

Research Paper

## A study on emotional maturity in an adolescent group studying at a higher secondary school in Western India

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the emotional maturity in an adolescent group of 14 to 17 years of age. 173 students from a higher secondary school of Anand district participated in the study. The emotional maturity scale developed by Dr. Tara Sabapathy was used for assessing the emotional maturity of the participants. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and understand the participants' emotional maturity using STATA14 software. The majority of the participants (70.5%) had average emotional maturity, 21.3% participants had above average emotional maturity, 5.2% participants had below average emotional maturity and less than 3% of the participants had emotional maturity levels in the extremes (i.e. extremely low, low, high and extremely high). Statistical analysis showed that there was no significant difference in the emotional maturity levels between boys and girls.

**Keywords:** *Emotion, Emotional maturity, Adolescents, Higher secondary school*

Emotions are affective experiences which are associated with the mental, social and psychological states of a person and they get expressed in a person's behavior. Emotions have a strong connection with the interests, needs, and feelings of a person. Emotional maturity is defined as how capable a person is to respond to situations, control his/her emotions and behave in a sophisticated manner when dealing with others. <sup>[1]</sup>

According to Walter D. Smithson (1974) it is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for a greater sense of emotional health, both intra-physically and intra-personally. <sup>[2]</sup>

It is also the ability to comprehend ones emotions including his/her surroundings. It is developed and shaped by our day to day experiences with people and environment. An

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emotionally mature person continuously sees himself with a clearer perspective and struggles to gain a healthy integration of thoughts, feelings, and action. <sup>[1]</sup>

According to World Health Organization (WHO) the period of adolescence begins with the onset of physiologically normal puberty and ends when adult identity and behavior is accepted. This period of growth and development lies between the age of 10 to 19 years and the individuals falling in this category are called adolescents. During this period variety of biological, cognitive, social and emotional, moral, etc. changes occur. <sup>[4]</sup> The emotional aspect of maturity is the most important factor in the development of the comprehensive mature personality, especially for the gifted. <sup>[5]</sup> It makes the individual ready for living an independent life as an adult. An important indication of emotional maturity is that the individual assesses a situation critically before responding to it unthinkingly as like an immature person or a child. <sup>[6]</sup> Emotionally mature adolescents ignore many stimuli that would have caused emotional outburst in them when they are younger. <sup>[6]</sup> They are stable in their emotional responses and they do not swing from one emotion or mood to other, as they used to do earlier. <sup>[6]</sup> This age group requires special attention and guidance for optimum development of their personality. The objective of this study was to assess the overall emotional maturity of an adolescent group of 14 to 17 years of age.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

A cross-sectional study was carried out after obtaining permission from the Institutional Ethics Committee. Convenient sampling procedure was followed to select the participants for the study. The participation in the study was voluntary and written consent from the participants was taken before the study. The emotional maturity scale developed by Dr. Tara Sabapathy was used to assess the emotional maturity of participants. The students were explained the purpose and significance of collecting the required information. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze and understand the participants' emotional maturity using STATA14 software.

The emotional maturity scale is a self-reporting four point scale. Items of the scale are in question format demanding information in any of the four options with the scoring of: always-4, sometimes-3, rarely-2, and never-1. Higher the score on the scale greater is the degree of emotional maturity. The reliability co-efficient was 0.81 which is significant at 0.01 level of significance. The correlation coefficient for the whole test was 0.88, which is significant at 0.01 level of significance.

*The scores were categorized as follows:*

Score	Interpretation
66-79	Extremely low emotional maturity
80-92	Low emotional maturity
93-105	Below average emotional maturity
106-123	Average emotional maturity
124-136	Above average emotional maturity
137-149	High emotional maturity
150-165	Extremely high emotional maturity

### RESULTS

Out of 173 participants, 97(56.1%) were boys and 76(43.9%) were girls.

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**Table 1: Showing the Emotional Maturity scores of the participants**

Scores	Interpretation	Frequency (%)
66-79	Extremely Low	1(0.6)
80-92	Low	1(0.6)
93-105	Below Average	9(5.2)
106-123	Average	122(70.5)
124-136	Above Average	37(21.3)
137-149	High	3(1.7)
150-165	Extremely High	0
Total		173(100)

Table 1 shows that out of 173 students, 122 (70.5%) students have average emotional maturity, 37(21.3%) had above average emotional maturity, 9(5.2%) had below average emotional maturity while the rest 5(2.9%) were at the extremes of emotional maturity levels. The mean is 117.7 which is interpreted as average and the standard deviation is 8.6.

**Table 2: Showing the Emotional Maturity Scores of boys and girls.**

Variable	Category (Gender)	N	Mean (SD)	t-value
Emotional maturity	Boys	97	117.99(8.55)	1.26
	Girls	76	115.95(14.24)	

*t-Tab=1.97; level of significance=0.05*

The above table shows that the mean scores for emotional maturity of boys and girls are 117.99 and 115.95 and the S.D. is 8.55 and 14.24 respectively. At 75 degree of freedom and 5% level of significance the calculated t value is 1.26. This calculated t value is less than the tabulated t value (1.97) at 5% level of significance.

Therefore, we accept the hypothesis which means that statistically there is no significant difference in the emotional maturity levels between boys and girls at 5% level of significance.

## **DISCUSSION**

Our study shows that there is no significant difference in the emotional maturity levels between adolescent boys and girls. This result is in agreement with many such studies.

Kaur, M. (2001) conducted study on ‘Emotional maturity of adolescence in relation to intelligence, academic achievement and environmental catalysts’ on a sample of 356 adolescents and found that there was no significant difference in emotional maturity due to area, sex and type of school. <sup>[7]</sup>

Bagh, B. (2018) conducted a study on “Emotional maturity among adolescents in relation to parental involvement” with a sample of 200 students (100 boys and girls each) from Hoshiarpur district and found that the mean emotional maturity score obtained by boys and girls is 130.47 and 134.1 respectively. The standard deviation obtained by boys and girls on emotional maturity scale was 25.15 and 28.68 respectively. He obtained a critical ratio of 0.951 which was no significant at 0.05 level of significance and hence he concluded that no significant difference exists in the emotional maturity of adolescent with respect to gender. <sup>[8]</sup>

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Kumar, B (2018) conducted a study on ‘Difference of emotional maturity among adolescents of Dehradun’. His sample consisted of total 100 subjects from Dehradun district and his study showed that boys and girls differ significantly in only one dimension of emotional maturity (i.e. emotional progression) while in other four dimensions (emotional stability, social adjustment, personality integration and independence) and in total emotional maturity boys and girls do not differ significantly. <sup>[9]</sup>

Sharma, R., Prabhakar, K., & Madnavat, A. (2013) conducted A Study of Relationship between Emotional Maturity & Adjustment for School Students with a sample of 100 students studying Class 10<sup>th</sup> and found that boys and girls studying in secondary classes were not significantly differing in their adjustment and emotional maturity. <sup>[10]</sup>

Shafeeq, N. Y., & Thaqib, A. (2015) conducted a Comparative Study Of Emotional Maturity Of Secondary School Students In Relation To Academic Achievement and found that there exists no significant difference between male and female adolescents on the measure of emotional maturity. Male adolescents had higher emotional maturity than female adolescents. <sup>[11]</sup>

Some studies have shown that there exists a significant difference in the emotional maturity levels between the two genders.

Dutta, J., & Rajkonwar conducted a study on Academic Achievement, Emotional Maturity and Intelligence of Secondary School Students in Lakimpur and Soniput districts of Assam and concluded that (1) female students were academically, emotionally and mentally better than male students in both Lakimpur and Soniput districts, (2) male and female students of Lakimpur district were emotionally more matured as compared to Sonitpur district students. <sup>[12]</sup>

Malliick Rinku, Singh Archana, Chaturvedi Poonam & Kumar Narendra (2014) conducted “A Study on Higher Secondary Student’s Emotional Maturity and Achievement” and found that there was significant difference between male and female higher secondary students with respect to level of emotional maturity. <sup>[13]</sup>

Brahmbhat S in 2016 conducted a study on Emotional Maturity among higher secondary school students and found that male students were more emotionally mature than female students. <sup>[14]</sup> Vyas T, & Gunthey R (2017) conducted a study on emotional maturity and self-confidence among adolescent students and their results showed that there is significant difference between the male and female adolescents on emotional maturity. <sup>[15]</sup>

Gakhar, S.C. (2003) conducted a study of Emotional Maturity of student at secondary stage, self-concept and academic achievement found that there was significant difference in emotional maturity of boys and girls. <sup>[16]</sup>

### ***Limitations of the Study***

1. The study was confined to adolescents of 14-17 years only.
2. The sample size used was very small.
3. Due to these reasons the study could not be generalized to all adolescents of the district or adolescents of other districts.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our study shows that majority (70.5%) of the students had average emotional maturity, followed by 21.3 % students who had above average emotional maturity. Less than 10% students had emotional maturity levels towards the extreme. There was no significant difference in the emotional maturity levels of boys and girls in 14-17 age groups.

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***Conflict of Interest***

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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