

NINA MAADAD

# Need or Greed: Young People's Financial Support Expectations and Cross-Cultural Differences

## ABSTRACT

*Most parents, teachers, and guardians understand that children, no matter what their age, have needs for certain things in life to help them develop physically, emotionally, and mentally. There are many things that children themselves want. In our daily lives a "need" or a "want" may sound very similar, so that differentiation between the two is not always clear. This paper explores the distinction between needs and wants and the different ways and means young people use to achieve these ends in Western society. It also looks at how parents react and deal with their children when the expectations rise and their needs and wants become more expensive. Sixty students, all aged between 16 and 22 years old, filled in questionnaires. They were from four different school sectors, five different cultural backgrounds, and two universities in South Australia. Twenty were later interviewed to document their experiences and stories. Data was analysed qualitatively for factors affecting attitude, lifestyle, core values, culture, and their impact on the behaviour outcomes. The study further examined how these patterns of behaviour reflected on the students' life skills, achievements, and how they affected family outcomes. Results showed that many parents took the blame for their children's actions and illustrated the influence of values and cultural background on children's attitude towards their parents, their needs, and expectations.*

**Key words:** *Young people, diversity in cultural upbringing, psychological experiences, lifestyle expectations, and increasing demands of children and culture.*

## INTRODUCTION

Bringing up children in a family is not without problems. Sleepless nights, isolation, learning new skills, adjusting to parenthood as well as changing lifestyles are generally reported by new parents as issues affecting their lives. Although raising children can be very challenging, the amount of energy, sacrifices, and efforts expended can still be rewarding and satisfying (Carr-Gregg, 2005).

Noticeable today is the broad change in today's children and how they want or feel the need to have certain things in order to for them to feel that they belong to a certain social group. Parents usually do not seem to mind the

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pressure of providing for their children's needs and this is understandable, but the pressures of what their children want now are becoming unrealistic and not necessary. A growing culture of spending around children seems to have emerged and each child wants to be better than his/her peers and have more things than they do (Pugh, 2008).

Parents are apprehensive about their duties towards their kids and believe that it is their responsibility to make available all their requests to prevent family altercations. They also have fears of psychologically depriving their children of those things which could put them at risk of being victimised by their social group. Consequently, it is becoming crucial for children to learn to value themselves and others for who they are and not for how much money they have or what they are worth materially. Teaching them to think this way is a lifetime process that starts at birth. In a materialistic society that associates success with money, it is the parents' duty to model to their children certain values other than materialistic values that they believe in, demonstrate these values to them throughout their daily activities and communicate them regularly to their children (Glasser-Schenck, 2008).

Aristotle viewed our human behaviour as having three dimensions (cited in Frankena, 2006). The first one was the cognitive dimension which related to analysing, judging, knowing, thinking or perceiving, meaning in effect our previous knowledge of moral rules. The affective dimension was second and it referred to our sense of feeling towards right or wrong. Last was the behavioural dimension which referred to unconcealed behaviour, how we deal with things, how do we resist temptation and act in the right manner.

These are very important dimensions of learned behaviour, so it is important for parents and other people in power to set the right example, in order for children to master these skills and apply them in life (Smolicz, 1999). A very interesting study done by Kohlberg, who based his work on Piaget's theories, proposed that children go through three levels of development: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional stages. Each is divided into two sub-stages: cultural rules, family values, and expectations; and how morals are defined (cited in Frankena, 2006).

The behaviour of some adolescents and young adults in modern families seem a long way from Aristotle's ideal. The fact that some children bully their parents in order to achieve what they want is worrying and an eye opener in such an individualistic society. Bullying does not have to be physical but can be verbal or non-verbal and it appears in two different forms, indirect and direct. Indirect non-verbal bullying includes manipulative, controlling, and cunning behaviours. Many children bully their parents on a daily basis in subtle and psychological ways, involving taunting, cruelty, sarcasm, accusation, guilt, and blame (Sullivan, 2000).

T. Kellerman (2003) also suggested that disrespect is mostly a matter of impulse control. To prevent disrespect and manipulation are occurring certain

rules need to take place in every household from the initial stages. Children look at these situations as a matter of survival and, therefore, they develop these skills, thinking that they are a necessity in life; and if no rules are laid down to obstruct such deeds, children are than encouraged to persevere.

In some societies, people's identities are constructed from within, not without, through the influences of history, language, family, and culture. However, in Western European societies, identities are not so much determined by who the person is or where that person comes from (Hasan ed., 1998). This view may help understand the reasons behind certain behaviour and reactions from families and their children, especially when they are not all originating from the same cultural background. This will also help provide an idea of why diverse means are used for survival in a world of maximum temptation, high novelty lifestyle, and materialistic competencies (Frankena, 2006:237).

According to J.J. Smolicz (1979 and 1999), core values are important and central to all social groups' cultures. The major role of core values is to act as a symbolic reality for a given group. Core values also identify social groups according to ethnicity, social class, religion, beliefs, etc. Furthermore, these values can be viewed in their own original setting or in a plural society. The core values of a group can involve one or more values, such as language, religion, and family; and these are evaluated differently depending on cultural context. Some aspects of cultural values change with time and modernization, while other aspects fundamentally stay the same. The aspects that change are associated with needs, materials, and modernisation; while the latter are regarded as central and all social and identification systems revolve around them.

The concept of core values is most useful in understanding how the children in today's society identify their needs and relate them to their home culture and upbringing. Anthropologists have raised an important issue regarding how members of a particular society all share the same cultural assumptions and may never develop different interpretations of reality. This issue derived from the notion of culture within any society, and the fact that certain suggestions are common sense in that environment; each individual can presume that society would have a general sympathy for his/her statements and an understanding of his/her actions. However, regardless of certain mutual concepts and shared knowledge and understanding, the nature of their social world and the great majority of people living in it would never consider the "truth" of significantly different views because of their intimacy and constant contacts with one another (Knafo & Galansky, 2008).

There have been many theories that have shown how both internal and external factors influence cultural changes and behaviour. The social environment seems to be the most influential factor that stands out in personal relationships. With respect to the individual's perspective, there is ongoing research that focuses on emotional development. Its emphasis is on how our concepts of self and conflict proceed and develop in life. Rogers and Maslow

(cited in Tenant, 1997) did much research on humanistic psychology and developed a number of categories for people's motives that were related and connected. Basically, unless individuals have reached a level of satisfaction at the most basic stage, they do not move onto the second step.

## **METHOD**

The data collection method reflected a qualitative approach that was personalized in term of collection and analysis. For example, semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used in line with the approach of humanistic sociology (Smolicz, 1979 and 1999). Individuals were studied both within the context of their families and within their cultural, social, and educational milieu. This enabled a better understanding of the ways values could be subsumed within a family, by looking at children within their own settings, entering their homes, families, and personal space.

This approach has been influenced by the principles of humanistic sociology which seek to investigate the attitudes, feelings, and self-reflections that individuals have in order to analyse the ways in which they adapt to the culture of their society and environment (Smolicz, 1979 and 1999). The capacity to do this depends completely on the individual and the changes that occur in their life which reflects differently on their consciousness and feelings. It must be borne in mind that two contradictory situations can exist, side-by-side, in the human consciousness. These differences do not make the research data invalid; but, on the contrary, they enrich the value of the research and open the mind to new ideas and concepts. In considering "need or greed" research, humanistic sociology can be applied on many different levels. These include an examination of the experiences of participants by analysing their point of view, as well as pointing to the social and cultural outcomes.

*On the Questionnaires.* At the early stage of the data collection a package, including a questionnaire, was sent out to four different schools and two universities. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: Section one asked general questions about participants' personal life and family situation; Section two asked about their relationship with family members such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, nieces, and nephews relating them to cultural values and expectations; and Section three asked questions about the students' personality type and perceptions to their needs, wants, and their lifestyle.

The participants were selected through personal and professional contacts. Fourteen students (7 males and 7 females) were studying at the University of Adelaide; twelve (3 males and 9 females) were studying at the University of South Australia; thirteen students (8 males and 5 females) were from a public school in the eastern suburbs; six students (3 males and 3 females) were from a private school in the eastern suburbs; eight students (5 males and 3 females) were from an independent school in the northern suburbs. Lastly, seven students (4 males and 3 females) belonged to a Catholic school in the city.

*On the Interviews.* I selected 20 participants to interview from those who completed the questionnaire. The selection was based on including participants from five different cultural backgrounds; some were interviewed two or three times. All of these participants were students in South Australia. Interviews were conducted at schools, university, or at the interviewees' homes. The interviews were semi-structured. In the course of the interview process most interviewees seemed to have answered freely and provided answers to the set of questions that I had put to them. The same questions were asked to each individual.

## FINDINGS

Sixty students in total from South Australia participated in this study (30 males and 30 females); eighteen participants were of Anglo-Saxon background, thirteen of Italian origins, eleven participants were of Asian background, nine of Greek origin, and nine came from an Arab background. The analysis of the data obtained in this study began once all the interviews were completed and all the questionnaires were returned. The interview and questionnaire data were analysed from an interpretative perspective to identify what themes were important to the respondents.

Data from the questionnaire and interviews were categorized, reduced, and analysed for emerging themes. The following tables highlight the range of responses.

**Table 1:**  
Concrete Facts about Respondents' Background (N= 60)

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	30	50
Female	30	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Level of Study:</b>		
University	26	
Public Secondary School	13	
Independent Secondary School	21	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>Type of Schooling:</b>		
Public	13	
Private	6	
Independent	8	
Catholic	7	
University	26	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>Family Circumstances:</b>		
With both parents	30	
With mother	13	
With partner	7	
With friends	16	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	

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<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Employment:</b>		
Full-time	8	
Part-time	27	
Not working	9	
N/A	16	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>Financial Support:</b>		
Parents	34	
Scholarship	2	
Self	8	
Parents and self	16	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>Mother's Occupation:</b>		
House wife	11	
Nurse	2	
Florist	1	
Receptionist	5	
Accountant	1	
Doctor	1	
Shop assistant	3	
Hairdresser	2	
N/A	34	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>Father's Occupation:</b>		
Technician	1	
Plumber	2	
Doctor	3	
Dentist	1	
Lawyer	2	
Electrician	1	
Builder	4	
Handyman	1	
Hairdresser	1	
Sales person	1	
Bus driver	1	
Cook	1	
Waiter	1	
Librarian	1	
N/A	39	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>Ethnic Background:</b>		
Anglo-Australian	18	
European (Italian, Greek)	22	
Arab (Lebanese, Jordanian, Egyptian)	9	
Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Malaysian)	11	
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	

This part of the paper explores individuals' personal details, family structure, and the relationship with immediate family members. It provides a general idea of the relationship between the participants, their parents, and siblings (if any). It also indicates the profession of both parents and hints at who supports the participants financially as well as their place of residence.

**Table 2:**  
Sociological Factors and Family Relationships

Question	Response
1. Who do you go to when in trouble financially?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- My parents.</li> <li>- My friends because my parents are far away.</li> <li>- Mostly my parents.</li> <li>- My grand-parents sometime.</li> </ul>
2. Who do you go to when in trouble emotionally?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- My friends.</li> <li>- My sister.</li> <li>- My boyfriend.</li> <li>- My girlfriend.</li> <li>- My parents.</li> </ul>
3. How often do you catch up with members of your family such as your grand-parents, uncles, aunts?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not often, just for special family occasions.</li> <li>- Regular basis.</li> <li>- Once a year for Christmas.</li> <li>- Whenever we have a birthday or Christmas.</li> <li>- Daily because we live close.</li> </ul>
4. Do you have breakfast, lunch or dinner on a daily basis with your immediate family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes, at least breakfast and most night dinners.</li> <li>- Every night we do but in the morning my parents leave early to go to work.</li> <li>- Never for lunch, not even weekends.</li> <li>- Often for dinner.</li> <li>- Not really.</li> <li>- Occasionally we organise family dinner.</li> <li>- Very busy to do so in the evening and like sleeping in the morning.</li> </ul>
5. Do you go on holidays? Alone? With family?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Always with the family, mum, dad and siblings.</li> <li>- Sometimes I go with my grand-parents.</li> <li>- I have done my share with family, now I travel with my friends and boyfriend.</li> <li>- Never with the family, it will be so boring.</li> <li>- I try to go on holidays but if my family pay for me they want to come along so I'd rather not do it.</li> <li>- I go with friends if I saved enough money.</li> </ul>
6. Are you satisfied with your family life in general?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes I am.</li> <li>- I think so.</li> <li>- I don't know anything different so I would say yes.</li> <li>- I wish my life was little different, a little richer.</li> <li>- Not really.</li> <li>- I don't know.</li> </ul>
7. Do your parents understand your needs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most times.</li> <li>- All the time.</li> <li>- I don't think they have any idea.</li> <li>- Not when it comes to money.</li> <li>- They don't understand that life is different now to 20 years ago.</li> <li>- Yes, they do.</li> <li>- We have a good understanding of our mutual needs and things that we can do without.</li> </ul>
8. Do you think that your parents are old fashioned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- They are not old fashioned at all.</li> <li>- They act it every now and then.</li> <li>- No.</li> <li>- Very old fashioned.</li> <li>- They find it hard to accept the new generation's way of living.</li> </ul>

Question	Response
9. Do your parents have different values and expectations to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes and no.</li> <li>- Not always.</li> <li>- God yes!!!</li> <li>- They want me to live the traditional way, the way they probably don't even live back home.</li> <li>- Yes, they are very spiritual.</li> <li>- Pretty religious and am not.</li> <li>- Very family oriented which is nice but I can't live that way in Australia.</li> </ul>
10. Are the parents of your friends different to your parents? Please explain.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes, they are a very close family and like to spend time together.</li> <li>- No, we are similar in many ways. I think this is why our parents are good friends.</li> <li>- Her parents are very open-minded.</li> <li>- Huge difference, I get embarrassed with my family.</li> <li>- They are very relaxed compared to mine and my friends seem to have a lot more freedom.</li> <li>- They are so easy going in comparison with mine.</li> </ul>
11. For how long do you think your parents should look after you financially?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Until I finish year 12 only.</li> <li>- Til the end of school and will work with Uni studies.</li> <li>- I hope they will forever.</li> <li>- Always, isn't this what parents are for?</li> <li>- I don't know, for as long as I don't have money.</li> <li>- <i>Umm ....</i> forever.</li> </ul>
12. Do you help with house work at all?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes, regularly. I have certain chores that are mine to do.</li> <li>- Yes, not often enough.</li> <li>- Not really.</li> <li>- They don't need my help, they manage.</li> <li>- Why should I, am only a child.</li> <li>- I don't get asked and if I did, I will ignore it and it goes away.</li> </ul>
13. How often do you help?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily.</li> <li>- With every meal and do my washing.</li> <li>- Do dishes every day and help with my sibling.</li> <li>- Help whenever it is needed.</li> <li>- Not often.</li> <li>- Not at all.</li> </ul>
14. Do your parents get mad if your duties or chores are not done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes.</li> <li>- Not really.</li> <li>- They don't care.</li> <li>- They appreciate it if I helped but it is not expected.</li> <li>- On the contrary, they get surprised if it was done.</li> <li>- They get mad but not furious.</li> <li>- So what?</li> </ul>
15. What do you do about that?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Get it done.</li> <li>- Apologize and do it straight away.</li> <li>- Buy time to do it later.</li> <li>- Explain why it is not done.</li> <li>- Nothing.</li> <li>- They will soon forget.</li> <li>- What can I do?</li> </ul>

Question	Response
16. Does it bother you if you upset your parents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes very much.</li> <li>- It does a little.</li> <li>- They are easy going, they will soon forget.</li> <li>- No.</li> <li>- Only when they remind me later when I need something.</li> <li>- If it affects my allowances (1).</li> </ul>
17. Do you shout or swear at your parents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No way.</li> <li>- Not in my culture, I see it happen a lot though with my friends.</li> <li>- Never.</li> <li>- May shout but not swear.</li> <li>- I raise my voice often when I am angry, but they speak louder any way.</li> <li>- Often.</li> <li>- I swear a lot and speak my opinion loudly.</li> </ul>
18. Do you get abusive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No way.</li> <li>- Never.</li> <li>- In my culture if I abused my parents it means I am a very bad person, it is a lack of respect.</li> <li>- I swear a lot and slam doors and abuse only verbally.</li> <li>- I don't know if you call swearing abusive, to me, it is just release of frustration.</li> <li>- Slam doors, bang books and kick off my shoes.</li> </ul>
19. How much do you take before you swear, shout or walk away?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't do any of it.</li> <li>- My culture would never allow me to do so.</li> <li>- I walk away to avoid confrontation often.</li> <li>- I don't swear but go to my room.</li> <li>- I start swearing and walk off especially when I am wrong.</li> <li>- I try to win the situation by ending the confrontation.</li> <li>- I attack first and it seems to work, the problems get solved.</li> <li>- Shouting is natural isn't it?</li> </ul>
20. When your parents get old will you? Look after them, send them to a nursing home, put them in a retirement village, keep them in their own home and look after them or other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I will look after them always, they looked after me.</li> <li>- A pleasure to look after them.</li> <li>- No way putting them in a retirement village.</li> <li>- Nursing home if they are ill and hard to look after.</li> <li>- Can't see myself changing their underwear and bathing them.</li> <li>- Don't know, depends on their health and my life at the time.</li> <li>- It is an expectation to look after them in my culture.</li> <li>- They will have to live with my older brother, this is the tradition.</li> <li>- Not sure what I will do.</li> <li>- Would like to build a home for them next door to me.</li> </ul>

The discussion that follows this section takes up the themes of sociological factors and the relationship with family members, as revealed in the interviews and the questionnaire responses.

***On the Cultural Differences.*** Western society functions differently from Asian, Italian, Greek, and Arabian societies in relation to family life and, especially, when the focus is on respect and closeness. The family decides on, or reserves the right to approve, almost every decision their children make before they can go ahead and act on it. This is a sign of respect, appreciation, and connection with the family. On the other hand, Western culture emphasizes

the freedom of the individual. It is generally the norm in Western families that children do not have to have their parents', teachers', or guardians' approval or permission to do things. This pattern is confirmed in the way some participants describe the amalgamation between them and their parents.

The findings indicated that participants who were not from an Anglo-Saxon background were more concerned with family values and often stressed the importance of respecting their parent's wishes and feelings. Similarly, the other participants also respected their parents' wishes and cared about them but that did not stop them from living their daily life the way they thought was best for them. J.J. Smolicz (1979) argued that in each ethnic group, some values emerged as vital to the group's on-going existence and to its members' sense of belonging to the group. His research indicated that for some groups, such as the Polish, Latvian, and Ukrainian, their language represented such a core value. In other groups, such as the Jews or the Irish, religious beliefs and practices were the core values. In contrast, Italians in Australia tended to regard collectivist family values as the core value most important to their survival. Additionally, Arabs are inclined to deem family values, Arabic language, and the Islamic religion as the main core values. These arguments are supported by responses provided by the participants, which demonstrate the difference in cultural values and the diverse ways they seem to live their lives.

As seen in table 2, it seemed natural for the Australian-born respondents to live the new mix of culture that their parents before them had created in order to find a compromise between Western and European, Asian or Arab culture. The respondents claimed that the restoration of such values helped them understand, respect, and appreciate the views of their parents and strengthen their beliefs, ethics, and morals. The degree of cultural differences in some cases was enormous and most respondents showed levels of high respect to their parents and values. There was a comparison between convergence in lifestyle and things some families allow their children to do and not do. Some respondents were envious of the relationship between some of their friends and their parents because they had more freedom and seemed to do what they desired in life without seeking their parents' approval or permission. In saying this, a few respondents, after admitting that some of their Australian friends often get away with much more than they do with their parents, do not wish to change their standard of living, lose their family values, and jeopardise the relationship between them and their parents (Radun, 2007).

This divergence between groups, however, is not unique to Australia. Cultural values vary from nation to nation and they also vary in their influence on different families and groups within any one nation. According to Michael Sandel, an individual self does not exist as an independent entity because no one is capable of standing outside his/her experience, or outside of society (cited in Theophanous, 1995:254). This attests to the fact that the behaviour of our children is a product of their families, surroundings, society, teachers, and

friends. This is not only because they tend to copy their parents' actions, but the fact that they know how much they can get away with and how far they can manipulate their parents.

***On the Importance of Family.*** It was evident that some respondents have strong family ties and tend to socialise frequently with family members and relatives and share meals on a regular basis. This behaviour draws attention to the importance and acceptance of family values. However, other respondents made it clear that lack of time plays a major factor and having a life outside the home and away from the family is the norm.

It was also clear that most respondents turned to their immediate family (parents and grand-parents) when in financial trouble except for those who had no family around them; they looked for support from their friends. Conversely, it was obvious that only few participants asked their parents for help when in trouble, while most of them relied on their friends (girlfriend and/or boyfriend) and few found comfort and support amongst their siblings.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that a group of respondents who live at home tend to help with housework regularly because they believe it is the norm. On the other hand, a few think that they do not do enough to help at home and should help a little more. In spite of this, there are those who do not do anything at all and think nothing of it. They keep piling on the work for their father or mother without guilt or shame and they know that their parents will not punish them and will soon get over the matter.

When asked about their plans for the future, when their parents become old and fragile or ill, most respondents emphasised the importance of living with their parents or close by to facilitate looking after them. A few participants were certain that they cannot look after their parents and will have to send them to nursing homes. These views were strongly related to cultural values and family ethical beliefs.

***On the Feelings toward Parents.*** In order to measure the perceptions that the participants held toward their parents, they were asked to describe their attitudes toward each mother/father figure. The study also included their thoughts about their upbringing and if they agree with the steps their parents use to discipline them and the way they are treated. A large number of students described their parents as being fair, but they also added that they will do things differently with their own children. Some suggested some unfairness in their upbringing and mentioned having to lie to survive. However, there were those who were totally satisfied with the relationship between them and their parents and hinted that they will not treat their children any differently. Furthermore, they hope that their parents will be there to help with the upbringing of their own children. One particular participant works and studies full-time to support her family. Her father is ill and her mother looks after him and, therefore, the respondents is the bread winner and the only hope of income for that family.

Evidence emerged that participants who came from broken families found

reaching their goals a little easier by using one parent against the other and by implementing emotional techniques to get their parents' attention. These respondents also suggested that they will be aware of such emotional games later on in life if their own children tried to play with them or against them.

*On the Bullying.* A series of questions in both the questionnaire and the interview sought to probe the respondents' ways and techniques for achieving materialistic needs and the way they deal with rejection from their parents. All of them admitted having the ability to use different means to accomplish certain results. Some participants attain their goals by working harder to provide for themselves and help their parents, by studying harder or even putting on hold their requests; while others become over-protective in a way which leads to bullying their parents. As discussed earlier, bullying does not always mean hitting or fighting; it can be verbal or non verbal, direct and indirect, and it can be over powering and intimidating. Some parents become docile because they fear the psychological reaction of their children for not being able to handle negative responses or even causing them to become isolated and rejected from certain social groups (Carr-Gregg & Shale, 2002).

There was a vast range of answers in relation to this theme; most of it related to cultural values and ways of upbringing. A number of respondents revealed that such behaviour is not a part of their cultural standards and will never happen. Other participants indicated that silence, escaping to their room, or leaving the house is a way of preventing such confrontation. Nevertheless, a number of participants revealed the abusive ways they use in order to deal with rejection or confrontation. This behaviour comes in different shapes, forms, and language. It was reported that some respondents slam doors, some raise their voices, and others use abusive language to deal with rejection.

**Table 3:**  
Psychological and Emotional Factors

Question	Response
1. What do you think you need to be completely happy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good health, wealth, and happiness.</li> <li>- Lots of money.</li> <li>- Good health for dad, happiness for mum, and money; so, I don't have to work that much.</li> <li>- Great family and mum's health.</li> <li>- Parents to be back together.</li> <li>- Good holiday away with my boyfriend.</li> <li>- Miracle.</li> <li>- Nice man with lots of money.</li> </ul>
2. What is the most important thing to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- My family.</li> <li>- Lots of things, family, future, study.</li> <li>- Money.</li> <li>- Self worth and family.</li> <li>- To be happy.</li> <li>- To have a good job and make my parents proud.</li> </ul>

Question	Response
3. What are your plans for the future?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lots of dreams at this stage.</li> <li>- To be rich and have a good job.</li> <li>- Have a good family and good job.</li> <li>- Don't have any.</li> <li>- Not sure.</li> <li>- Don't care, I take it one day at a time.</li> <li>- Can't plan ahead.</li> </ul>
4. Do you have a special way or tactic for asking for special things from your parents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I try begging often.</li> <li>- Putting on the cute look, it works with dad.</li> <li>- I do it in a polite manner.</li> <li>- Winging it often works for me.</li> <li>- Manipulating works well.</li> <li>- Keep asking until I get it.</li> <li>- Not really, different ways with mum and dad.</li> </ul>
5. Do you really need everything you ask for or is it just a habit to have everything?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- No.</li> <li>- Not often.</li> <li>- It is worth trying.</li> <li>- Why should others have it?</li> <li>- I am like all my friends, it is good to give it a try.</li> <li>- Can't see why not.</li> <li>- No, not really need it but maybe would like to have it.</li> <li>- I don't think so.</li> <li>- Of course I do, otherwise I wouldn't ask for it.</li> </ul>
6. How much do you think you can get away with regarding your parents?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In all honesty, I get treated fairly.</li> <li>- Murder.</li> <li>- They trust me and believe in what I do, so I have to say that I get away with a lot. However I don't take advantage of it.</li> <li>- I am very spoiled and get it all.</li> <li>- They try to be firm but I often get what I want.</li> <li>- Whatever, I want to get away with.</li> </ul>
7. How often do your parents say "No" to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- As often as they have to.</li> <li>- Often I would say.</li> <li>- Whenever, it is suitable and fair.</li> <li>- They can try and always start by saying no.</li> <li>- No does not mean "No".</li> <li>- Not much, they know that I will get it any way.</li> </ul>
8. Do you take "No" for an answer? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Yes, my parents know better.</li> <li>- No, I am a free spirit, entitled to my own opinion, can always try.</li> <li>- Most times, it is not good to argue with your parents.</li> <li>- Rarely.</li> <li>- Only when it is fair.</li> <li>- I don't give up that easily.</li> <li>- Only after trying every other avenue.</li> </ul>
9. Do you describe yourself as: emotional, quiet, happy, depressed, calm, outgoing, sad, or other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very emotional, calm, and happy.</li> <li>- I am emotional and calm; and according to my parents, these are my good qualities.</li> <li>- Happy person and very outgoing.</li> <li>- Very sensitive and quiet.</li> <li>- Depressed because of all the pressure.</li> <li>- All of the above at different times.</li> <li>- Mostly happy.</li> <li>- Very quiet and emotional.</li> <li>- No, not sad but quiet.</li> </ul>

Question	Response
10. Do you often get what you want in life? If yes, how?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mostly, by demanding it. Unless you try you don't know and who knows you may even get more the next time.</li> <li>- I could say yes, I must be lucky.</li> <li>- I get what I should get. I am not greedy, so I am easily satisfied.</li> <li>- I would like a lot more from life.</li> <li>- No, life is not fair, it is only natural, can't expect to get all you want all the time, be reasonable this is impossible.</li> <li>- Not really, others have more than me.</li> <li>- Those who don't deserve anything have it all, where is the fairness in this.</li> </ul>
11. Do you see yourself as: demanding, hard working, satisfied or other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I work pretty hard at school and I am satisfied with my results.</li> <li>- Very hard working to support my family.</li> <li>- According to my parents, I am very demanding. I don't think so though.</li> <li>- I am very satisfied with my life.</li> <li>- If you call ambitious demanding, so let it be.</li> <li>- I could be all of them at different times and different situations.</li> <li>- If you don't demand or ask you will never get.</li> <li>- Hard working on demanding to be satisfied.</li> <li>- Not sure.</li> </ul>
12. To get what you want do you manipulate, lie, speak the truth, keep secrets, and negotiate, or other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I do whatever I have to do to get what I want.</li> <li>- Will never lie but I am a good negotiator.</li> <li>- Speak the truth, especially to mum, and if I get what I want it is fair, otherwise it is not meant to be.</li> <li>- I can't tell the truth to my parents, they don't understand.</li> <li>- My friends think that I can be a great achiever. I can manipulate any situation and get away with it.</li> <li>- Secrets and lies seem to work for me.</li> <li>- Not sure if I will lie but do negotiate often.</li> <li>- Life line for lying is often short, I will only say the truth or not say anything at all.</li> </ul>
13. When your desires are not met with your parents do you: cry, get over it, put on an attitude, demand change, play the guilt trip, negotiate, blame, or other?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The guilt trip works for me. It has got benefits to have split families I reckon.</li> <li>- I don't cry in front of anyone, but I can alone.</li> <li>- Can't help the attitude issue, it seems to take over any situation I am in. It is successful most times, so I don't worry about it.</li> <li>- They tell me, I am like mum with the attitude issue, I can only blame her for it, so they put up with me.</li> <li>- I get over the issues quickly. We can't afford much and I know my parents try their best.</li> <li>- I put on the blame trick before I get blamed.</li> <li>- I demand and cry, and don't get over it quickly.</li> </ul>
14. Do you believe that if your parents were from a different cultural background, your life will be different?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I am sure it will be, but I am not sure that it will be better.</li> <li>- I don't know.</li> <li>- I look at my friends and I think that they have to do lots for their parents. I don't do much.</li> <li>- I don't think that I can cope. Catching up with grand-parents weekly and helping them with house work and visiting relatives, no thanks.</li> <li>- Would love to have no worries, no big family, and no social formalities; life will be so easy.</li> <li>- Not sure if I lost all the cultural values that my family taught me; my life may become empty and meaningless.</li> <li>- Probably boring and you will end up lonely.</li> </ul>

Question	Response
15. Do you think you will treat your children, the way your parents treat you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Of course.</li> <li>- I hope I will, they did a good job, I hope to have as much love and time for my kids.</li> <li>- I hope that I could be more understanding and modern with my kids.</li> <li>- Would hope my kids will treat me with the same respect.</li> <li>- I will love them the same, but may be will give them a little more freedom or maybe not because I would want to protect them.</li> <li>- Would let them do whatever they want.</li> <li>- Don't want any kids, I can't let them do to me what I do to my parents.</li> <li>- Will never let them get away with what I get away with.</li> <li>- I will do even more to my kids and will not deprive them of anything they desire.</li> </ul>
16. How much do you think you will let your children get away with in comparison to you?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not much.</li> <li>- I want what is best for them, this comes with consequences and trust.</li> <li>- I will definitely have disciplinary rules.</li> <li>- I will have a nanny that can bring them up.</li> <li>- My mum will help with the kids while I will go to work, so she will do a good job.</li> <li>- I will never have kids, I can't understand why people want to have them.</li> <li>- They will not get away with anything, not with me.</li> <li>- I will not waist my life putting up with little children. I will tell them once what to do, and they will have to do it.</li> <li>- I don't know how my parents did it, I don't think I can.</li> </ul>
17. Do you describe yourself as greedy or needy? Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I am not greedy, I just have lots of needs, life is demanding.</li> <li>- Maybe I am very needy. I need and need and need.</li> <li>- I would like to have things that I wish for, why not? That does not make me a bad person, especially since my parents can afford it. The problem is that they are not often willing to spend their money.</li> <li>- I get what I can afford most times.</li> <li>- I only ask for things when I know that my parents can pay for it.</li> <li>- If dad says "No", mum pays and vice versa.</li> <li>- Someone will and this makes me greedier I think.</li> <li>- I wouldn't say that I am greedy because I don't have everything that I want.</li> </ul>
18. Do you need all the materialistic things that you ask for? e.g. technology, phones, jewelleries, i pods, car, etc. Why?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Not always but it is worth trying.</li> <li>- It is good to have what everyone else has, you might feel left out otherwise.</li> <li>- What you are worth financially makes yourself worth, this is how it goes in this world.</li> <li>- I do need, the more you have the more popular you become. Girls love to know that you can afford things.</li> <li>- Certain image gets you in a certain social circle. So to answer your question, yes.</li> <li>- No, not really. Most of the time, it is because of pressure from the society and the materialistic culture that surrounds us.</li> </ul>

Question	Response
19. Would not meeting your “needs” affect you psychologically do you think? Explain your answer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is more of a trend.</li> <li>- It is a game of power/me against them.</li> <li>- It is winning or losing with your parents and proving a point.</li> <li>- It can become psychologically distressing when you fail to achieve certain things.</li> <li>- Psychological issues are bigger than not getting what you ask for especially things you don’t really need in life.</li> <li>- No, it is more my way of staying in charge of my life and not letting others tell me what to do.</li> <li>- Might get disappointed but not ill.</li> </ul>

## IMPLICATIONS

This part explores psychological and emotional well being in the context of the participants’ lifestyle and expectations. What emerged in this part of the study was that need was driven by many causal factors, for example, social factors, group image, family circumstances, financial availability or simply the need to have what others do. The source materials for this discussion were the recorded interviews and open-ended questionnaires. These emphasized the ways in which individuals tried to manage such cultural needs and achieve certain results; and how they used certain patterns of learned behaviour to deal with difficult situations. These patterns of behaviour were different between families from different cultural backgrounds.

Albert Bundura, in his study, utilizes “social cognitive” theory which focuses on the idea of social process in learning and on cognitive factors such as expectations, self-perceptions, and beliefs (cited in Woolfolk, 2001). This theory distinguishes between: *firstly*, active learning, which is learning by doing and experiencing the consequences of that action; and *secondly*, vicarious learning, which is learning by observing others. Albert Bundura’s theories have also centred on the importance of observation for successful learning (cited in Woolfolk, 2001). Some examples supporting Albert Bundura’s study were noticed when a few participants mentioned that they have certain expectations of their parents and this is what parenthood is all about; to bring up, protect, love unconditionally, and provide for your children. Some also stated that “if your parents can’t look after you, they shouldn’t have you in the first place”.

The findings highlight issues such as factors that influence choice of attitude and reactions, expectations of parents and demands, satisfaction with lifestyle, future goals, problems experienced when not able to satisfy their needs, financial support, ability to accept facts of life or adapt to a new cultural materialistic lifestyle. These all play a major contributing role to ultimate behaviour outcomes. Success in achieving certain needy outcomes is grounded in the participants’ experiences, particularly when they deal with issues in different ways. Failure or weakness on the part of parents to acknowledge these factors could result in feelings of ignominy as well as the fear of losing their children.

Additionally, the results highlight that most children approach their parents with pre-conceived expectations. Among other things, they know exactly how far they can go before being questioned, stopped or even punished. Most participants were aware of what they were doing and which technique works best with their parents. A few also admitted to knowing how far they can push, bully, and manipulate their parents. Although a number of students who took part in this study stated that their lifestyle was satisfying and their needs were met, a few on the other hand were undecided. Many others claimed they were disappointed with the lack of financial support received from their families.

Most respondents in this study reported that the way they behave can be a reflection of their parents' values and explained that if they did not behave or perform in accordance to certain cultural values their parents will be disappointed. This may also cause embarrassment and to some alienation from their ethnicity; this was supported in a study done by A. Knafo and N. Galansky (2008) who emphasized the importance of the child-parent value transmission. A number of respondents said that they will have children of their own; some would like their own parents to contribute to the upbringing of their children; some wanted to raise them differently from how they were brought up and be more affectionate and give them freedom; while others did not want to have children at all. This means that good ties between some families were evident, other families experienced misunderstanding and distant relationships, and in other families yet again there was a sense of total failure.

***On the Psychological Factors.*** According to descriptions given by the respondents, most parents want what is best for their children. However, by giving them everything, they ask for because they want to comfort them and not deprive them, it does not mean that they are doing what is best for them. The relationship between parents and children was in many cases the reason that triggered certain behaviour or attitude towards need. There are those who understood their families' situation and sympathised with their circumstances, while others who did not react to their parents' requests carried on expecting, dreaming, and demanding. This was clearly demonstrated in table 3 where the responses showed that most children know what they can achieve and how far they can push their parents' buttons.

Most participants stressed the facts that missing out on materialistic things will not affect them psychologically and are more a power game they play with their parents to retain control. Some described the scenes they put on when in trouble as normal and how they perform it before the full moment of judgment. Others talked about their attitude towards their parents and justified their manipulative behaviour by saying that it is a smart move – “*you have to be smart to survive*”. On the other hand, few participants did not feel emotionally or psychologically disturbed in situations where their needs were not met.

***On the Need or Greed Factors.*** The study provides evidence that student beliefs, expectations, and family values are all related and they influence the behaviour and attitude of all participants. The need factor was definitely

manoeuvred by situations deriving from greed roots more than being based on specific materialistic needs.

***On the Personal Identification.*** The issue of personal identification resulted in respondents manifesting a variety of reflections. There were those who seemed so interested in family values, seeing, and sharing family functions and visiting grand-parents, aunts, and uncles. There were others, however, who treated family values differently and were not interested in their grand-parents and found it only a chore that they must do on special occasions (such as Birthdays and Christmas). These values often wield a great influence on individual behaviour and attitude and the way decisions are made in life. They tend to affect the whole family and not just the individual. This was demonstrated in the responses about the importance of one's family.

***On the Future Aspects (Children of Their Own).*** Differing expectations for the needs of the participants in this study, along with general beliefs about family in general, have been speculated as factors contributing to attitude and behaviour. A few participants were realistic in their expectations of their parents and in their attempt to explain why they do things the way they do, they indicated a consistency regarding parental values and beliefs. A few examples may define reasons behind certain behaviour: "*my turn will come to look after my parents like they looked after me*"; "*that is what we all do in my culture, it is our duty*"; and "*my parents know better what is best for me*". Ethnic differences in the examples mentioned showed strength in the relationships between some participants and their families and this contributed to positive attitude outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

The first aspect of psychological challenge that many parents feared was having their children to face what P.M. Nicassio (1983) has called "social alienation". It relates to the loss of family and friends; and the frustration of finding someone to replace them. In terms of humanistic sociology, they would be cut off from everyday contact with primary social values, such as parents and close friends, which they depend on for communal survival.

According to R. Sternberg, it is obvious that the example parents set for their children in the early stages of their life forms the foundation of their behavioural styles (cited in Grigorenko & Sternberg, 2001). It also moderates the relationship between parenting behaviour and child outcomes because the emotional environment will shape the way in which a parenting strategy is carried out. These emotions and behaviour are often based on cultural demands and cultural contexts. According to T. Stuart and C. Bostrom (2003), it is also valuable to teach children responsibility from a young age so they can learn to be accountable for their actions. Too often parents find it much easier to cover up for their children, do their job for them and even letting them off the hook by focusing on the positive outcome that could lead from the negative behaviour. This attitude will only encourage the children to repeat the same mistake again

and again. Therefore, it is essential to call attention to the problem immediately and point out the appropriate consequences.

It was observable in many ways through the questionnaire that many parents took the blame for their children's actions by supporting them blindly and giving in easily to their demands. The respondents "knew the drill" and had a reasonable idea about how tolerant their parents would be to their needs. According to a few participants, if you know how much you can get away with, why not keep trying? "*The next time you may achieve even a bit more*", this is one respondent's comment on how much they think they can get away with.

There is evidence to support the notion that parents' actions and cultural background influences children's attitudes towards needs and expectations. This was demonstrated in some answers: "*this behaviour is not possible in my culture*"; or "*my family will be alienated from the rest of the social group if I embarrassed them*". Participants emphasized that being needy is not simply about materialistic things but it is the trend to fit in a certain society and the greed is to have what others do have; so, it associates them with others and makes them belong. Some parents may have a stronger influence on children's behaviour than others and this is basically rooted in cultural beliefs, parents' lifestyle, and the example they set as well as parents' involvement in the lives of their children from an early age.

The most important theme that emerged out of the questionnaire and interview responses was that of family values, which the interviewees interpreted as creating a strong connection between them and their parents. All 60 respondents said that they loved and respect their parents. Even though there was a vast variety in the ways of showing it, most participants reacted to certain things and ways that they have been accustomed to with their growing up. It was, however, displayed in the tables above that need was not a crucial factor or a mean of survival for most respondents. For some, it was only a power play in order to become a member of a certain social group. Some participants felt special as a result while a few wanted to prove a point to their parents as well as self. They simply set out to achieve what they need to achieve. There were also those who did not admit that they felt needy or dependent.

***On the Limitations of Present Study.*** At this point, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the study. The research was a small scale qualitative investigation involving only 60 participants who lived and studied in Adelaide, Australia. However, it is important to recognize that the findings generated in this study cannot be generalized to all Australians and their children. Insights and understanding of the specific respondents in their given social and cultural context are appropriate outcomes; generalizability in the forms of predictions or probabilities to a wider population is not.

***On the Implications and Recommendations for Future Research.*** The findings of this study have implications for further research in gender differences and reaction to need. It is important to understand the dissimilarity

in views related to certain materialistic things. This study has been very small and limited in scope, and there is a need for other investigations based on other cultural backgrounds with larger groups of respondents.

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