



Available Online

Journal of Education and Social Studies

ISSN: 2789-8075 (Online), 2789-8067 (Print)

<https://www.scienceimpactpub.com/jess>

PREVALENCE RATE OF EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE AMONG EARLY GRADERS: A DIAGNOSTIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the prevalence rate of emotional disturbance at the early childhood level. The study was quantitative in nature. The study was conducted to investigate the prevalence rate of emotional disturbance. Screening of early graders was carried out by the class teacher using screening test regarding emotionally disturbed and stable students. Govt. Girls High school Jalal Pur Jattan Gujrat was taken as a sample. All the students enrolled in early grade were the sample of the study. An instrument "Screening test to screen out emotionally disturbed Students" was developed by the researcher to collect data for the investigation of research objective. Screening test for screening emotionally disturbed students conducted by the class teacher. It was concluded that mostly students were emotionally stable and few students were emotionally disturbed. On the basis of conclusion it was recommend that teachers and parents should be aware about child emotional state and other behavioral problems at early childhood level for their better development and learning, the higher authorities may train teachers to diagnose emotional disturbance among early graders to use different strategies to improve their learning and the school administration may arrange seminars for teachers and parents to aware regarding emotional development and disturbance among early graders for their better emotional development.

Keywords: Emotional disturbance; Prevalence rate; Early graders.

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<https://doi.org/10.52223/jess.2024.5324>

Received: May 06, 2024; Revised: September 17, 2024; Accepted: September 22, 2024

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INTRODUCTION

Emotional disturbances in early childhood are a serious issue that can affect a child's growth and education. Among these disturbances are feelings of anxiety, hopelessness, or difficulty controlling emotions. To promote children's healthy development, it is critical to understand the prevalence of these issues and the underlying causes behind them. The early years are critical for the development of social skills and emotions. It covers the earliest years of life till roughly the age of six. During this period, children are particularly sensitive to their surroundings and experiences. Stressful situations, family dynamics, genetics, and other variables can all contribute to emotional disorders.

Early emotional problem detection can help guarantee that children receive the support and attention they need to overcome these challenges, according to study. For example, early intervention can prevent these problems from getting worse as children get older (Kauffman & Landrum 2012). Furthermore, schools, parents, and medical experts can create child-supporting strategies that are more effective by understanding the underlying causes of emotional problems. (Garner & Shinkoff, 2012). Emotional disturbance is characterized by significant difficulties with emotion regulation, which can impair social, cognitive, and behavioral functioning. Children with emotional disturbances can feel a wide range of

emotions, such as anger, frustration, sadness, concern, and fear. These emotions could be intense, persistent, and difficult to manage.

Early childhood emotional development is a complex process that is essential to children's general wellbeing and social ability. In this developmental stage, which usually lasts from infancy to approximately age six, children make substantial progress in identifying, comprehending, and controlling their emotions. Early emotional development is mostly controlled by inherent reactions to the emotional cues of caregivers. However, as infants get older and can distinguish and identify both their own feelings and those of others, emotional development advances (Jelicic et al., 2022). Since these connections create the foundation for emotional security and resilience, developing strong bonds with caregivers is crucial to emotional development. Since they have a stable base from which to explore their emotions and the social world, children with secure attachments feel more confident in their ability to regulate and appropriately express their emotions. As children get older, their interactions with peers and adults teach them how to navigate social situations, resolve conflicts, and build relationships with others. These encounters help develop emotional competence and emotional skill, which are important indicators of future academic achievement, mental health outcomes, and general life satisfaction (Snyder et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2022).

Early childhood development is critical, as it lays the groundwork for later functioning and emotional and social development (Alam, 2022; Chen et al., 2022; Kwon et al., 2022). This study focuses on an important—yet sometimes disregarded—aspect of emotional disturbance and its early childhood causes. Speyer et al. (2022) and Malcorps et al. (2022). A child's capacity to form positive social relationships, manage stress, and achieve academic success can all be greatly impacted by emotional disturbances, which can also be a sign of more serious psychological problems in early life (Meng et al., 2023). This study's justification comes from the expanding understanding that a child's total development depends just as much on their emotional health as on their physical health (Ryff et al., 2003). An excessive amount of fear, anxiety, melancholy, or anger are common symptoms of emotional disturbances, which can have a negative impact on a child's ability to learn and socialize. On the other hand, mood swings may be a normal part of growth or a sign of underlying behavioral or emotional issues. Understanding the nature and extent of these emotional shifts is necessary to distinguish between potential causes for concern and normal developmental stages (Stenner & De Luca Picione, 2023).

Although it is common for young toddlers to feel irritated, frustrated, depressed, and excited. When movements are strong or frequent, they could indicate an emotional disturbance or mood disorder that has to be addressed quickly in order to be effectively treated. We can assist kids and their families more effectively if we recognize the trends in these difficulties.

Statement of the Problem

It might be difficult to deal with emotional disturbance in both parents and children. Early childhood is a crucial time for emotional growth, setting the stage for long-term wellbeing. The patterns of emotional disturbance and the reasons behind it at this point, however, continue to be difficult problems. Early life experiences have been shown to be crucial for emotional growth. Research has shown that emotional development occurs most smoothly and steadily in the early years, and that obstacles to this process can hinder it. Emotional disturbances are known to impact a child's capacity to control their emotions, build healthy connections, and acquire critical social skills. Early childhood is a crucial time in human development that has a big impact on a person's mental, emotional, and social health later in life. On the other hand, there is mounting data that suggests emotional abnormalities are becoming more common in early children. There is a dearth of detailed data regarding the prevalence of emotional problems in early life, despite the grave consequences. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to ascertain how common emotional disturbances are in young children.

Research Objective

This study was aimed to identify emotionally disturbed students at early childhood level.

Significance of the Study

This study plays a significant role because it's an innovative idea. The study will be helpful for teachers. The findings of this research will have important implications for the early identification and support of children who are struggling with emotional disturbance. The result of the study will help teachers, parents and school administration to support the emotional needs of young children. This study will also be helpful for school leaders who can solve psychological issues regarding the behavior of students.

Delimitations of the Study

This study focus was exclusively on children aged 3 to 6 years old, which is a critical period for early childhood development. This delimitation ensures that the findings are specific to the early childhood stage and not influenced by developmental stages of older children. The study was limited to children enrolled in Government Girls High School Jalal Pur Jattan. Primary focus was on identifying prevalence of emotional disturbance among students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional Disturbance in Early Childhood begins by delineating the critical developmental period from infancy through early childhood, typically defined as ages 0-6. This phase is foundational for emotional, social, and cognitive growth, shaping lifelong patterns of behavior and mental health. Emotional disturbance encompasses a range of conditions where children experience significant challenges in regulating emotions, behaviors, and interactions with others. (Jelicic et al., 2022). Disturbance in early childhood underscores the significance of this developmental phase in shaping lifelong emotional health and well-being. Early childhood is a critical period marked by rapid brain development and heightened sensitivity to environmental influences, making it particularly vulnerable to the effects of emotional disturbances (Jelicic et al., 2022).

Emotional disturbance is defined as patterns of emotional and behavioral difficulties that have a major influence on a child's everyday growth and functioning. A comprehensive approach that takes into account the biological, psychological, and environmental aspects impacting emotional health is necessary to comprehend the extent of emotional distress. Educators, physicians, and caregivers can better support children suffering emotional disturbances and encourage interventions that support their well-being and academic performance by making these criteria and their scope clear.

Because emotional disturbance has a significant impact on developmental trajectories, it is important to understand it in early childhood. In this delicate stage, kids establish attachment bonds with their caretakers and start navigating social settings, setting the foundation for later relationships and emotional fortitude. Studies show that early life events have a significant impact on brain development, influencing neuronal networks linked to social cognition and emotional control. Therefore, early detection and treatment of emotional abnormalities can reduce negative effects and encourage the development of better emotions. Wolfram and Kienesberger (2023). Early childhood emotional disturbance is a wide range of disorders that can show themselves in a variety of ways, from excessive anxiety and terror to problems controlling one's impulses and emotions. If untreated, these difficulties not only have an immediate negative effect on the child's social and academic functioning but also carry a long-term risk of mental health problems in adolescence and adulthood. Examining the intricate interplay between biological (such as genetic predispositions and neurological processes) and environmental (such as family dynamics, peer relationships, and community support networks) effects is necessary to comprehend the underlying causes of emotional disturbance (Engel & bartz, 2022).

To sum up, emotional disturbance in early infancy is crucial for directing practice, policy, and research targeted at improving children's emotional wellbeing and promoting positive developmental outcomes. Society can better help children in navigating their emotional environments and laying a solid basis for future success and resilience by addressing emotional difficulties early and holistically (Yoon et al., 2022). Because emotional disturbance in early childhood has a significant and long-lasting effect on a child's general well-being and future achievement, it is important to understand it. This stage of development, which lasts from infancy to early childhood (ages 0-5), is distinguished by the quick development of social competence, emotional control, and stable attachment bonds. Children start to acquire the fundamental abilities to recognize, communicate, and control their emotions during this period. These abilities set the stage for their future emotional resilience and interpersonal interactions (Benavides et al., 2022).

The impact early emotional disturbance has on several areas of a child's development emphasizes how important it is. Children that possess emotional competence are more adept at navigating social situations, communicating with adults and peers, and handling stress and hardship. These abilities support mental health and well-being in later stages of life in addition to favorable social and academic outcomes (Yoon et al., 2022). Early childhood is also a crucial time for brain development, especially in areas related to processing and regulating emotions. The brain circuits that control emotional reactions and behavioral patterns are shaped by experiences encountered during this delicate time. Secure attachment relationships, the cornerstone of emotional stability and resilience, are developed via positive interactions with caregivers and supportive circumstances.

Intervention programs, parenting techniques, and educational methods that assist children's emotional development are also informed by an understanding of emotional disturbance in the early life stage. Timely treatments that can either prevent or lessen the negative effects of emotional disturbances on a child's development are made possible by the early detection of emotional problems. Caregivers and educators are essential in facilitating healthy emotional development because they create a responsive and loving atmosphere that encourages emotional expression and exploration (Teizazu et al., 2023). Emotional disturbance, often known as emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD), is a broad category that includes a range of emotional and behavioral traits that can have a substantial negative influence on a child's capacity to learn and perform in social and educational contexts (Kauffman & Landrum, 2012).

The prevalence of emotional abnormalities in children varies greatly according on the group under study and the particular disorder. Most studies show that a considerable fraction of children globally suffer from emotional disorders; estimates vary from 10% to 20% of children having severe emotional and behavioral problems at some stage in their development. According to Meng et al. (2023), these difficulties may include conduct disorders, anxiety disorders, depression, and other conditions characterized by disruptive behavior. Furthermore, the frequency of emotional disturbance in early childhood varies throughout communities and contexts, impacted by variables such as socioeconomic status, environmental stresses, and genetic predispositions. A thorough understanding of these variables is essential for developing effective intervention techniques, which place a focus on early detection, nurturing surroundings, and focused interventions made specifically to meet the requirements of young children. Through the investigation of these fundamental elements, scholars and professionals can augment their capacity to facilitate sound emotional growth from early childhood, therefore endorsing general welfare and adaptability over the life course.

Childhood emotional disturbance prevalence rates are a reflection of the intricate interactions between biological, environmental, and sociocultural factors. Studies show that 13–20% of kids globally suffer from mental disorders that have a substantial negative influence on their everyday life and overall health. These disruptions cover a broad range of illnesses, including as conduct disorders, depression, bipolar disorder,

anxiety disorders, and others, each having a different prevalence rate according on the population under study and the diagnostic standards applied (Poulou, 2015). There may be a rise in the identification and diagnosis of emotional problems in children based on recent trends in prevalence rates. Improvements in screening procedures and diagnostic instruments, along with increased awareness among parents, educators, and medical professionals, are responsible for this trend (Snyder et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2022). Growing awareness has led to more kids being (Snyder et al., 2022; Tang et al., 2022). As awareness grows, more children are identified and receive appropriate interventions, contributing to the reported prevalence rates.

A comprehensive strategy that incorporates early screening, evidence-based therapies, and support networks for kids and their families is needed to address the prevalence of emotional disorders. To guarantee prompt access to mental health services and foster resilience in kids dealing with emotional difficulties, cooperation between healthcare professionals, educators, and community stakeholders is crucial (Speyer et al., 2022). Communities can adopt focused initiatives to assist each kid's emotional well-being and create situations where each child has the chance to flourish by knowing the prevalence rates and related trends. Emotional disturbance encompasses more than just mood swings or transient emotional anguish. It encompasses ongoing emotional challenges that recur throughout time and in diverse situations, affecting numerous facets of a child's life. Complex connections between biological, psychological, and environmental elements frequently lead to such disorders. Genetic predispositions and neurological variations influencing the processing and control of emotions are examples of biological influences. Psychological elements that impact emotional development include early childhood experiences, trauma, and attachment connection disruptions. According to Meng et al. (2023), environmental determinants include cultural influences, family dynamics, socioeconomic pressures, and availability of supportive services.

A wide range of signs and behaviors are indicative of an emotional disturbance, including excessive anxiety, persistent melancholy or depression, self-harm or other aggressiveness, social disengagement, and trouble establishing and sustaining relationships. Individual differences in temperament, genetic predispositions, and contextual factors like family dynamics, community support systems, and socioeconomic conditions all have an impact on the strength and presentation of these manifestations (Yoon et al., 2022). Diagnosis and assessment of emotional disturbances in children involve a structured way of understanding the effects such conditions produce on different aspects of the child's development and well-being. Regarding socialization and peer relations, emotional disturbances seriously affect the child's interactive potential with peers, his understanding of social cues, and his handling of friendships. In the case of anxiety disorders, this condition may heighten the feelings of social anxiety, and hence participating in group activities or even starting conversations becomes extremely challenging for anxious children (Catherine & Brown, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

The study was quantitative in nature. The study was conducted to investigate the prevalence rate of emotional disturbance among students of early grade. Screening of early graders was carried out by the class teacher using screening test regarding emotionally disturbed and stable students. The population for this study comprised all students enrolled in early grade at Government Girls' High School in Jalal Pur Jattan. All early graders were taken as sample of the study.

Instrumentation

An instrument "Emotionally Disturbed Students Screening Test" was developed by the researcher to collect data for the investigation of research objective. The test was on 5-points Likert scale on four factors (Incapability to learn, wrong behaviour, Personal relations and Dispositions of sadness or despairs) were

developed for screening emotionally disturbed students. Initially 40 indicators were developed for the screening of students of early grades.

For Validity mentions the meaningful accuracy, appropriateness and effectiveness of the tool. Researcher construct a tool to screen out the students who are emotionally disturbed. For validation of instrument expert opinion was taken from fourteen Subject Experts. Instruments were distributed to 14 experts who have command over subject matter and instrument development. Content Validity Ratio (CVR) of each item was calculated through the formula suggested by Lawshe (1975). Moreover, weak item was deleted on the basis of opinion given by the experts. Content Validity Index (CVI) of all the instruments was calculated. The items/indicators having CVR more than .80 were kept for final observations.

Table 1. Final emotionally disturbed students screening test.

Sr. No.	Factors	No. of Indicators
1	Incapability to learn	10
2	Wrong behavior	9
3	Personal relations	9
4	Dispositions of sadness or despairs	10

Data Collection

To collect qualitative information from the selected early graders, screening test for emotionally disturbed students were distributed to the teachers of early grade with a request to rate their responses against each statement. Filled tests were collected and data analysis process were initiated.

Analysis of Data

Present Study being a quantitative in nature, data was analyzed by using descriptive statics including percentage and frequency techniques were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The specific focus of the study was to screen out the emotionally disturbed students at early grades studying at Government Girls’ High School in Jalal Pur Jattan District Gujrat. The class teacher was deputed to observe all students according to the screening test on following factors; Incapability to learn, wrong behaviour, Personal relations and Dispositions of sadness or despairs. Descriptive field notes were prepared for interpretation of the data in accordance with the research questions.

Frequency and percentage was used to find out the emotionally disturbed early grader students at Government Municipal Model Girls’ High School in Jalal Pur Jattan District Gujrat.

Table-Two: Emotionally Disturbed Students at Early Grade Level

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Emotionally Stable	44	80.0
Emotionally Disturbed	11	20.0
Total	55	100.0

The analysis showed that 20% early grader students were emotionally disturbed while 80% students were emotionally stable at Government Girls’ High School Jalal Pur Jattan District Gujrat. Most of the students at early childhood level were emotionally stable but a reasonable number one fifth of students were emotionally disturbed at early childhood level at Government Girls’ High School in Jalal Pur Jattan District Gujrat.

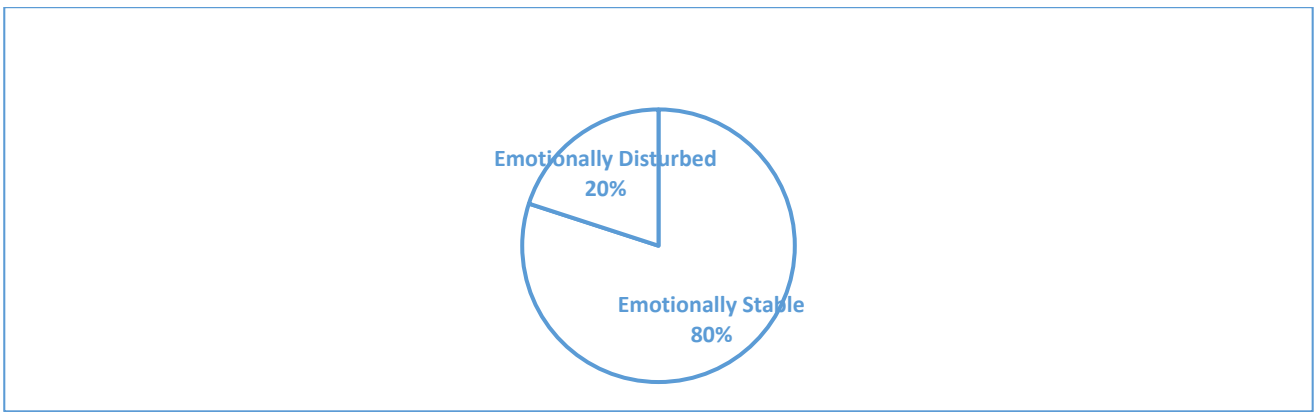


Figure 2. Emotionally disturbed students at early childhood level.

Findings

Most of the students at early childhood level were emotionally stable but a reasonable number of students were emotionally disturbed at early childhood level at Government Girls' High School in Jalal Pur Jattan District Gujrat. A reasonable number of students as emotionally disturbed at early grade was an alarming situation for the administration, teachers and parents. Different problems among students regarding Inability to learn, inappropriate behaviour, Interpersonal relations and Moods of unhappiness or depressions were identified which further lead to emotional disturbance among early graders.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the prevalence of emotional disturbances at early childhood, focusing on the interactions between individual, familial, and environmental factors. The findings provide a comprehensive understanding of how these elements converge to influence the emotional well-being of children. According to the study, there was a notable degree of emotional disorders indicated by early childhood students. These findings were consistent with the observation that a large number of kids showed symptoms of emotional distress, like trouble learning. Inappropriate conduct and inadequate interpersonal interaction. These results are consistent with the earlier ones. According to research, emotional disruptions throughout a child's early years are rather typical and can have a lasting impact on the child's development and future academic success. The significant incidence discovered in this study has demonstrated the need for early identification and intervention, as Kauffman (2001) notes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For educators, these results of study have significant ramifications. The most crucial individuals in identifying or helping students with emotional disorders are teachers. Naturally, the teachers will benefit from early detection and intervention tools like the EDQ. It is crucial that instructors have professional training in recognizing and addressing emotional and behavioral issues. Additionally, incorporating social-emotional learning into the curriculum could aid kids in learning how to effectively manage their emotions.

Ultimately, this study underscored the importance of a supporting and caring home environment for parents, assisting them in understanding the dynamics of the family, which serve as the cornerstone for their children's emotional well-being. Parents should strive for a solid, supportive connection within the family as well as open communication with their child. Parenting education programs can also be beneficial because they can impart knowledge on how to raise kids in an efficient manner. Lastly, they must be able to recognize the warning signs of mental disorders in their kids and help them get the professional assistance they need in a timely manner.

Different school administrators have different ideas on how to set up the classroom to support kids' emotional health. Based on the findings, a recommendation is made that all schools make sure that there exist programs and policies treating emotional disturbances in order to take care of the students' mental health. This covers SEL curriculum integration as well as teacher training on emotional and behavioral difficulties. In order to help students experiencing emotional problems, administrators need to take appropriate measures to guarantee that the schools have the resources they need, including school counselors and psychologists among other support staff. It is only through the implementation of techniques targeted at managing the needs of students with emotional disturbances that a school culture supportive of resilience and emotional well-being can be established.

Therefore, the results of this study can aid policy makers in developing educational policies that place a higher priority on students' emotional wellbeing. In order to ensure that children experiencing emotional disturbances receive timely interventions, early stage identification and intervention measures should be integrated into the school system. A more encouraging learning environment can be produced in schools by implementing policies for SEL and mental health awareness.

The funds and resources needed to support mental health programs in schools were also recommended by this study. Legislators ought to suggest allocating more funds appropriately for mental health services provided in schools and teacher professional development initiatives. By putting students' emotional health first, policymakers may help build an inclusive and encouraging learning environment. After the investigating the prevalence of emotional disturbance at early childhood level following recommendations were suggested to be, To particularly identify pupils with emotional disturbance and to identify potential risk factors, screening tests may be conducted on a regular basis in the early grades. Teachers' pre-, post-, and induction training may include content and skill-based training in addition to helping them achieve the necessary degree of expertise for this purpose. To communicate the observation and concerns regarding the emotional health of the students, parent-teacher engagement is required. Parents, educators in particular, and the community at large need to be made aware of the significance of mental health awareness among all parties involved in education through social, print, and electronic media.

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