



# Early Maladaptive Schemas and Personal Growth Initiative in Undergraduate Students

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## Abstract

Early Maladaptive Schemas are deep cognitive structures constituted by beliefs about the world, oneself, and one's relationship with others. Personal Growth Initiative is a complex process of growth, which can be described as a person's active and intentional involvement in changing and developing as a person. The present study adopts a between groups design to determine whether there are any gender differences among undergraduate students with respect to early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative. A correlational design was adopted to determine whether there is a relationship between early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative in undergraduate students. On- probability purposive sampling technique was used to select a sample of 600 undergraduate students (boys=300, girls =300) from private college. Significant differences were found between undergraduate students with respect to some dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative. Results further showed that there is a relationship between some dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and dimensions personal growth initiative in boys as well as girls. Current findings suggest that special workshops and training on life skills for students can help them understand the adverse effects of early maladaptive schemas on their personal growth, and how effectively they can avoid it.

**Keywords:** Early Maladaptive Schemas; Personal Growth Initiative; Undergraduate Students; Private Colleges

## Abbreviations

PGI: Personal Growth Initiative; SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

## Introduction

Late adolescence is a unique and important period for human development. Erikson (1994) examined the concept of identity in relation to late adolescence. Although Erikson

considered identity formation to be a lifelong process, he emphasized late adolescence as a key stage in his developmental theory, constituting a particular critical development period when a sense of personal and social identity becomes integrated through 'identity crises. Soygut G, et al. [1] divides early adolescence as approximately 10 to 13 years, middle adolescence as approximately 14 to 16 years, and late adolescence as approximately 17 to 21 years. Arnett JJ [2] proposed removing the ages of 18 to 25 years from "adolescence" all together in favour of a

new distinct phase of human development, the “Emergent Adult.” Other nomenclature used to describe people in their early 20s includes “youth hood,” “thesholders,” “twixters” and “adultescents”. Erikson (1960) theorized that identity develops when young people are given a psychosocial ‘moratorium’, referring to an opportunity in which they can experiment with different social roles before making permanent commitments to an occupation, to intimate relationships, to social groups and communities, and to a philosophy of life. This ‘moratorium’ period closely corresponds to ‘college age’; attending college provides students with consciousness-raising experiences to learn about themselves and others through exposure to diverse perspectives, opinions, and ways of living. The commonly used chronologic definition of adolescence includes the ages of 10-18, but may incorporate a span of 9 to 26 years depending on the source [3]. Inconsistencies in the inclusion criteria of “adolescence”, and adolescent sub- stages, can create confusion in the construction of adolescent research and adolescent program planning.

Late adolescence is a challenging period characterized by pervasive social role changes across many domains. The current study involves students currently falling in the age range of 17 to 23 years, thus it can be said that that the sample prominently consists of middle and late adolescents. Steinberg L, et al. [4] identified adolescent sub-stages as early adolescence ranging from 10 to 13 years, middle adolescence ranging from 14 to 18 years, and late adolescence being from 19 to 22 years of age. When a child’s core needs are not met they develop into maladaptive schemas. These core needs may include such things as: safety, security, nurturance, acceptance, respect, autonomy, guidance, direction, love, attention, approval, self-expression, joy, pleasure, and relaxation. Young contends that the problem for people with their personal growth is that these core needs were not met during childhood. These unmet needs lead to the development of “early maladaptive schemas.” He defines these early maladaptive schemas as broad, pervasive relationship themes. They are developed during childhood and further elaborated throughout one’s lifetime. They are dysfunctional to a significant degree [5].

In general terms, a schema can be defined as a structure, framework, theme, or pattern of cognitive content. Beck AT [6] considered that maladaptive schemas reflected deeply rooted patterns of distorted thinking about the world, oneself and one’s relationship with others. Schemas are considered to be highly generalized, resistant to change and exert a strong influence over cognition, and this influence is exerted through information processing at the unconscious level. Young and colleagues distinguish between 16 EMSs that are organized in five domains, which correspond to the frustration of five basic psychological needs in childhood: secure attachment,

autonomy, realistic limits, self-directedness, and playfulness.

The existence of schemas obviates the need to mentally reinvent the wheel with each new experience, so incoming information can be compared and filtered. Schemas act as screening templates to determine what is processed, and thereby distort and bias the understanding of information [7]. Early maladaptive schemas may result from a frustration of these basic needs by interaction between the child’s innate temperament and dysfunctional experiences with parents, siblings, and peers during the first few years of life. When core basic childhood needs such as safety, predictability/ consistency, love/ nurturance/ attention, acceptance/ praise, empathy, guidance/ protection, and validation go significantly unmet, maladaptive schemas may form as a result. The idea is that an early maladaptive schema, develops as a protective measure when the core childhood needs are not sufficiently met, thus serving a functional purpose at the time. Problems may develop when early maladaptive schemas persist into adulthood and adversely impact the development of a meaningful life or relationships. An early maladaptive schema that may have served a useful (protective) purpose in childhood may become an out dated, maladaptive, and ineffective complex defence mechanism in adulthood [8].

According to Young, these maladaptive coping strategies develop during childhood in response to damaging childhood experiences. These maladaptive coping responses take one of three basic forms: surrender, avoidance, or over-compensation. Surrender refers to compliance and dependence. People with this coping strategy avoid conflict at all cost and engage in people-pleasing behaviours. Avoidance strategies include excessive autonomy or isolation, addictive forms of self-soothing, and compulsive stimulus-seeking. For example, someone who was abandoned as a child might avoid intimate relationships, or abruptly leave a relationship at the slightest sign of discord, in order to avoid the possibility of future abandonment. Over-compensation means to behave in a manner that is the extreme opposite of how we really feel. So, if I feel insignificant and unimportant, I might behave in a haughty and arrogant manner in an effort to conceal or deny my insecurities. It becomes clear that these maladaptive coping strategies can lead to devastating consequences [9].

A number of studies across a range of populations have shown early maladaptive schemas to be associated with personal growth initiative. Recently, researchers have begun investigating the prevalence of early maladaptive schemas in personal growth of individuals. Calvete E, et al. [10] investigated on early maladaptive schemas and social anxiety in adolescents showed that early maladaptive schemas predict anxious automatic thoughts, and to show that such automatic thoughts act as mediators between schemas and

prospective changes in social anxiety symptoms. The study examined an alternative reverse model in which schemas acted as mediators between automatic thoughts and social anxiety. A total of 1052 adolescents (499 girls and 553 boys) completed measures of early maladaptive schemas, socially anxious automatic thoughts, and social anxiety symptoms at Times 1, 2, and 3. The automatic thoughts of anticipatory negative evaluation at Time 2, mediated relationship between the other-directedness schemas at Time 1, and social anxiety symptoms at Time 3. The results revealed bidirectional longitudinal relationships among schemas and automatic thoughts that were consistent in content (e.g., the disconnection/rejection schemas and automatic thoughts of negative self-concept). It was found that early maladaptive schemas of the other-directedness domain (subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional seeking) play a relevant role in the development and maintenance of social anxiety.

Wright MOD, et al. [11] conducted a study whose purpose was to explore the extent to which emotional abuse and emotional neglect treatment by parents contributed uniquely to young adult maladaptive long-term outcome with respect to symptoms of anxiety, depression, and dissociation. 301 college men and women assessed perceptions of experiences of childhood abuse and neglect, exposure to parental alcoholism, current symptoms of psychological distress, and endorsement of maladaptive interpersonal schemas. Hierarchical regression analyses revealed that perceptions of emotional abuse and emotional neglect were associated with later symptoms of anxiety and depression and were mediated by schemas of vulnerability to harm, shame, and self-sacrifice. Only emotional neglect was related to later symptoms of dissociation; this relationship was mediated by the schemas of shame and vulnerability to harm. Richardson G [12] describes the results of the administration of the Young Schema Questionnaire in a British sample of 54 sexually abusive adolescents. A clinical group of 40 was differentiated from a non-clinical group of 14 on the basis of their respective scores on the young maladaptive schema questionnaire [13]. All the subjects exclusively chosen on their sexually abusive behaviour, and which was compatible with the cognitive behavioural approach. In the clinical group the highest scores were for the emotional inhibition, social isolation/alienation and mistrust/abuse maladaptive schemas. Within this clinical group, schema scores were found to differentiate subjects who had sexually abused children from those had sexually assaulted peer-aged or adult females.

Camara M, et al. [14] examined the effects of early maladaptive schemas derived from the Schema Therapy model according to the diathesis-stress paradigm. It was hypothesised that abandonment, emotional deprivation, defectiveness, and failure schemas would interact with stressful events to predict depressive symptoms, whereas

abandonment, vulnerability to harm, and dependence schemas were expected to moderate anxiety symptoms. A two-wave prospective study showed that the presence of early maladaptive schemas constitutes a vulnerability factor for both, depressive and anxiety symptoms. The early maladaptive schemas content specificity revealed that abandonment, emotional deprivation, defectiveness, and failure schemas were related to depressive symptoms, whereas abandonment, vulnerability to harm, and dependence schemas were related to anxiety symptoms. Lang A, et al. [15] explored the relationship between personality dysfunction and Machiavellianism among schema-approach and early maladaptive schemas. Using self-report measures of Machiavellianism and early maladaptive schemas with 498 adolescents, it was tested which early maladaptive schemas were associated with Machiavellianism. Results showed that emotional deprivation, mistrust/abuse, entitlement/grandiosity, and approval-seeking/recognition-seeking early maladaptive schemas were positively associated with Machiavellianism, while enmeshment/undeveloped self and self-sacrifice EMSs were negatively related to Machiavellianism. Machiavellianism was suggested to be the result of maladaptive coping responses to the early maladaptive schemas.

Similarly a study of Early Maladaptive Schemas in Adolescence by Gonzalez-Jimenez AJ, et al. [16] intended to identify the maladaptive schemes among 126 girls and 120 boys in the province of Almeria. The results indicated that there were no differences in the maladaptive schemas based on gender. It can be seen from the above mentioned studies that schemas do affect the life process of an individual and how they grow to become a person with futuristic perspective. The vital part in a person's growth is stimulated by environmental, developmental or intentional process, despite the individual's resistance to grow healthy. Personal growth initiative (PGI) is a future-looking perspective in which individuals believe they will be able to improve themselves. It involves a desire to engage in growth, a perceived ability to recognize the resources required, and a particular plan that will allow the individual to realize their personal growth goals [12], and is a paramount expression of eudemonia [17].

Unlike other growth scales and constructs that focus on the amount individuals passively perceive their growth [18], personal growth initiative examines an individual's active interest in self-improvement. In addition, other constructs examine personal growth as an outcome, whereas personal growth initiative focuses on personal growth as a process [12]. PGI is a metacognitive construct indicating an intentional engagement in growth-inducing thoughts and behaviours in all life domains. Personal growth initiative goes beyond the belief that change and improvement can be achieved by actively endeavouring to realize positive change. Personal

growth initiative encompasses many of the concepts found in curiosity, because curiosity includes a willingness to enter novel situations and an ability to cope with novel situations, which can lead to growth [19]. Kashdan, et al. (2004) found that curiosity was related to personal growth, positive affect, and lessened negative affect, which are all correlates of personal growth initiative. Personal growth initiative has been associated with many positive outcomes. It is related to elements of psychological well-being, including heightened self-acceptance [17] and personal growth. It is also related to increased positive affect and decreased negative affect and increased satisfaction with life [12]. It has also been associated with positive adaptability, including problem-focused coping and lowered trait anxiety. Because it is future-oriented, it is related to hope and optimism [20]. It is also a mediator between achievement recognition and life satisfaction, suggesting that recognition may promote personal growth initiative, which then produces life satisfaction [21].

Patanapu SK, et al. [22] explored whether academic performance influences personal growth initiative among undergraduate dental students. The findings indicated that females showed higher mean score for all subscales of PGIS except "Using resources" than males. Ayub N, et al. [23] investigated the relationship of personal growth initiative, psychological wellbeing, and psychological distress among 150 college students in the age range of 18 to 22 years. The findings of the study suggest that personal growth initiative is positively associated with psychological well-being and negatively associated with psychological distress among adolescents. Furthermore, adolescents who are high in personal growth initiative and psychological well-being experience less mental health issues.

Warner GJ, et al. [24] examined the effects of personal initiative on adults' performance. The study aimed at examining the development of personal initiative, its predictors, and its developmental effects from childhood to adolescence. A total of 1,593 German children participated in a longitudinal study starting at Grades 2 to 4, with a second measurement wave two years later. Latent change score analyses revealed that children differed significantly in their change scores of personal initiative, that the executive functions and positive parenting predicted change scores in personal initiative, and those high initial levels and change scores in personal initiative reduced the development of internalizing and externalizing problems and supported the development of parasocial behaviour and academic competencies. These findings endorse the plasticity of personal initiative and shed light on the active part of children in promoting their own development.

Robitschek C, et al. [12] examined in their study the influence of personal growth initiative and coping styles on career

exploration and vocational identity in 205 college students. Results showed that personal growth initiative predicted environmental exploration and vocational identity, and coping style predicted self-exploration. Support was found for the prediction of vocational identity by environmental exploration. The presence of both direct and indirect paths between personal characteristics and vocational identity highlights the importance of considering both career exploration processes and outcomes. Pellerone M [25] examined the role of identity, congruence of interests and coping strategies as predictive variables of decision making in 350 undergraduate students. Results indicate that the profile of interests is higher in adolescents with achievement identity; a positive correlation between identity-moratorium status, intuitive decision making style and dependent coping strategy was noticed.

Luyckx K, et al. [26] investigated on personal growth initiative and identity formation in adolescence through young adulthood on a sample of 551 (14-35 year). Path analyses from a structural equation modelling approach indicated that all four components of Personal Growth Initiative (i.e., planfulness, readiness for change, intentional behaviour, and using resources) predicted different commitment and exploration processes, with planfulness being the most consistent predictor. The components of personal growth initiative were analysed for different ages in order to explore their identity. Moreover the dependence on ruminative or maladaptive forms of identity exploration mediated pathways was found. Research on adolescents has undergone many transitions from focusing on the physiological development and emotional changes, research today focuses on puberty, formal operational thinking, identity development, career development, problem behaviour and delinquency, generation gaps, family and peer relationships and school transitions. Adolescence is a period when individuals are particularly concerned about their sense of self and identity [27]. It is seen that schemas do affect the life process of an individual and how they grow to become a person with futuristic perspective. The vital part in a person's growth is stimulated by environmental, developmental or intentional process, despite the individual's resistance to grow healthy. This study was done to analyse the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative in undergraduate students. Also, the differences in early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative with respect to gender in undergraduate students.

### Research Questions

- Are there any gender differences in dimension of early maladaptive schemas (viz. emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/abuse, social isolation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence incompetence,

vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement and insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz. readiness for change, planfulness, using resource, intentional behaviour) among undergraduate students.

- Is there a relationship between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas (viz., emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/abuse, social isolation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement and insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, planfulness, using resource, intentional behaviour) in undergraduate boys?
- Is there a relationship between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas (viz., emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/abuse, social isolation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement and insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, planfulness, using resource, intentional behaviour) in undergraduate girls?

### Research Objectives

- To observe whether there are gender difference in dimension of early maladaptive schemas (viz. emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/abuse, social isolation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement and insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz. readiness for change, planfulness, using resource, intentional behaviour) among undergraduate students.
- To observe whether there is a relationship between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas (viz., emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/abuse, social isolation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement and insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, planfulness, using resource, intentional behaviour) among undergraduate boys.
- To observe whether there is a relationship between the dimensions early maladaptive schemas (viz., emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/abuse, social

isolation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement and insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, planfulness, using resource, intentional behaviour) among undergraduate girls.

### Hypotheses

- There will be gender differences in the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas (viz. (Ai) emotional deprivation, (Aii) abandonment, (Aiii) mistrust/abuse, (Aiv) social isolation, (Av) defectiveness/shame, (Avi) failure, (Avii) dependence incompetence, (Aviii) vulnerability to harm, (Aix) enmeshment, (Ax) subjugation, (Axi) self-sacrifice, (Axii) emotional inhibition, (Axiii) unrelenting standards, (Axiv) entitlement and (Axv) insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz., (Bi) readiness for change, (Bii) planfulness, (Biii) using resource, (Biv) intentional behaviour) among undergraduate students.
- There will be a relationship between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas (viz. (Ai) emotional deprivation, (Aii) abandonment, (Aiii) mistrust/abuse, (Aiv) social isolation, (Av) defectiveness/shame, (Avi) failure, (Avii) dependence incompetence, (Aviii) vulnerability to harm, (Aix) enmeshment, (Ax) subjugation, (Axi) self-sacrifice, (Axii) emotional inhibition, (Axiii) unrelenting standards, (Axiv) entitlement and (Axv) insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz., (Bi) readiness for change, (Bii) planfulness, (Biii) using resource, (Biv) intentional behaviour) in undergraduate boys.
- There will be a relationship between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas (viz. (Ai) emotional deprivation, (Aii) abandonment, (Aiii) mistrust/abuse, (Aiv) social isolation, (Av) defectiveness/shame, (Avi) failure, (Avii) dependence incompetence, (Aviii) vulnerability to harm, (Aix) enmeshment, (Ax) subjugation, (Axi) self-sacrifice, (Axii) emotional inhibition, (Axiii) unrelenting standards, (Axiv) entitlement and (Axv) insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz., (Bi) readiness for change, (Bii) planfulness, (Biii) using resource, (Biv) intentional behaviour) in undergraduate girls.

### Method

#### Research Design

The present study adopts a between groups design to

observe whether there are any gender differences in the dimension of early maladaptive schemas (viz., emotional deprivation, abandonment/instability, mistrust/abuse, social isolation/undesirability, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence/incompetence, vulnerability to harm/illness, enmeshment/undeveloped self, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards/hyper criticalness, entitlement/grandiosity, insufficient self-control/self-discipline) and the dimension of personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, planfulness, using resources, intentional behavior) among undergraduate students [28]. A correlational design was adopted to determine the relationship between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and the dimensions of personal growth initiative in undergraduate boys and girls.

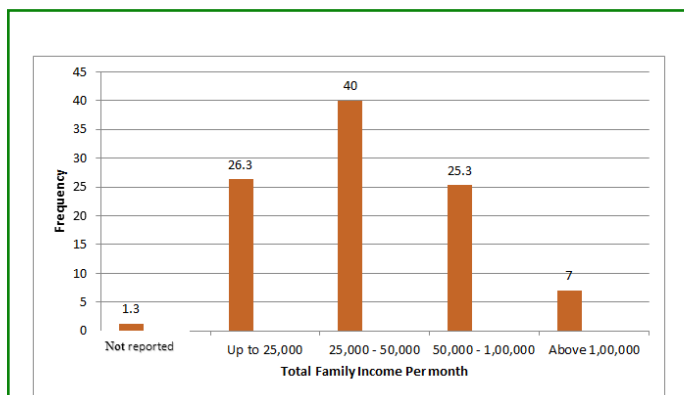
## Sample

Non probability purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample of 600 undergraduate students, which included 306 boys and 294 girls aged between 17-23 years (Mean age=20). The undergraduate students were from various private degree colleges in Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

### Inclusion Criteria

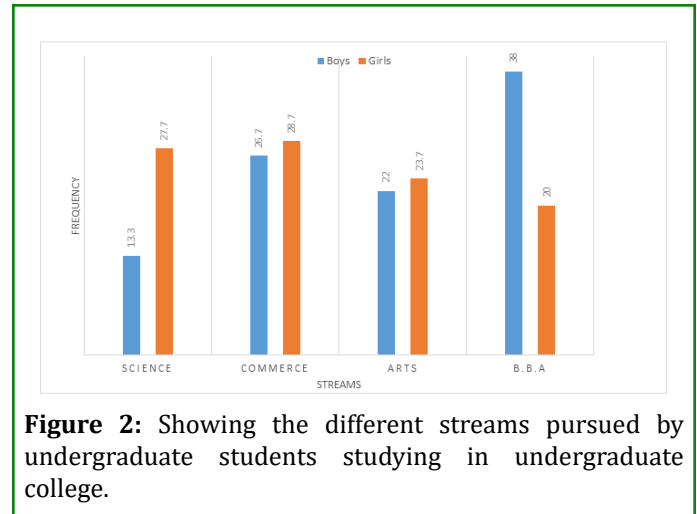
- Students pursuing B.A, B.Com, B.Sc. and B.B.A.
- Exclusion Criteria
- Students from government colleges are not considered.
- Individuals pursuing studies from distance education.
- Individuals pursuing vocational courses.
- Students from residential educational institutions.
- Students working part time.

The sample of 600 undergraduate students comprised of 51% boys and 49% girls. Out of the total sample 46.0% belonged to I year, 29.7% belonged to II year and 24.3% belonged to III year. The demographic details of the participants are graphically represented in the figures below.



**Figure 1:** Showing the total family income per month of the students studying in undergraduate college.

From Figure 1 it can be seen that 26.0% of students belong to with a monthly income of less than 25,000, 40.0% of students belong to families with monthly income between 25,000-50,000, 25.3% students belonged to families with a monthly income between 50,000-1,00,000 per month and 7.0% students belonged to families with a monthly income above 1,00,000. Lastly, 1.7% students did not share their details.



**Figure 2:** Showing the different streams pursued by undergraduate students studying in undergraduate college.

From Figure 2 it can be seen that 13.3% of boys and 27.2% of girls pursued science, 26.7% of boys and 28.7% of girls pursued commerce, 22.0% of boys and 23.7% of girls pursued Arts and 38.0% of boys and 20.0% of girls pursued BBA.

## Instrument

### Information schedule

Participants were asked to provide their gender, age, education, family information (Parents, education, socioeconomic status, type of disorder), physical and psychological health of the respondents as well as their family members, and the like in writing, on the demographic sheet.

### Young Schema Questionnaire - Short Form (YSQ-S2)

The Young Schema Questionnaire (YSQ) is a measure of Early Maladaptive Schemas developed for the understanding and treatment of enduring mental health problems. Maladaptive behaviour inhibits ability to adjust healthily to particular situations. In essence, they prevent from adapting or coping well with the demands and stresses of life. YSQ (SF2) was developed by Young and Brown in the year 2003. According to Young, Early Maladaptive Schemas (EMS) is deep cognitive structures constituted by beliefs about the world, oneself, and one's relationship with others. Young proposed a first clinical scale to assess EMS: The Young Schema Questionnaire (YSQ-L1). A later version, the YSQ-L2 (205 items), was developed by Young to measure 16 early maladaptive

schemas. The Schema Questionnaire-Short Form (YSQ-S2) was designed to measure 15 early maladaptive schemas and is a shorter instrument. It consists of 75 items.

**The dimensions are described below:**

**Emotional Deprivation: (item no: 1-5):** This includes a general expectation for basic emotional needs to go unmet or unnoticed. Three major forms of emotional deprivation include deprivation of nurturance, protection, and empathy.

**Abandonment/Instability: (item no: 6-10):** This involves the experience of real or perceived unreliability and instability of others for basic connection and support. There is often an accompanying belief that others are unwilling to stay with the individual.

**Mistrust/Abuse: (item no: 11-15):** This is a basic belief that others will inevitably hurt, take advantage, manipulate, or lie to you in some way. There is often a belief that these harmful behaviours are intentional or the result of negligence. As an adult, there may be a belief of always feeling that you get the "short end of the stick" in comparison to others.

**Social Isolation/ Undesirability: (item no: 16-20):** This EMS involves a deep sense of feeling isolated from the world, disconnected from other people, and not feeling a sense of social belonging to any group or community.

**Defectiveness/Shame: (item no: 21-25):** This involves a core feeling of a sense of defectiveness or inherent "badness." There is often a belief that if you were actually exposed to others as your true self, you would discover that you were actually unlovable. This schema may manifest itself through heightened sensitivity to criticism and blame, intense self-consciousness, insecurity, and comparisons around others.

**Failure: (item no: 26-30):** The belief that one has failed, will inevitably fail, or is fundamentally inadequate relative to one's peers, in areas of achievement (school, career, sports, etc.). Often involves beliefs that one is stupid, inept, untalented, ignorant, lower in status, less successful than others, etc.

**Dependence/Incompetence: (item no: 31-35):** This EMS is associated with a belief that you are not capable of dealing with everyday responsibilities without significant help from others. These beliefs may become evident through failure to take care of yourself, make healthy decisions, or solve daily problems without seeking excessive outside assistance – a general sense of helplessness.

**Vulnerability to Harm/Illness: (item no: 36-40):** This schema may be experienced as a pronounced fear of looming or imminent disaster, coupled with the belief that it cannot be avoided/prevented. These fears are generally associated with medical, emotional, or external catastrophes.

**Enmeshment/Undeveloped Self: (item no: 41-45):** This may be experienced as intense emotional closeness and involvement with significant others (other parents); the cost of which is often forgoing healthy social development or building a sense of a personal identity. This EMS often

includes feelings of being smothered by or overly attached (fused) to others, while also experiencing a lack of personal direction or emptiness.

**Subjugation: (item no: 46-50):** This involves a tendency to surrender control to others in attempts to avoid abandonment, anger, or conflict. Individual may identify with this through a pattern of subjugating their needs/emotions coupled with a perception that their own needs, feelings, wants, or beliefs are unimportant or invalid to others.

**Self-Sacrifice: (item no: 51-55):** There may be excessive focus on going "above and beyond" to meet the (real or imagined) needs of others, while sacrificing your own gratification/needs in the process. There may be internal motivations related to desires to avoid causing pain to others or guilt from feeling selfish in some way. This schema may develop into an underlying sense that your own needs are going unmet (and are possibly un-vocalized to others), followed by increased resentment toward the recipients of your self-sacrifices.

**Emotional Inhibition: (item no: 56-60):** This involves overly suppressing forms of spontaneous emotional expression, action, or communication out of fear that these expressions of emotion will result in shame, disapproval, rejection, or loss of impulse control. Commonly, attempts may be made to inhibit: anger/aggression, positive impulses (spontaneous expressions of joy/happiness), and vulnerability/open communication about feelings or needs. There may also be a proclivity toward an overemphasis on rationality with a disregard for emotions.

**Unrelenting Standards/Hyper criticalness: (item no: 61-65):** This schema is characterized by a deep belief that individual must meet incredibly high standards (performance/behaviour) in order to avoid criticism. You may experience feelings of pressure, notice difficulty slowing down, and hyper criticalness/unrealistically high standards of yourself and others. This schema may present itself outwardly as perfectionism, excessive attention to detail, rigidity toward behavioural, moral, or ethical rules/standards, or a preoccupation with time and efficiency (in hopes of getting more accomplished).

**Entitlement/Grandiosity: (item no: 66-70):** This Schema is related to a belief in your superiority to others or a general belief in being entitled to special privileges, rights, or exceptions. There is often a belief that "normal" rules of social interactions don't apply to you and that you should be able to do as you please without concern for the impact on others or an exaggerated focus on/need to be the "best" in some way to achieve power/control (not primarily related to attention/approval). There may be a tendency toward exerting power over others, forcing viewpoints upon others, or generally trying to control others' behaviours in self-serving ways.

**Insufficient Self-Control/Self-Discipline: (item no: 71-75):** This schema involves significant difficulty or refusal

to demonstrate adequate self-control and to tolerate frustration/discomfort in the service of achieving goals. There may be a focus on avoiding discomfort (pain, conflict, overexertion, responsibility, or confrontation) with the potential cost of personal fulfilment of goals or relationships.

The questionnaire is a Likert-scale ranging from 1 - "completely untrue of me", 2- "mostly untrue of me", 3- "slightly more true than untrue", 4- "moderately true of me", 5- "mostly true of me" to 6- "Describes me perfectly" Higher values indicate a stronger presence of the respective schema, indicative of stronger endorsements. No items are to be reversed scored. High scores on each schema indicate high maladaptive behaviour of the respective schema. YSQ-S2 has good psychometric properties and internal reliability of  $\alpha=0.94$  [29].

### Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II)

The Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II) is a revised multidimensional measure of the complex processes of personal growth initiative, which can be described as a person's active and intentional involvement in changing and developing as a person. The scale was developed by Robitschek G, et al. [12] in the year 2012.

The Personal Growth Initiative Scale-II (PGIS-II) includes 4 subscales:

- **Readiness for Change:** The ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness to engage in personal growth processes. The subscale questions include 2, 8, 11, and 16.
- **Planfulness:** The ability to be strategic and organized in self-change efforts. The subscale questions include 1, 3, 5, 10 and 13.
- **Using Resources:** The ability to identify and access resources external to the self, such as other people and materials. The subscale questions include 6, 12, and 14.
- **Intentional Behaviour:** showing likelihood towards doing of self-change plans and behaviours. The subscale questions include 4, 7, 9, and 15.

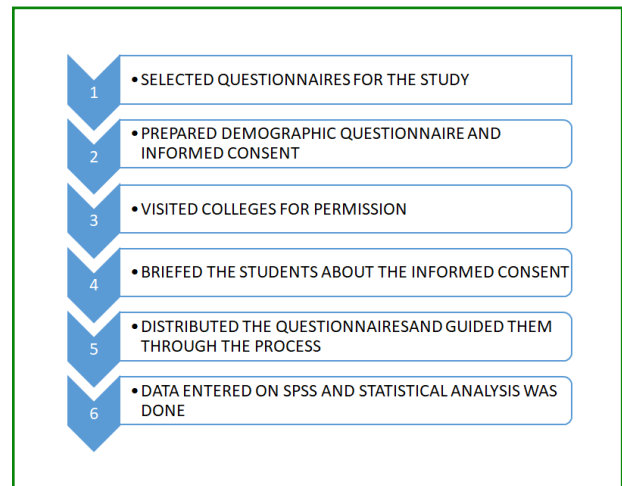
The personal growth initiative scale II consists of 16 items that are rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 6 where 1= strongly Disagree 2= Disagree Somewhat, 3=Disagree a Little, 4=Agree a Little, 5=Agree Somewhat to 6 = Strongly Agree. Item scores are summed to obtain a total PGI score. The score ranges from 0-20, 0 being the lowest and 20 being the highest. A higher score indicates a greater degree of personal growth initiative in each subscale and overall. The internal consistency estimates ranged from 0.90 - 0.94 and test retest reliability was found to (0.74) moreover the construct validity data from various samples indicated adequate psychometric properties of this version of the personal growth initiative [30]. Also there is evidence that the personal growth initiative is strongly positively related to psychological well-being and

negatively related to psychological distress [31].

### Procedure

After selecting the measures to be used for the study, the researcher approached the principals/coordinators of various colleges for permission. The researcher visited the colleges where permission was granted to administer the questionnaires on the scheduled dates. Students from first second and third years were approached and rapport was established with them. They were made aware that their participation in the study was purely voluntary and were also assured that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the study. Only those who agreed to participate in the study were requested to sign an informed consent form. Next, the information schedule was administered after which the researcher gave instructions about the questionnaires to students. The students took an average of 30 minutes to fill the information schedule and questionnaires [32].

The data collected was then encoded, entered in SPSS and statistically analysed. The procedure that was followed is presented in the form of a flowchart.



### Data Analysis

After collecting the data, it was analysed using descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test and Pearson product moment correlation. Independent sample t-test was used to analyse gender differences in the dimension of early maladaptive schemas and the dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate students. Pearson product moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between the dimension of early maladaptive schemas and the dimensions of personal growth initiative in undergraduate boys and girls.

### Results

The obtained data of this study were analysed using independent sample t-test and Pearson product moment



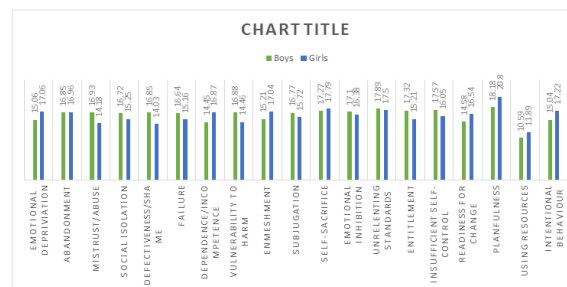
correlation using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. Independent sample t-test was used to analyse gender differences in the dimension of early maladaptive schemas and the dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate students. Pearson

product moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between the dimension of early maladaptive schemas and the dimensions of personal growth initiative in undergraduate boys and girls.

	Undergraduate students				t-test
	Boys		Girls		
	M	S.D	M	SD	
<b>Early Maladaptive Schemas</b>					
Emotional Deprivation	17.16	4.19	15.06	5.88	<b>5.07**</b>
Abandonment	16.85	4.58	16.96	5.68	<b>-0.27*</b>
Mistrust/Abuse	16.93	4.11	16.18	5.35	<b>1.94**</b>
Social Isolation	16.72	4.1	15.25	5.83	<b>3.60**</b>
Defectiveness/Shame	16.85	4.76	14.03	6.28	<b>6.20**</b>
Failure	16.64	4.4	15.16	5.3	<b>3.75**</b>
Dependence/Incompetence	16.87	4.44	14.45	5.44	<b>5.98**</b>
Vulnerability To Harm	16.88	4.25	14.46	5.22	<b>6.23**</b>
Enmeshment	17.04	4.08	15.21	5.14	<b>4.86**</b>
Subjugation	16.77	4.466	15.72	5.452	<b>2.58*</b>
Self-Sacrifice	17.27	4.67	17.79	5.92	<b>-1.19**</b>
Emotional Inhibition	17.1	4.31	16.38	4.94	1.91
Unrelenting standards	17.89	4.13	17.5	4.69	1.06
Entitlement	17.53	4.03	16.8	5.08	<b>1.95**</b>
Insufficient self-control	17.57	4.06	16.05	5.27	<b>3.96**</b>
<b>Personal Growth Initiative</b>					
Readiness For Change	14.58	3.93	16.54	4.609	<b>-5.61**</b>
Planfulness	18.18	4.348	20.8	5.107	<b>-6.77*</b>
Using Resources	10.59	3.18	11.89	3.843	<b>-4.54**</b>
Intentional Behaviour	15.04	3.607	17.22	4.482	<b>-6.59**</b>

Note: \* $p \leq 0.05$ . \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ;  $df = 598$

**Table 1:** Mean, standard deviation and t-values of the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and the dimensions of personal growth initiative among boys and girl ( $n=600$ ).



**Figure 3:** Bar graph showing mean scores of boys and girls with respect to early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative and its dimensions ( $n=600$ ).

Table 1 shows a significant gender difference in the emotional deprivation dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t=5.07$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) in undergraduate students. As evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 17.16$ ) reported higher levels of emotional deprivation as girls ( $M = 15.06$ ). In other words, boys have high emotional deprivation of nurturance, protection, and empathy than girls. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Ai) has been accepted.**

Table 1 also shows a significant gender difference in the abandonment dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t=-0.27$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) in undergraduate students. As evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 16.85$ ) reported lower levels of abandonment as girls ( $M = 16.96$ ). In other words, girls have high experience of real or perceived unreliability and instability of others for basic connection and support. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Aii) has been accepted.**

Similarly, table 1 shows a significant gender difference in the mistrust/abuse dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t=1.94$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) in undergraduate students. As evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 16.93$ ) reported higher levels of mistrust/ abuse as girls ( $M = 16.18$ ). In other words, boys have high belief that others will inevitably hurt, take advantage, or manipulate, in some way than girls. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Aiii) has been accepted.**

Additionally, table 1 shows a significant gender difference in the social isolation dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t = 3.60$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 16.72$ ) reported higher levels of social isolation than girls ( $M = 15.25$ ). In other words, boys have deep sense of feeling disconnected from other people, than girls. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Aiv) has been accepted.**

Similarly, table 1 shows a significant gender difference in defectiveness / shame dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t = 6.20$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 16.85$ ) reported higher levels of defectiveness/ shame than girls ( $M = 14.03$ ). In other words, boys have heightened sensitivity to criticism and blame, intense self-consciousness, insecurity, and comparisons around others than girls. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Av) has been accepted.**

Furthermore, table 1 shows a significant gender difference in failure, dimension of early maladaptive schemas, ( $t = 3.75$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 16.64$ ) reported higher levels of failure than girls ( $M = 15.16$ ). In other words, boys have feeling of being untalented, ignorant, lower in status, less successful than others, than girls. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Avi) has been accepted.**

Table 1 also shows a significant gender difference in dependence / incompetence, dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t = 5.99$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As is evident from the mean scores,

boys ( $M = 16.87$ ) reported higher levels of dependence/ incompetence than boys ( $M = 14.45$ ). In other words, girls are associated with a high belief that they are not capable of dealing with everyday responsibilities than boys. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Avii) has been accepted.**

Moreover, table 1 shows a significant gender difference in vulnerability to harm, dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t = 6.23$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 16.88$ ) reported higher levels of vulnerability to harm as girls ( $M = 14.46$ ). In other words, boy's fears are generally associated with medical, emotional, or external catastrophes than girls. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Aviii) has been accepted.**

Similarly, table 1 shows a significant gender difference in enmeshment, dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t = 4.86$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 17.04$ ) reported higher levels of enmeshment than girls ( $M = 15.21$ ). In other words, boys have intense emotional closeness and involvement with significant other than girls. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Aix) has been accepted.**

Table 1 also shows significant gender difference in subjugation, dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t = 2.58$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, that boys ( $M = 16.77$ ) reported higher levels of subjugation than girls ( $M = 15.72$ ). In other words, boys are more subjugated than girls. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Ax) has been accepted.**

Furthermore, table 1 shows significant gender difference in self-sacrifice, dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t = 1.19$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, there is no much difference between boys ( $M = 17.27$ ) and girls ( $M = 17.79$ ). In other words, both may go "above and beyond" to meet the (real or imagined) needs of others. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Axi) has been accepted.**

Table 1 also shows a significant gender difference in entitlement, dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t = 1.95$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 17.53$ ) reported higher levels of entitlement than girls ( $M = 16.80$ ). In other words, boy's belief in superiority to others, in being entitled to special privileges, rights, or exceptions than girls. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Axiv) has been accepted.**

Moreover, table 1 shows a significant gender difference in insufficient self-control, dimension of early maladaptive schemas ( $t = 3.96$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). As is evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 17.57$ ) reported higher levels of insufficient self-control than girls ( $M = 16.05$ ). In other words, girls find it significantly difficult to demonstrate adequate self-control and to tolerate frustration. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Axv) has been accepted.**

Table 1 also shows a significant gender difference in readiness for change, dimension of personal growth initiative ( $t = 5.61$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). As evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 14.58$ ) reported lower levels of readiness for change as girls ( $M = 16.54$ ). In other words, girls have more readiness for change than boys. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Bi) has been accepted.**

Similarly, table 1 shows a significant gender difference in planfulness, dimension of personal growth initiative ( $t = 6.77$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). As evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 18.18$ ) reported lower levels of planfulness as girls ( $M = 20.8$ ). In other words, girls have more planfulness than boys. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Bii) has been accepted.**

Moreover, table 1 shows a significant gender difference in using resources, dimension of personal growth initiative ( $t = 4.54$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). As evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 10.59$ ) reported lower levels of using resources as girls ( $M = 11.89$ ). In other words, girls have high ability to identify and access resources external to the self than boys. **Hence,**

**hypotheses H1 (Biii) has been accepted.**

Table 1 also shows a significant gender difference in intentional behaviour, dimension of personal growth initiative ( $t = 6.59$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). As evident from the mean scores, boys ( $M = 15.4$ ) reported lower levels of intentional behaviour as girls ( $M = 17.22$ ). In other words, girls show likelihood towards working on self-change plans and behaviours more than boys. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Biv) has been accepted.**

Lastly, table 1 shows no significant gender difference in emotional inhibition and unrelenting standards, dimensions of early maladaptive schemas. In other words perceived unreliability of others for basic connection and support, the belief that others will inevitably hurt, take advantage, over suppression of expression, action and communication and incredibly high standards of individual to avoid criticism was not significant. **Hence, hypotheses H1 (Axi), H1 (Axiii) has been rejected.**

Early Maladaptive Schemas	Personal Growth Initiative			
	Readiness for change	Planfulness	Using Resource	Intentional Behaviour
Emotional deprivation	-0.16	-0.22	-0.16	-0.26
Abandonment	<b>.018*</b>	-0.02	0.02	<b>.029*</b>
Mistrust/ Abuse	-0.14	-0.07	<b>-.064*</b>	-0.07
Social isolation	-0.11	<b>-.16*</b>	-0.14	-0.17
Defectiveness/ Shame	-0.22	<b>-.20*</b>	-0.13	-0.27
Failure	<b>-.084*</b>	-0.24	-0.07	<b>-.18*</b>
Dependence/ Incompetence	-0.12	-0.12	<b>-.037**</b>	-0.13
Vulnerability to harm	<b>-.17*</b>	<b>-.24*</b>	-0.14	<b>-.18*</b>
Enmeshment	<b>-.16*</b>	-0.16	<b>-.14*</b>	<b>-.20*</b>
Subjugation	-0.15	<b>-.19**</b>	<b>-.07**</b>	-0.25
Self-sacrifice	0.05	0.09	0.04	0.13
Emotional Inhibition	-0.13	-0.09	-0.06	-0.15
Unrelenting Standards	0.07	0.02	0.08	0.15
Entitlement	-0.02	-0.09	-0.05	-0.09
Insufficient Self-control	0.11	0.23	0.25	0.33

**Note:** \* $p \leq 0.05$ . \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ;  $df = 305$

**Table 2:** Correlation between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys ( $n = 306$ ).

Table 2 reveals that there were significant positive correlations between the abandonment dimension of early maladaptive schemas and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.18$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ); and intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.30$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. In other words, an increase in perceived unreliability of others

for basic connection and support corresponds to increase the ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, and the likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H2 (Aii), H2 (Bi) and H2 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Table 2 shows that there were significant negative correlation between the mistrust / abuse dimension of early maladaptive schema and the using resources( $r = -0.64, p < 0.05$ ) dimension of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. In other words, higher the belief that others will inevitably hurt, take advantage, or manipulate, in some way, the lower is the ability to identify and access resources external to the self. **Hence, hypotheses H2 (Aiii), H2 (Biii) have been accepted.**

The results of Table 2 also reveals that there were significant negative correlation with respect to the social isolation dimension of early maladaptive schema and; the planfulness ( $r = -0.16, p < 0.05$ ) dimension of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. In other words, higher the sense of social isolation corresponds to a lower ability to strategize and organize in self-change. **Hence, hypotheses H2 (Aiv) and H2 (Bii) have been accepted.**

Similarly, the findings of this study also reveals that there was a significant negative correlation between the defectiveness / shame dimension of early maladaptive schema and planfulness ( $r = -0.20, p < 0.05$ ) dimension of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. In other words, higher the sensitivity to criticism and blame, lower is the ability to strategize and organize in self-change. **Hence, hypotheses H2 (Av) and H2 (Bii) have been accepted.**

Moreover, Table 2 reveals that there were significant negative correlation between the failure dimension of early maladaptive schema and readiness for change ( $r = -0.09, p < 0.05$ ); and intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.18, p < 0.05$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. In other words, higher the feeling of being lower in status and less successful, lower is the ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, and showing likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H2 (Avi), H2 (Bi) and H2 (Biv) have been accepted.**

The results of table 2 also reveals that there was a significant negative correlation between the dependence / incompetence dimension of early maladaptive schema and the using resources ( $r = -0.04, p < 0.01$ ) dimension of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. In other words higher the belief of not being capable of dealing with everyday responsibilities, lower is the ability to identify and access resources external to the self. **Hence, hypotheses H2**

**(Avii) H2 (Biii) have been accepted.**

Similarly, Table 2 also reveals that there were significant negative correlation between the vulnerability to harm dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change( $r = -0.17, p < 0.05$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.24, p < 0.05$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.19, p < 0.05$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. In other words higher the association with medical, emotional, or external catastrophes corresponds to a lower ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, and the likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H2 (Aviii), H2 (Bi), H2 (Bii), and H2 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Moreover, Table 2 shows that there were significant negative correlation between the enmeshment dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.16, p < 0.05$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.14, p < 0.05$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.20, p < 0.05$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. In other words, higher levels of emotional closeness and involvement, corresponds to lower ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, and the likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H2 (Aix), H2 (Bi), H2 (Biii), and H2 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Results of Table 2 also reveals that there were significant negative correlation between the subjugation dimension of early maladaptive schema and the planfulness ( $r = -0.19, p < 0.05$ ); and the using resources( $r = -0.07, p < 0.05$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. In other words, higher domination over something corresponds to lower ability to, strategize and organize in self-change, and identify and access resources external to the self. **Hence, hypotheses H2 (Ax), H2 (Bii) and H2 (Biii) have been accepted.**

Lastly, table 2 also shows that there were no significant correlation found between the emotional deprivation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement, and insufficient self-control dimensions of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change, planfulness, using resources and intentional behaviour dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. **Hence, hypotheses H2 (Ai), H2 (Axi), H2 (Axii), H2 (Axiii), H2 (Axiv), H2 (Axv), H2 (Bi), H2 (Bii), H2 (Biii) and H2 (Biv) have been rejected.**

Early Maladaptive Schemas	Personal Growth Initiative			
	Readiness for change	Planfulness	Using Resource	Intentional Behaviour
Emotional deprivation	<b>-.46**</b>	-0.33	<b>-.49**</b>	<b>-.38**</b>
Abandonment	<b>-.09**</b>	<b>-.14**</b>	-0.09	<b>-.10**</b>
Mistrust/ Abuse	-0.18	<b>-.13**</b>	<b>-.16**</b>	-0.13
Social isolation	<b>-.34**</b>	<b>-.33**</b>	<b>-.35**</b>	<b>-.40**</b>
Defectiveness/ Shame	<b>-.49**</b>	<b>-.39**</b>	<b>-.39**</b>	<b>-.35**</b>
Failure	<b>-.44**</b>	<b>-.45**</b>	<b>-.38**</b>	<b>-.42**</b>
Dependence/ Incompetence	<b>-.37**</b>	<b>-.36**</b>	<b>-.32**</b>	<b>-.45**</b>
Vulnerability to harm	<b>-.31**</b>	<b>-.32**</b>	<b>-.19**</b>	<b>-.37**</b>
Enmeshment	<b>-.35**</b>	<b>-.27**</b>	<b>-.27**</b>	<b>-.34**</b>
Subjugation	<b>-.31**</b>	<b>-.33**</b>	<b>-.30**</b>	<b>-.34**</b>
Self-sacrifice	<b>.15**</b>	<b>.07**</b>	<b>.00**</b>	<b>.11**</b>
Emotional Inhibition	-0.22	-0.21	-0.18	-0.17
Unrelenting Standards	0.22	0.13	0.08	0.24
Entitlement	-0.14	-0.11	-0.17	-0.1
Insufficient Self-control	0.01	0.69	0.49	0.66

**Note:** \* $p \leq 0.05$ . \*\* $p \leq 0.01$ ;  $df = 293$

**Table 3:** Correlation between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and dimensions of personal growth initiative among girls ( $n=294$ ).

Table 3 reveals that there were significant negative correlation between the emotional deprivation dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.46$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); the using resources ( $r = -0.46$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.38$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words higher the deprivation of nurturance, protection, and empathy the lower is the ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, to identify and access resources external to the self, and the likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Ai), H3 (Bi), H3 (Biii) and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Table 3 also shows that there were significant negative correlation between the abandonment dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.09$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.14$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.10$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, the higher perceived unreliability of others for basic connection and support, corresponds to lower ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change and the likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Aii), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii) and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Similarly, Table 3 also reveals that there were significant

negative correlation between the mistrust/ abuse dimension of early maladaptive schema, and the planfulness ( $r = -0.13$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); and the using resources ( $r = -0.16$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, the higher the belief that others will inevitably hurt, take advantage, or manipulate, in some way the lower is the ability to identify and access resources external to the self and strategize and organize in self-change. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Aiii), H3 (Bii) and H3 (Biii) have been accepted.**

Moreover, Table 3 also shows that there were significant negative correlation between the social isolation dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.34$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.33$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); the using resources ( $r = -0.35$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.40$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, higher social isolation corresponds to lower ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, identify and access resources external to the self and the likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Aiv), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii), H3 (Biii), and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Similarly the findings of this study reveals that there was a significant negative correlation between the defectiveness/

shame dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.49, p < 0.01$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.40, p < 0.01$ ); the using resources ( $r = -0.40, p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.35, p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, higher the sensitivity to criticism and blame, lower is the ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, identify and access resources external to the self and showing likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Av), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii), H3 (Biii), and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Additionally, Table 3 also shows that there were significant negative correlation between the failure dimension of early maladaptive schema the readiness for change ( $r = -0.44, p < 0.01$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.45, p < 0.01$ ); the using resources ( $r = -0.38, p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.41, p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, higher the feeling of being lower in status, corresponds to being less successful, lower is the ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, identify and access resources external to the self and the likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Avi), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii), H3 (Biii), and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Table 3 also shows that there were significant negative correlation between the dependence/ incompetence dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.37, p < 0.01$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.36, p < 0.01$ ); the using resources ( $r = -0.32, p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.45, p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, higher the belief of not being capable of dealing with everyday responsibilities, lower is the ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, identify and access resources external to the self and showing likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Avii), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii), H3 (Biii), and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Table 3 also shows that there were significant negative correlation between the vulnerability to harm dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.31, p < 0.01$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.32, p < 0.01$ ); the using resources ( $r = -0.20, p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.37, p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, higher association with medical, emotional, or external catastrophes corresponds to lower ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, identify and access resources external to the

self and showing likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Aviii), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii), H3 (Biii), and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Moreover, table 3 also reveals that there were significant negative correlation between the enmeshment dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.35, p < 0.01$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.27, p < 0.01$ ); the using resources ( $r = -0.27, p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.34, p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, high levels of emotional closeness and involvement, lower is the ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, identify and access resources external to the self and showing likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Aix), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii), H3 (Biii), and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Similarly the findings of this study also reveals that there were significant negative correlation between the subjugation dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = -0.31, p < 0.01$ ); the planfulness ( $r = -0.33, p < 0.01$ ); the using resources ( $r = -0.30, p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.34, p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, higher domination over something corresponds to the lower ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, identify and access resources external to the self and showing likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Ax), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii), H3 (Biii), and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Table 3 also reveals that there were significant positive correlation between the self-sacrifice dimension of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change ( $r = 0.15, p < 0.01$ ); the planfulness ( $r = 0.73, p < 0.01$ ); the using resources ( $r = 0.0, p < 0.01$ ); and the intentional behaviour ( $r = -0.11, p < 0.01$ ) dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. In other words, higher the need to go "above and beyond" to meet the (real or imagined) needs of others, higher is the ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, identify and access resources external to the self and showing likelihood towards working on self-change plans. **Hence, hypotheses H3 (Axi), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii), H3 (Biii), and H3 (Biv) have been accepted.**

Lastly the results of table 3 also shows that there were no significant correlation found between the emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement, and insufficient self-control dimensions of early maladaptive schema and the readiness for change, planfulness, using resources and intentional behaviour dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. **Hence,**

**hypotheses H3 (Axii), H3 (Axiii), H3 (Axiv), H3 (Axv), H3 (Bi), H3 (Bii), H3 (Biii) and H3 (Biv) have been rejected.**

### Summary of Results

In the following section the results obtained have been summarized. The findings of the present study revealed Significant gender differences were observed between the emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/ abuse, social isolation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence /incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, entitlement, and insufficient self-control dimensions of early maladaptive schemas among undergraduate students.

- Significant gender differences were observed between the readiness for change, planfulness, using resources, and intentional behaviour dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate students.
- Significant relationship was found between the mistrust/ abuse and dependence / incompetence dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., using resources) among undergraduate boys.
- Significant relationship was found between the social isolation dimension of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., planfulness) among undergraduate boys.
- Significant relationship was found between the defectiveness/ shame dimension of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., planfulness) among undergraduate boys.
- Significant relationship was found between the failure dimension of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, intentional behaviour) among undergraduate boys.
- Significant relationship was found between the vulnerability to harm dimension of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, planfulness, and intentional behaviour) among undergraduate boys.
- Significant relationship was found between the enmeshment dimension of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, using resources, and intentional behaviour) among undergraduate boys.
- Significant relationship was found between the subjugation dimension of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., planfulness, using resource) among undergraduate boys.
- Significant relationship was found between the emotional deprivation dimension of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, using resources, and intentional behaviour) among undergraduate girls.

- Significant relationship was found between the abandonment dimension of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, planfulness intentional behaviour) among undergraduate girls.
- Significant relationship was found between the mistrust/ abuse dimension of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., planfulness, and using resources) among undergraduate girls.
- Significant relationship was found between the social isolation, defectiveness/ shame, failure, dependence/ incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, planfulness, using resources, intentional behaviour) among undergraduate girls.

### Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to observe whether there is a gender difference among undergraduate students with respect to the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and dimensions of personal growth initiative. Correlation analysis was also used to ascertain the relationship between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas (viz., emotional deprivation, abandonment, mistrust/abuse, social isolation, defectiveness/shame, failure, dependence incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice, emotional inhibition, unrelenting standards, entitlement and insufficient self-control) and the dimensions of personal growth initiative (viz., readiness for change, planfulness, using resource, intentional behaviour) among undergraduate girls and boys [33].

The present study shows that there are significant gender differences between undergraduate students with respect to the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas. It was seen that girls scored high on emotional deprivation, social isolation, dependence /incompetence, enmeshment, and insufficient self-control whereas boys scored high on defectiveness/ shame, failure, vulnerability to harm, subjugation, and entitlement, dimensions of early maladaptive schemas. The results of the study done by Gonzalez-Jimenez A], et al. [16] to identify the maladaptive schemes on 126 girls and 120 boys shows that there are differences in the maladaptive schemas based on gender. Moreover a study done by Lachenal-Chevalet et al. (2006) also reported higher scores for men on entitlement, insufficient self-control, emotional deprivation and mistrust of early maladaptive schemas as compared to women.

Significant gender differences were observed between undergraduate students with the respect to the readiness for change, planfulness, using resources, and intentional

behaviour dimensions of personal growth initiative. It was seen that girls scored high on all the dimensions of personal growth initiative. The findings of the current study can be supported by a study by Patanapu SK, et al. [22] he explored whether academic performance influences personal growth initiative among 278 undergraduate dental students. The findings indicated that females showed higher mean score for all subscales of personal growth initiative than males. Results show that significant negative relationship was found between undergraduate boys with respect to mistrust/abuse and dependence / incompetence dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and using resource dimension of personal growth initiative. Also significant negative relationship was found between undergraduate boys with respect to failure dimension of early maladaptive schemas and readiness for change, and intentional behaviour dimensions of personal growth initiative. Moreover significant negative relationship was also found between undergraduate boys with respect to vulnerability to harm dimension of early maladaptive schemas and readiness for change, planfulness, and intentional behaviour dimensions of personal growth initiative. Also significant negative relationship was found between undergraduate boys with respect to enmeshment dimension of early maladaptive schemas and readiness for change, using resources, and intentional behaviour dimensions of personal growth initiative. Further significant negative relationship was also found between undergraduate boys with respect to subjugation dimension of early maladaptive schemas and planfulness, and using resource dimensions of personal growth initiative. Significant positive correlation was found between undergraduate boys with respect to the abandonment dimension of early maladaptive schema and readiness for change and intentional behaviour dimension of personal growth initiative. Also significant positive relationship was found between undergraduate boys with respect to social isolation dimension of early maladaptive schemas and planfulness dimension of personal growth initiative. Significant positive relationship was also found between undergraduate boys with respect to defectiveness/ shame dimension of early maladaptive schemas and planfulness dimension of personal growth initiative. A similar study done by Camara M, et al. [14] to test the effects of early maladaptive schemas derived from the Schema Therapy model according to the diathesis-stress paradigm. It was hypothesised that abandonment, emotional deprivation, defectiveness, enmeshment and failure schemas would interact with stressful events to predict depressive symptoms, whereas abandonment, vulnerability to harm, and dependence schemas were expected to moderate anxiety symptoms. Due to gender differences in early maladaptive schemas and depressive and anxiety symptoms. A two-wave prospective study showed that the presence of early maladaptive schemas constitutes a vulnerability factor for both, depressive and anxiety symptoms. A person low on willingness to grow will have low self-efficacy to grow so high on depression and anxiety supports the result of the current study. Moreover, a research study by Zafiropoulou (2014), states that boys experience more dependence and lack of self-control/self-discipline than girls which means

that boys have more tolerance to frustration than girls.

A significant negative relationship was found between undergraduate girls with respect to emotional deprivation of early maladaptive schemas and readiness for change, using resources, intentional behaviour dimension of personal growth initiative. A study done by Atalay H, et al. [34] to examine the relationships between early maladaptive schemas and the character and temperament aspects of personality can be related to the results as emotional deprivation effects the growth of the individual. Results demonstrated that there are high level of positive as well as negative correlations between most of temperament and character inventory items and some of the subscales of the young schema questionnaire, including emotional deprivation, vulnerability, social isolation and defectiveness. Emotional deprivation does affect the personal growth of individual.

A negative relationship was also found between undergraduate girls with respect to abandonment of early maladaptive schemas and readiness for change, planfulness, intentional behaviour dimension of personal growth initiative. Loneliness is a central and inevitable fact of being alive. In a study done by Brage, et al. (1993) showed that the extent of loneliness among Midwestern adolescents was investigated in relation to depression, self-esteem, family strength, parent adolescent communication. The sample consisted of 156 adolescent. The results found that there was high loneliness in older adolescent than the younger. Loneliness was significantly related to depression, self-esteem, family strength. Which shows that loneliness affects the growth of an individual psychological preparedness, strategize and organize in self-change, identify and access resources external to the self and showing likelihood towards working on self-change plans. Thus showing that, the higher perceived unreliability of others for basic connection and support the lower is the ability to assess one's own psychological preparedness, and likelihood towards working on self-change plans.

Similarly significant negative relationship was found between undergraduate girls with respect to mistrust/ abuse of early maladaptive schemas and planfulness, using resources of personal growth initiative. Mistrust affects the mind-set of the individual in the initials stages of growth which in turn affects their confidence levels and their willingness to grow. Significant negative relationship was found between undergraduate girls with respect to social isolation, defectiveness/ shame, failure, dependence/ incompetence, vulnerability to harm, enmeshment, subjugation, self-sacrifice of early maladaptive schemas and readiness for change, planfulness, using resources, intentional behaviour dimension of personal growth initiative. Ghadimi A, et al. [35]



conducted a study to determine the relationship between maladaptive schemas, behavioural growth and meta-cognitive beliefs. The cross-correlation study, consisted of 300 adolescents. The results showed that there is a significant relationship between cognitive self-awareness, negative beliefs about the uncontrollable thoughts, beliefs about the need to control thoughts, behavioural development. Which shows that self-consciousness, insecurity, helplessness, affects the willingness of individual to grow, his thought process towards a positive growth process. The present study revealed significant gender differences between undergraduate students with respect to the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and the dimensions of personal growth initiative. The present study also revealed relationship between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate boys. There was a relationship between the dimensions of early maladaptive schemas and dimensions of personal growth initiative among undergraduate girls. Based on the results of this study we can conclude that early maladaptive schemas do exist in students and that the best way to prevent their appearance is to reach an emotional stability by learning how to achieve emotional understanding, and insight to life skills. We can recommend that in the early childhood development stage emphasis is made regarding this issue. This way in the future we can obtain healthy and stable social relationships in adulthood.

The current study has a number of limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. Since it was a self-report inventory there were chances of manipulation and not answering what was true to their feelings this may have affected the result. Moreover the aspect concerning divorce of parents was not taken into consideration in information schedule. The findings of the study it can be seen that interventions, workshops and training programmes can effectively help students understand and avoid the maladaptive schemas and to develop much healthier and adaptive patterns and behaviour. Special workshops can be conducted for parents to create awareness of maladaptive schemas and how they can effectively help their children to avoid such behaviours. This will be helping overcome the effects of having maladaptive schemas. This study can also be used for further studies and research.

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