

# Unseen Struggles: Emotional Quotient in the Shadow of Parental Absence

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**Abstract-** *This study examined how the emotional quotient (EQ) of high school students at AUP Academy was affected by parental absence, specifically that caused by employment abroad. Understanding the needs of students in non-traditional caregiving arrangements requires examining how parental absence impacts teenage emotional development. **Methods:** A descriptive correlational methodology assessed EQ across five domains: self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation. Students who had one or both parents employed overseas were among the participants. Data were gathered using validated instruments and analyzed through correlation and multiple linear regression. **Findings:** Despite the physical absence of one or both parents, students generally exhibited high emotional quotient (EQ) scores ( $M = 3.97-4.25$ ). Correlational analysis revealed that parental absence was significantly associated with most EQ domains, particularly self-regulation ( $r = 0.522$ ), social skills ( $r = 0.375$ ), and motivation ( $r = 0.334$ ). In contrast, empathy showed weak, non-significant correlations ( $r = 0.117-0.143$ ). At the overall level, EQ was positively correlated with parental attachment and family dynamics ( $r = .386$ ). Regression analysis further revealed that attachment significantly predicted students' EQ ( $B = 0.166, p = .002$ ), whereas family dynamics did not ( $B = 0.107, p = .156$ ), with the model explaining 15.1% of the variance in EQ. **Significance:** These results demonstrate adolescents' emotional resilience and the key role of parental attachment in supporting emotional functioning despite physical absence. The study emphasizes the importance of consistent emotional support from parents, caregivers, or school personnel and recommends implementing emotional intelligence programs, offering guidance services, and fostering a faith-based environment.*

**Keywords:** emotional quotient, parental absence, family dynamics, adolescent development, empathy

## I. INTRODUCTION

The emotional development of adolescents is remarkably shaped by the presence, involvement, and support of their parents. However, for many students in developing countries, like the Philippines, the absence of one or both parents—particularly due to labor migration—has become a defining feature of their upbringing. In the study of Liu and Hannum (2023), there are around 27% of children in the Philippines are left behind as their parents seek employment abroad. As proved by Wassink and Viera (2021), children who experienced parental absence had less social support, which often led to lower academic attainment.

Research has shown that children experiencing parental absence may struggle with emotional regulation and attachment (Jiang et al., 2023; Mao et al., 2020). While studies have

examined the psychological and academic effects of parental migration (Zúñiga et al., 2024), there is a scarcity in research that directly explores how this absence impacts the development of emotional intelligence—particularly within the context of Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) families. This gap in the literature is significant, as Emotional Quotient (EQ) not only influences academic success but also long-term mental health, mediated by factors like self-efficacy and motivation. (Ye et al., 2024; MacCann et al., 2020).

Hence, this study delves into whether parental absence may be used as a predictor of students' emotional intelligence and whether there is a substantial correlation with emotional quotient. By examining the experiences of students with OFW parents, this study aims to shed light on how emotional development is affected in such circumstances and how families, communities, and others may better help these children.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to recent studies, family structure, attachment, and the presence of caregivers all have a substantial impact on emotional quotient (EQ), which is important for adolescent development (Williams & Sternberg, 2019). According to Alhassan and Alhassan (2023), children who experience parental absence have less resilience, empathy, and emotional control. Attachment affects children's behavior, feelings, and social cognition (Hutchings et al., 2023). Parent-child attachment is particularly impacted by parental absence. Communication gaps may arise in long-distance relationships, and attachment quality is critical for academic and emotional adjustment (Amoroso et al., 2023; Zhang & Deng, 2022).

Parental absence often diminishes self-awareness in adolescents, affecting their ability to understand their emotions and set personal or academic goals (Mathew et al., 2022; Kenechukwu et al., 2021).

The absence of parental role models may impede the development of essential social skills related to interaction, empathy, and communication (Thompson et al., 2021; Kim & Lee, 2020). According to Singh and Patel (2020), this often leads to poor self-esteem and difficulties in forming positive relationships. Similarly, empathy—a core element of Emotional Quotient—is compromised in these adolescents, though supportive peer environments and resilience have shown promise in mitigating these challenges (Miller et al., 2020; Garcia & Lee, 2022). Academic motivation tends to decline without consistent parental support. Thus, emotional encouragement from teachers and extended family has been shown to improve goal-setting and perseverance (Harris & Nguyen, 2021; Johnson & Martin, 2022). Studies have shown that adolescents affected by long-term separation from parents, such as children of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), encounter weakened attachment, loneliness, and disrupted family communication (Amoroso et al., 2023; Gudoy, 2024). Bowen's Family Systems Theory provides the framework for understanding how emotional interdependence within families is altered by parental absence. Emotional cutoff, triangulation, and stress absorption in adolescents are common patterns that emerge when one or both parents are absent (Bowen, 1966). Disruptions in family dynamics, leading to reduced cohesion and communication, further contribute to emotional vulnerability (Jabbari et al., 2023).

In the context of Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) education, family plays a central role in fostering emotional, spiritual, and moral development. Proverbs 22:6 (NIV) urges, "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it." "Character development is the most important work that is entrusted to human beings,"

according to Ellen G. White (White, 1954, Education, p. 225). The absence of parents challenges this foundation, underscoring the need for SDA schools to provide holistic, Christ-centered emotional support that nurtures resilience and spiritual anchoring. This study responds to that need by examining Emotional Quotient (EQ) within a faith-based academic setting.

### III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

1. **Research Design:** The study utilized a descriptive-correlational design, a non-experimental method appropriate for exploring relationships between naturally occurring variables without manipulation (Siedlecki, 2020). This design enabled the researchers to analyze how attachment and family dynamics correlate to emotional quotient.
2. **Participants/Data Sources:** Participants, carefully selected to ensure the study's validity, included 103 high school students (Grade 7-12) from Adventist University of the Philippines Academy, chosen through criterion-based purposive sampling. The inclusion criteria required that respondents have one or both parents working abroad, a selection process that guaranteed the relevance of the sample to the research focus.
3. **Tools and Instruments:** Three instruments were used: a demographic survey, the Emotional Quotient Questionnaire (EQQ), and the Parental Absence Questionnaire (PAQ). The EQQ, adapted from Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) and Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment questionnaire (IPPA), assessed self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and motivation using a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The PAQ, adapted from the Inventory of Parental Influence, evaluated Attachment and family dynamics. Cronbach's Alpha scores confirmed high reliability (e.g., Attachment = 0.926, Self-Awareness = 0.888). (Mayer et al., 2002; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).
4. **Procedures:** The researchers first obtained a letter from the research teacher and submitted a formal request to the school principal for permission to collect data. After approval, an online survey through Google Forms was used to collect data to ensure convenience and accessibility. Printed copies of the survey were given to participants who lacked internet or mobile device access. Ethical clearance was secured from the Institutional Ethics Review Board (ERB). Both online and printed surveys included a cover letter outlining the purpose and emphasizing the voluntary nature of participation. Participants could withdraw at any time without penalty. To ensure truthful responses and preserve the integrity of the research, anonymity and confidentiality were rigorously upheld.
5. **Analysis Techniques:** Data was processed using Jamovi software. Descriptive statistics summarized the Emotional Quotient and Parental Absence levels, while Pearson correlation measured the strength of associations between variables. Linear regression tested the predictive power of parental absence, and t-tests were applied to analyze gender differences.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### I. Parental Absence in Terms of Attachment and Family Dynamics

Findings revealed that despite physical separation, students reported strong emotional ties with their parents and functional family systems ( $M=3.76$ ,  $SD=1.02$ ). Attachment ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ) and Family Dynamics ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ) were both

rated high, indicating the presence of supportive environments even in the context of parental absence.

**Table 1. Extent of Parental Absence**

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Attachment	3.77	0.99	High
Family Dynamics	3.74	1.05	High
Overall Mean	3.76	1.02	High

Research says that in OFW homes, remote parental participation is still a stabilizing feature. It is frequently maintained through digital communication (such as mobile phones, messaging apps, and video conversations), which enables parents to continue being involved in their children's everyday lives even when they are far away (Acedera & Yeoh, 2021). Safeguarding family routines and emotional stability at home is facilitated when a reliable caregiver (often a grandparent or other kin) coordinates everyday care and communications with the migrant parent (Fu et al., 2023). Nevertheless, parental absence can cause family stress and infrequently strain sibling relationships, particularly when misunderstandings or communication breakdowns occur (Jensen et al., 2023; Lin et al., 2025).

**A. Strength of Emotional Attachment**

Students reported a generally high level of attachment to parents despite physical absence (overall  $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = 1.03$ ). Results show that parents care about their feelings ( $M = 4.09$ ,  $SD = 0.97$ ), express affection through communication ( $M = 3.96$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ), and provide security and love ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ). Emotional sharing was also rated high ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ), with moderate acknowledgment of parents understanding emotional needs ( $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). Lower ratings were noted for emotional sharing ( $M = 3.49$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ , High) and comfort-seeking ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ , Moderate), suggesting that while attachment is strong, limited parental availability may constrain deeper emotional exchanges.

**Table 2. Questions in terms of Attachment**

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I believe my parent(s) care deeply about my feelings even if they are far away.	4.09	0.97	High
My parent(s) express their affection through calls, messages, or letters.	3.96	1.00	High
I feel secure and loved by my parent(s) despite their absence.	3.95	0.99	High
I feel emotionally supported by my parent(s) even when they are not physically present.	3.94	0.99	High

My parent(s) understand my emotional needs even when they are away.	3.63	1.04	High
I feel comfortable sharing my emotions with my parent(s) despite their absence.	3.49	1.08	High
I seek comfort from my parent(s) when I am feeling sad or upset.	3.30	1.17	Moderate
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.77</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High; 3.41 – 4.20 = High; 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 = Low; 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

Bernardo (2025) highlighted the importance of digital communication in maintaining emotional closeness in Overseas Filipino Workers families while children often withhold **struggles** to avoid emotionally burdening their distant parents (Aguilar, 2020). These findings are consistent with those findings. Similar to this, it is emphasized how crucial emotional availability is to preserve close family bonds over long distances (Fauk et al., 2024).

**B. Family Dynamics in the Absence of Parents**

Students reported generally positive family dynamics despite parental absence (overall M = 3.73, SD = 1.02, High). The highest-rated item was continued parental involvement in decision-making (M = 4.20, SD = 0.90, Very High), showing that many parents guide the family remotely. High ratings were also observed for the presence of substitute parental figures (M = 3.84, SD = 1.00), regular communication with absent parents (M = 3.81, SD = 1.02), and support from other family members (M = 3.73, SD = 1.00). In contrast, moderate ratings were given for changes in sibling/family relationships (M = 3.33, SD = 1.09), increased conflict (M = 3.11, SD = 1.23), and feelings of disconnection (M = 3.11, SD = 1.19), suggesting some emotional strain and shifting roles.

**Table 3. Questions in terms of Family Dynamics**

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
My parent(s) are still involved in family decision-making even if they are far away.	4.20	0.90	Very High
There is someone in the family who takes on the parental role in the absence of my parent(s).	3.84	1.00	High
I communicate regularly with my absent parent(s).	3.81	1.02	High

I feel supported by other family members when my parent(s) are not around.	3.73	1.00	High
My relationship with my siblings or other family members changes when my parent(s) are away.	3.33	1.09	Moderate
There are more conflicts at home because of my parent(s)' absence.	3.11	1.23	Moderate
The family atmosphere feels more disconnected when my parent(s) are away.	3.11	1.19	Moderate
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>1.02</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High; 3.41 – 4.20 = High; 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 = Low; 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

**II. Emotional Quotient in terms of Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Social Skills, Empathy, and Motivation.**

Table 4 demonstrates students' generally high level of emotional quotient (overall M = 4.03, SD = 0.88). All components were rated high, with empathy receiving the highest score (M = 4.15, SD = 0.85), indicating strong interpersonal sensitivity. Other components were also consistently high: self-awareness (M = 4.09, SD = 0.84), motivation (M = 4.07, SD = 0.88), social skills (M = 4.02, SD = 0.89), and self-regulation (M = 3.80, SD = 0.95).

**Table 4. Students' Level of Emotional Quotient**

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Self-Awareness	4.09	0.84	High
Self-Regulation	3.80	0.95	High
Social Skills	4.02	0.89	High
Empathy	4.15	0.85	High
Motivation	4.07	0.88	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.03</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High; 3.41 – 4.20 = High; 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 = Low; 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

The consistently high ratings indicate well-developed emotional skills, which align with findings by Santos & Rivera (2020) and Lim & Almazan (2019) that emotional quotient can remain strong when emotional support is present, even in the absence of parents.

### A. Insights on Self-Awareness

Table 5 presents students' responses on self-awareness, with an overall mean of 4.09 (SD = 0.83), indicating high emotional self-awareness. The highest-rated items were awareness of how mood impacts others (M = 4.36, SD = 0.67, Very High) and understanding how emotions influence thoughts and behavior (M = 4.24, SD = 0.75, Very High). High ratings were also observed for recognizing emotions (M = 4.16, SD = 0.80), reflecting on emotional reactions (M = 4.12, SD = 0.86), identifying emotional triggers (M = 3.98, SD = 0.83), and differentiating personal from others' emotions (M = 3.95, SD = 0.91). The lowest-rated item was expressing emotions appropriately (M = 3.81, SD = 1.02, High), suggesting that some students may still face challenges in articulating emotions constructively.

**Table 5.** Questions in terms of Self-Awareness

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I am aware of how my mood impacts others around me.	4.36	0.67	Very High
I understand how my emotions affect my thoughts and behavior.	4.24	0.75	Very High
I can recognize my emotions when they arise.	4.16	0.80	High
I can reflect on my emotional reactions and learn from them.	4.12	0.86	High
I can identify triggers that cause me emotional distress.	3.98	0.83	High
I can differentiate between my emotions and those of others.	3.95	0.91	High
I am confident in expressing my emotions in appropriate ways.	3.81	1.02	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.09</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High; 3.41 – 4.20 = High; 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 = Low; 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

Overall, students demonstrated a well-developed sense of self-awareness. Emotional self-awareness is foundational to emotional intelligence and key to managing relationships and personal challenges (Goleman, 2019; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

### B. Self-Regulation and Coping Strategies

Table 6 presents students' responses on self-regulation, yielding an overall mean of 3.80 (SD = 0.96), interpreted as high. The highest-rated items practicing self-control in difficult situations (M = 3.93, SD = 0.98) and regulating emotions to achieve goals (M = 3.90, SD = 0.89) suggest that many students can maintain composure and focus under pressure. Similarly, using positive coping strategies (M = 3.85, SD = 0.96) and staying calm during challenges (M = 3.80, SD = 0.95) indicate effective emotional regulation. High ratings were also observed for

avoiding impulsive reactions when upset ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ) and managing emotions in stressful situations ( $M = 3.75$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ).

**Table 6.** *Questions in terms of Self-Regulation*

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I practice self-control when dealing with difficult situations.	3.93	0.98	High
I am able to regulate my emotions to achieve my goals.	3.90	0.89	High
I use positive strategies to cope with negative emotions.	3.85	0.96	High
I can stay calm when faced with challenges.	3.80	0.95	High
I avoid reacting impulsively when I feel upset.	3.76	0.96	High
I manage my emotions effectively in stressful situations.	3.75	0.99	High
I can adapt to unexpected changes without becoming overwhelmed.	3.59	1.00	High
Overall Mean	3.80	0.96	High

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High; 3.41 – 4.20 = High; 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 = Low; 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

The lowest-rated item, adapting to unexpected changes without becoming overwhelmed ( $M = 3.59$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ , high), while still within the high range, suggests that some students may face challenges with emotional adaptability in unanticipated situations.

### C. Social Skills and Building Relationships

Table 7 presents students' social skills, with an overall mean of 4.02 ( $SD = 0.89$ ), indicating a high level of interpersonal competence. The highest-rated items were supporting others in times of need ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $SD = 0.79$ , Very High) and active listening ( $M = 4.26$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ , Very High), reflecting empathy and attentiveness. High ratings were also observed for building positive relationships ( $M = 4.13$ ,  $SD = 0.83$ ), maintaining friendships ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), communicating ideas effectively ( $M = 3.88$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ), and resolving conflicts constructively ( $M = 3.85$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ). The lowest-rated item, feeling comfortable in team environments ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ , High), though still within the high range, may indicate some challenges in collaborative interactions. Overall, the results reflect strong social skills among students.

**Table 7.** *Questions in terms of Social Skills*

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
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I support others when they are in need of help or encouragement.	4.34	0.79	Very High
I listen actively to others when they are speaking.	4.26	0.80	Very High
I build positive relationships with people from diverse backgrounds.	4.13	0.83	High
I find it easy to make and maintain friendships.	3.94	0.91	High
I am able to communicate my ideas clearly and effectively.	3.88	0.96	High
I can resolve conflicts with others in a constructive way.	3.85	0.92	High
I feel comfortable working in a team environment.	3.76	0.99	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High; 3.41 – 4.20 = High; 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 = Low; 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

Goleman (1998) emphasized that social competence—including empathy and effective communication—is a core component of emotional intelligence. Similarly, Bar-On (1997) identified social skills as critical to emotional well-being and the development of meaningful interpersonal relationships.

#### D. Empathy and Sensitivity to Others' Emotions

Table 8 shows an overall mean of 4.15 (SD = 0.84) for students' empathy, indicating a high level of empathic ability. The highest-rated items were trying to understand how others feel (M = 4.25, SD = 0.78, Very High) and noticing when others are upset (M = 4.25, SD = 0.83, Very High), reflecting strong emotional awareness. High ratings were also observed for valuing others' emotions and viewpoints (M = 4.19, SD = 0.86), showing compassion to those in difficulty (M = 4.16, SD = 0.82), putting oneself in another's shoes (M = 4.11, SD = 0.84), and being attentive to nonverbal cues (M = 4.09, SD = 0.86).

**Table 8.** *Questions in terms of Empathy*

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I try to understand how others feel.	4.25	0.78	Very High
I notice when others are feeling upset or distressed.	4.25	0.83	Very High

I show compassion to those who are experiencing difficulties.	4.16	0.82	High
I value the emotions and viewpoints of others.	4.19	0.86	High
I can put myself in someone else's shoes.	4.11	0.84	High
I am attentive to nonverbal cues.	4.09	0.86	High
I am sensitive to their needs and feelings.	3.97	0.89	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High; 3.41 – 4.20 = High; 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 = Low; 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

The lowest-rated item, being sensitive to others' needs and feelings ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ , High), though still within the high range, suggests occasional difficulty recognizing subtle cues. Overall, students demonstrate well-developed empathy that supports emotional and social functioning (Goleman, 1995; Davis, 1983).

### E. Goal Achievement Enhancing Motivation

Table 9 shows that students reported a high level of motivation (overall  $M = 4.07$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ). The highest-rated item was motivation to improve and grow ( $M = 4.32$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ , Very High), followed by finding joy in pursuing goals ( $M = 4.18$ ,  $SD = 0.86$ , High), and being driven to achieve them ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ , High). High ratings were also observed for staying focused on important tasks ( $M = 4.05$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ) and feeling a strong sense of purpose ( $M = 4.00$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ). The lowest-rated items, taking initiative ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ) and persisting despite setbacks ( $M = 3.93$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), though still high, suggest that some students may face challenges in sustaining proactive and resilient behaviors. Overall, the results reflect strong intrinsic motivation and goal orientation among students.

**Table 9.** Questions in terms of Motivation

Items	Mean	SD	Interpretation
I am motivated to improve myself and grow as a person.	4.32	0.82	Very High
I find joy and satisfaction in pursuing my goals.	4.18	0.86	High
I am driven to achieve my goals.	4.08	0.90	High
I stay focused on tasks that are important to me.	4.05	0.91	High

I feel a strong sense of purpose in my actions.	4.00	0.89	High
I take initiative to accomplish tasks.	3.94	0.95	High
I remain persistent in the face of setbacks.	3.93	0.91	High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>4.07</b>	<b>0.91</b>	<b>High</b>

Legend: 4.21 – 5.00 = Very High; 3.41 – 4.20 = High; 2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate; 1.81 – 2.60 = Low; 1.00 – 1.80 = Very Low

This supports **Deci and Ryan's (1985)** theory on intrinsic motivation and aligns with **Schunk's (1990)** findings on the importance of goal setting and perseverance for academic and personal success.

### III. Relationship Between Parental Absence and Emotional Quotient

The purpose of the Pearson correlation study was to ascertain how parental absence and emotional quotient were related.

**Table 10.** *Correlation Between Parental Absence and Emotional Quotient*

		Attachment	Family Dynamics	Parental Absence
Self Awareness	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.150	0.194	0.202*
Self Regulation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.522***	0.277**	0.505***
Social Skills	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.375***	0.262**	0.394***
Motivation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.334***	0.201*	0.335***
Empathy	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.117	0.122	0.143
Emotional Quotient	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	0.366***	0.257**	0.386***

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The correlation analysis reveals that parental absence, as measured by attachment and family dynamics, is significantly correlated with most domains of emotional quotient (EQ).

Attachment correlated moderately with self-regulation ( $r = 0.522^{***}$ ), social skills ( $r = 0.375^{***}$ ), and motivation ( $r = 0.334^{***}$ ), highlighting the role of emotional bonds in shaping EQ. Family dynamics also correlated with self-regulation ( $r = 0.277^{**}$ ), social skills ( $r = 0.262^{**}$ ), and motivation ( $r = 0.201^*$ ), indicating that quality family interactions support adolescents' emotional quotient even when parents are physically absent. These results are consistent with Cruz (2022), who emphasized the importance of supportive virtual family ties in maintaining emotional well-being, even when distance is present. Empathy correlated weakly and non-significantly, suggesting that the ability to understand and respond to others' feelings may develop through broader socialization processes, consistent with Davis' (1983) multidimensional theory of empathy. Overall, emotional quotient correlated significantly with parental absence ( $r = 0.386^{***}$ ), affirming that attachment and family dynamics remain key factors in adolescents' emotional development.

#### IV. Predictive Power of Parental Absence on Emotional Quotient

To ascertain whether parental absence could predict emotional quotient, linear regression analysis was utilized.

**Table 11.** *Regression Analysis: Parental Absence as Predictor of Emotional Quotient*

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p
Intercept	3.014	0.2735	11.02	<.001
Attachment	0.166	0.0524	3.17	0.002
Family Dynamics	0.107	0.0747	1.43	0.156

**R**=.389, **R**<sup>2</sup>=.151, **Adjusted R**<sup>2</sup>=.134, **F** (2,100) =8.92, **p**<.001

The multiple linear regression analysis further confirmed that attachment is a significant predictor of Emotional Quotient ( $B = 0.166$ ,  $p = .002$ ), while family dynamics did not emerge as a significant predictor ( $B = 0.107$ ,  $p = .156$ ). The model explained 15.1% of the variance in Emotional Quotient,  $F(2, 100) = 8.92$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicating that attachment exerts a stronger influence on students' emotional development than the structural quality of family dynamics. These results highlight that maintaining close emotional bonds with parents, even in the context of physical absence, is more critical to students' emotional resilience than broader patterns of family interaction. These findings align with previous research that discovered that adolescents' Emotional Quotient is more influenced by emotional attachment than by family structure (Gonzalez & Alvarez, 2021).

#### V. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the often-overlooked emotional struggles of adolescents with absent parents, focusing on five domains: (1) self-awareness, (2) self-regulation, (3) social skills, (4) empathy, and (5) motivation to investigate how parental absence affected high school students' emotional quotients (EQ). The findings revealed that while overall emotional quotient scores were high, even in the extent of parental absence, lower ratings in areas such as seeking comfort and emotional sharing suggest difficulties in forming deeper emotional connections. This is likely due to reduced physical presence and communication gaps with their parents. These findings support earlier research observations by Reyes and Santos (2020), who found that children of Overseas Filipino Workers often suppress emotional concerns to avoid

burdening their parents. They also reflect the emotional strain caused by parental unavailability (Delos Reyes & Galarion, 2020).

Furthermore, this advances our knowledge that parental absence, particularly in the context of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs), does not necessarily result in lower emotional competence. Instead, students with strong emotional bonds and nurturing environments display notable emotional strength. Factors such as consistent communication, expressions of affection, and active parental involvement, even from a distance, positively influence adolescents' ability to regulate emotions, build relationships, and maintain motivation.

This study affirms that the quality of emotional relationship is anchored in faith, love, and consistent care, and is pivotal in fostering adolescents' emotional and spiritual growth. Ellen G. White emphasized that "The home is the heart of society. The happiness of society, the success of the church, the prosperity of the nation, depend upon home influences" (The Adventist Home, p. 15) and that "The restoration and uplifting of humanity begins in the home" (The Adventist Home, p. 37). Even in the context of parental absence, these principles call for the intentional cultivation of love, respect, and godliness. Scripture reinforces this mandate: "Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6, ESV) and "Children are a heritage from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3, NIV), placing a sacred responsibility on families and faith communities.

Consequently, several recommendations are proposed. First, schools should strengthen emotional support programs by providing counseling services specifically tailored to students with absent parents, ensuring access to consistent guidance and care. Second, Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW) parents are encouraged to maintain regular and meaningful communication with their children to reinforce emotional bonds and provide a sense of security. Third, substitute caregivers or guardians should be adequately trained to offer emotional support, ensuring a stable and nurturing home environment. Fourth, church communities should actively engage in providing spiritual mentoring, emotional encouragement, and practical support to families affected by parental absence, fostering a faith-based environment that promotes resilience and belonging. Finally, future research should explore additional variables such as socio-economic status, peer influence, and academic pressure to better understand the broader context of emotional development.

When families, schools, churches, and communities unite to offer Christ-centered care, they embody the biblical promise that "God sets the lonely in families" (Psalm 68:6, NIV). This collaboration affirms that faith, love, and intentional support can transcend physical distance, fostering resilience and holistic growth among adolescents facing parental absence.

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