confidence of the two groups reveals that there was insignificant difference in the parenting confidence between them, as mothers of both the groups had average to above average parenting confidence.

2.5 Relation Frustration of Working Mothers

Table 9
Relation Frustration of Working Mothers

L e v e l s	Mothers of preschoolers			Mothers of adolescents			Total
	n	%	n	%	n	%	
Lower extreme	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Below average	31	51.7	19	31.7	50	41.7	
Average	18	30	36	60	54	45	
Above average	5	8.3	4	6.7	9	7.5	
Upper extreme	6	10	1	1.7	7	5.8	
Total	60	100	60	100	120	100	

X^2 for Relation Frustration among working mothers= 12.563*, df= 3, table value= 7.81 , *significant at 5%

Table 9 depicts the level of relation frustration which reflects the parent's level of stress or distress in relating to and controlling the behavior and affect of the child, along with the tendency to overreact and become and become frustrated in common parenting situation. Most of the sample working mothers 45% (30% mothers of preschoolers and 60% mothers of adolescents) had average relation frustration. Another 41.7% (51.7% mothers of

preschoolers and 31.7% mothers of adolescent) scored significantly below average on relation frustration. Another 7.5% and 5.8% had scored significantly above average and upper extreme respectively. This means that most mothers encountered either average or below average relation frustration in dealing with the children.

Comparatively, mothers of preschoolers had lesser frustration than mothers of adolescents as statistically also this difference was significant.

Result of section 2 indicates that most mothers shared average to above average attachment, below average to average discipline practices, average involvement, average to above average parenting confidence and average to below average relation frustration with their children. The mother-child relationship in most cases was moderate in nature with no major conflicts or frustration. Use of statistical procedure points that there are significant differences between working mothers of preschoolers and adolescents on dimensions namely, attachment, discipline, involvement and relation frustration. Statistically there was significant difference in the attachment pattern of mothers of preschoolers and mothers of adolescents. As more mothers of adolescents showed above average attachment with their children. The results point to the fact that probably with the age mother-child relationship became stronger. Comparatively more mothers of adolescents had below extreme and lower extreme discipline practices than mothers of other group who showed average discipline practices. Probably with young children the mothers had to use discipline to teach them few rules where as with adolescents harsh discipline was not required. Mothers of adolescents showed more involvement than the mothers of preschoolers. Probably as mother continued to parent their children; they became more confident and sure. Mothers of preschoolers had lesser frustration than mothers of adolescents as statistically also this difference was significant.

3. INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MATERNAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MOTHERING

In order to assess the correlation between emotional intelligence and mother-child relationship, Pearson's coefficient of correlation was computed. The values calculated are presented in Table 10.

The results show that maternal age was positively significant correlated with involvement ($r=0.382$, $p<0.05$), parenting confidence (0.210, $p<0.05$), and relation frustration (0.310, $p<0.05$) but at the same time, age had negative significant relation with discipline (-0.201 , $p<0.05$). The results indicate that as the mothers aged, they scored low on discipline but high in involvement, parenting confidence and relation frustration. This means that comparatively older mothers were more involved, confident but at the same time low in discipline and high in relation frustration.

Table 10

CORRELATION BETWEEN MATERNAL EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND MOTHERING

	Age of mothers	Age of children	Sensitivity	Maturity	Competency	Emotional intelligence	Attachment	Discipline practices
Age of mothers	-							
Age of children	-0.233	-						
Sensitivity	-0.070	0.111	-					
Maturity	-0.118	0.108	0.510**	-				
Competency	-0.100	0.346**	0.377**	0.474**	-			
Emotional intelligence	-0.135	0.220*	0.606**	0.674**	0.693**	-		
Attachment	-0.089	-0.156	-1.156	0.020	-0.137	-0.061	-	
Discipline practices	-0.201*	-0.119	0.069	0.017	-0.058	0.093	0.030	-
Involvement	0.382**	0.145	0.044	-0.056	0.030	-0.013	-0.170	-0.271**

Parenting confidence	0.210*	0.184*	0.175	0.144	0.116	0.124	0.277**	-0.119
Relation frustration	0.310**	-0.058	0.033	-0.007	0.016	-0.017	-0.184	-0.167

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Similarly the various components of parent-child relationship were correlated with each other. There was positive significant correlation between attachment and parenting confidence (0.277, $p < 0.05$), maternal involvement and parenting confidence (0.248, $p < 0.05$), involvement and relation frustration (0.182, $p < 0.05$). But at the same time there was negative significant correlation between attachment and relation frustration (-0.184, $p < 0.05$); discipline and involvement (-0.271, $p < 0.05$). This implies that higher the attachment the higher the parenting confidence and lower the relation frustration; those mothers who had high discipline had low involvement but those who had high involvement were also more confident of their parenting. The results highlight that some aspects of parenting tend to affect each other directly while others tend to affect inversely.

However, for the sample mothers their emotional intelligence or its components failed to significantly impact their parent-child relationship. Probably there were other factors apart from maternal emotional intelligence which would affect her parenting with regard to their preschoolers and adolescents.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In spite of socio cultural changes mothers continue to be primary caregivers for their children. The mother-child relationship evolves with the development of children; however, the relationship is irrevocable and extremely sturdy. Working status of mothers has led to some changes in her parenting and even in the family environment. Emotional intelligence is a new area of research which has garbed lot of attention in the last decade or so. It is seen as a crucial harbinger of occupational success and is considered more important than intelligence. Maternal emotional intelligence is expected to play a role in how she manages her family and rears her children.

Results of the current research related to emotional intelligence reveal that majority of the sample mothers had high emotional intelligence. The number of mothers having high level emotional intelligence outnumbered those having low levels of it. Statistically significant differences were noted in the emotional intelligence of mothers with preschoolers and adolescents. More mothers with adolescents had higher emotional intelligence than the other groups. Overall, most sample working mothers showed moderate emotional sensitivity and emotional maturity and higher level of emotional competency. Statistically there was significant difference in the emotional sensitivity and emotional competency of mothers of two groups. Comparatively the working mothers of adolescents had higher emotional sensitivity and emotional competency than the mothers of preschoolers. However, there was no difference in the emotional maturity of the mothers of two groups. Vijaylaxmi (2007) had also noticed that employed mothers tend to have high emotional maturity. The present results also indicate similar findings.

Analysis of the mother-child relationship reveals that most mothers shared average to above average attachment, below average to average discipline practices, average involvement, average to above average parenting confidence and average to below average relation frustration with their children. The mother-child relationship in most cases was moderate in nature with no major conflicts or frustration. Use of statistical procedure points that there are significant differences in parenting between working mothers of preschoolers and adolescents on four dimensions namely, attachment, discipline, involvement and relation frustration. Mothers were most attached and involved with their adolescents; while they used more discipline with preschoolers and faced lesser relation frustration in dealing with them. More mothers of adolescents showed above average attachment with their children, implying that probably with the age mother-child relationship become stronger. Comparatively more mothers of adolescents had below extreme and lower extreme discipline practices than mothers of other group who showed average discipline practices. Probably with young children the mothers had to use discipline to teach them few rules where as with adolescents harsh discipline was not required. Mothers of adolescents showed more involvement than the mothers of preschoolers. Probably as mothers continued to parent their children; they become more confident and sure. Mothers of preschoolers had lesser frustration than mothers of adolescents as statistically also this difference was significant. Safia (2010) had also noticed that with the age mother-child relationship become stronger. The present study also indicates similar findings.

Calculation of Pearson correlation also indicates that as the mothers aged, they scored low on discipline but high in involvement, parenting confidence and relation frustration. This means that comparatively older mothers were more involved and confident but at the same time low in discipline and high in relation frustration. The three components of emotional intelligence namely maturity, competency, and emotional quotient were significantly and

positively correlated with each other and with overall emotional intelligence index. Similarly the various components of parent-child relationship were correlated with each other. The higher the attachment the higher the parenting confidence and lower the relation frustration; those mothers who had high discipline had low involvement but those who had high involvement were also more confident of their parenting. The results highlighted that different aspect of parenting tend to affect each other sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly.

However, for the sample mothers their emotional intelligence or its components failed to significantly impact their parent-child relationship. Probably there were other factors apart from maternal emotional intelligence which would affect her parenting with regard to their preschoolers and adolescents. There is a need to undertake a comprehensive research to understand the existence of an insignificant relationship between the two crucial variables covered under the study. Kiel and Maack (2012) findings also indicated that maternal emotional intelligence would not affect parenting of her children.

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