

## Influence of Emotional Competence on Adjustment of Adolescents

Naila Firdous<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Shah Alam<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

In our day-to-day life, we have frequently been using and hearing the word "Intelligence," which can be defined as logic, understanding, mental alertness, quickness in learning. Emotional Competence is considered as one of the facets of Intelligence. Emotional Competence is the ability to monitor, regulation and understand one's own and others' emotions. It is an important factor necessary for everyone because competence can be enhanced by using various psychological techniques. Adolescents can do well in academics, but they find difficulty adjusting and adapting to their environment if they are not emotionally competent. Adolescence is the stage that brings many changes, such as biological, psychological, social, and emotional. At this stage, conflicts arise in various domains of life, such as choosing a friend, career, and coping with several types of pressure and environment that suits them better. Adolescents must overcome such kinds of conflicts. The present study aims to see the influence of emotional competence on the adjustment of adolescents. A convenient sampling method was used to draw the sample. The sample consists of 80 (N=80) adolescents, 40 (n=40) boys, and 40 (n=40) girls with the age range from 14-19 years. Moreover, two tools were used to conduct this study, i.e., the Emotional Competence Assessment Scale by Paiva and Kumar (2009) and the Adjustment Inventory developed by Kumar (1999). The result found insignificant difference between girls and boys on emotional competence and adjustment. Moreover, the result revealed significant influence of interest on social adjustment, and happiness and sadness on emotional adjustment. The result of the present research may be helpful in enhancing emotional competence, so that adolescents better adjust in their environment.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Competence, Adjustment, Adolescent*

Adolescence is a transition period from childhood to adulthood where physical, psychological, and emotional changes occur. Adolescents start to search for their identity and want their place in peer-group; they need to choose various career options. Multiple problems may be faced if they are unable to cope with them. They are at a greater risk for indulging in harmful behavior such as the use of drugs, delinquency, engaging in sexual behavior, and behavioral adjustment problems. If a person has difficulty

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar\* Department of Psychology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Psychology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, India

\*Corresponding Author

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## **Influence of Emotional Competence on Adjustment of Adolescents**

adjusting and engages in risky behavior, it may be problematic and affect their later life (Sher & Zalsman, 2005). Various theories suggest that if individuals use maladaptive styles to regulate emotion, it may be a significant predictor for engagement in risky behavior (Cooper, Wood, Orcutt & Albino, 2003).

Throughout all stages of an individual's life, the adolescence stage is considered most challenging. Adolescents must pass through it successfully; otherwise, it could lead to various problems in adjustment, maintaining relationships, and emotional disturbances. We often use and listen to the term 'intelligence,' which refers to the attributes of mental alertness, ready wit, quickness in learning, and the ability to understand the relationship.

Alfred Binet defined Intelligence as the ability to judge well, understand well and reason well. But this type of Intelligence is not sufficient for successful interpersonal relationships. We often find people who are doing well in their academics and professions but are not happy in their relationship and find difficulty establishing and maintaining the relationship. Psychologists believe that these difficulties may be due lack of emotional Intelligence.

### ***Emotional Intelligence***

This concept was first proposed by Salovey and Mayer. They defined Emotional Intelligence as the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, discriminate among them, and use the information to guide one's thinking and action. Emotional Intelligence is the emotional side of life. An individual can understand and manage one's own and others' emotions, keep motivated, and handle relationships effectively.

### ***Emotional Competence***

Emotional Competence is the ability to express one's own emotions and feelings. It is the essential social skill to know, understand and respond effectively to one's own and others' emotions. It takes the concept of emotion as normal such as anger, fears because if we suppress such kind of emotion, we prevent ourselves from getting hurt or embarrassed.

Dr. Saarni refers to emotional competence as the functional capacity to reach our goals after facing emotion-provoking situations. She also said emotional competence serves as the building block for self-efficacy. The use of emotion as a set of skills achieved leads to the development of emotional competence. Attainment of emotional competence skills is essential to self-efficacy.

### ***Adjustment***

Adjustment is the ability of an individual to better fit in the environment according to the demand. Adolescence is the period of 'storm and stress. Many psychologists believe that cause of problems in adolescents is due to cultural conditions. At this stage, adolescents face difficulties adjusting, such as the emotional, social, or educational aspects of life.

S.R Laycock grouped the problem of adolescents under the following head:

- Adjustment in home, school, society, and to the opposite sex.
- Freedom from home
- Adjustment in suitable vocation
- Developing a sound philosophy of life
- Health adjustment

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Individuals try to adapt and adjust to their environment and form new relationships. They face academic and social pressure, and sometimes it becomes so stressful for the individual that they start experiencing depression and anxiety (Hankin & Abela, 2005). Some individuals use adaptive ways to deal with negative and stressful situations. At the same time, some people cannot cope and start using maladaptive patterns, leading individuals to engage in risky behavior. Different studies suggest that every individual respond differently to depression and anxiety-provoking situation (Nolen-Hoeksema, 2000).

The study conducted by Auerbach et al. (2007) found that individuals who have high levels of neuroticism and emotional regulation deficits were more likely to report increased engagement in risky behavior following increases in symptoms of either depression or anxiety than others. However, individuals with high levels of neuroticism and adaptive emotion regulation strategies show decreased engagement in risky behaviors following an increase in depressive or anxious symptoms.

Hessler & Katz (2010) conducted a longitudinal study that showed that children with poor emotional awareness and regulation were more likely to use drugs, have more sexual partners, and emotional regulation and expression difficulties were associated with behavioral adjustment problems. The result of this study was consistent across the longitudinal study.

One study conducted by Kaur & Chawla (2018) on academic anxiety and school adjustment among adolescents. Their result showed that academic anxiety was higher among adolescents who are living with family than the adolescents living in the orphanage. The result also showed that school adjustment was higher among adolescents living with their parents than those living in orphanages. Adolescents who live with family have strong emotional bonds and are less affected by the problems. Adjustment potential help individual to better deal with peer pressure, academic stress, conform to the rules of the school setting.

Another study conducted by Sivakumar (2017) on adolescent students' emotional adjustment found that male and female students of urban and rural have similar emotional adjustment.

Penza- Clyve & Zeman (2002) revealed that adolescents with a poor understanding of emotion have a more internalizing problem. Poor emotional awareness and expressivity have been linked with problematic behavior and peer relations in childhood (Saarni, 1999)

Baumrind et al. (1995) reported in their study that if responsive parenting is used, psychological autonomy is motivated and demand appropriate behavior and monitor it appropriately, it contributes to reasonable psychosocial, academic, and behavior adjustment.

#### ***Significance of the study***

The present study aimed to see the influence of emotional competence on adolescents' adjustment. In this fast-going world, it is vital to adapt and adjust according to the environment. Sometimes we cannot understand ourselves and others, so we do not behave according to the situation's demand. If a person is emotionally competent, they act according to the situation, deal effectively with problems. If they lack this attribute, they may suffer from anxiety, depression, and difficulty maintaining a relationship. The present study may help increase awareness in our society about the need and importance of emotional competence so that individuals can deal with their emotion-provoking situations and deal

## Influence of Emotional Competence on Adjustment of Adolescents

effectively with their relationships. This study will also assist professionals such as psychotherapists and counselors to deal with adolescents in enhancing emotional competence skills and providing support and care to their clients to provide healthy and better-adjusted individuals because adolescents are future and they are surely going to serve their society and country if they are provided with a conducive and secure environment.

### *Objective*

1. To see the difference in emotional competence and adjustment of adolescent boys and girls.
2. To see the effect of emotional competence on adjustment of adolescents.

### *Hypothesis*

1. There will be no significant difference in emotional competence of adolescent boys and adolescent girls.
2. There will be no significant difference in the adjustment of adolescent boys and adolescent girls.
3. There will be no significant influence of emotional competence on the social adjustment of adolescents.
4. There will be no significant influence of emotional competence on the emotional adjustment of adolescents.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Sample*

The present study consisted of 80 students (N=40 boys and N=40 girls) from different coaching of Aligarh. They were between the age group of 14-19 years.

### *Tools Used*

**Emotional Competence Assessment Scale:** this scale was developed by Paiva and Kumar (2009). It consists of 35 items in eight different dimensions and is applicable for all age groups. The items in the scale provide the adequate content validity.

**Adjustment Inventory:** The current inventory was developed by Kumar (1999). The scale consists of 40 items, and it has two dimensions, i.e., Social, which is ten items, and Emotional have 30 items. All items are positive, but item number 33 is negative. The reliability found 0.88 of this test.

### *Procedure*

The present study's data was collected from the adolescent group studying and preparing for different competitive exams in the coaching of Aligarh. The researcher was first approached teachers to obtain permission. After taking permission, the researcher went to the class, built rapport with the students, and then gave a brief explanation about the aim of the study. They were assured that their information would be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. After obtaining consent from the participant, questionnaires were distributed, and 15 minutes were given to fill two questionnaires, i.e., Emotional Competence Assessment Scale and Adjustment Inventory, along with biographical data.

### **Inclusion criteria:**

- Adolescents' age ranges from 14-19 years were included in the study.
- Those who were interested to participate were included.

## Influence of Emotional Competence on Adjustment of Adolescents

### Exclusion criteria:

- Age ranges below 14 years and above 19 years were excluded from the study.
- Those who left any statement blank were not included.

### Statistical Analysis

In the present study, SPSS-25 was used to make an analysis. An Independent t-test was used to see the significant difference between the means of two groups. Further, Multiple linear regression analysis was done to see the influence of emotional competence on the adjustment of adolescents.

## RESULT

**Table 1: Shows difference on Emotional Competence and Adjustment of Adolescent Male and Female**

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t
Emotional competence	Male	40	78.00	11.591	-1.293
	Female	40	81.73	14.064	
Adjustment	Male	40	24.63	8.02	.014
	Female	40	24.60	7.76	

It is clear from table 1 that there is insignificant difference exist between means of emotional competence of boys and girls. In the case of adjustment there is insignificant difference exist among boys and girls at .05 level.

**Table 2. Shows Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (stepwise) of Emotional Competence on Social Adjustment of Adolescents (N=80)**

**Predictors:** happiness, love, interest, sympathy, fear, anger, sadness and jealousy

**Criterion:** social adjustment (Y<sub>1</sub>)

Predictor Variables	Stand. $\beta$	Multiple R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
X	.285	.285	.081	6.893	0.010
Constant	2.845				

X= interest

It is clear from Table-1 that interest domain of emotional competence is significantly correlated with social adjustment where  $R = .285$  at 0.010 level. Interest is also emerged as significant predictor of social as  $R^2 = .081$  which account for 8.1% of variation in social adjustment. Further,  $F = 6.893$  which is also significant at 0.010 level.

**Table 3. Shows Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (stepwise) of Emotional Competence on Emotional Adjustment of Adolescents (N=80)**

**Predictors:** happiness, love, interest, sympathy, fear, anger, sadness and jealousy

**Criterion:** emotional adjustment (Y<sub>1</sub>)

Predictor Variables	Stand. $\beta$	Multiple R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	P
X1	.447	.447	.20	19.484	0.000
X2	.495	.495	.045	4.612	.035
Constant	8.904				
	5.207				

X1= happiness, X2= sadness

## Influence of Emotional Competence on Adjustment of Adolescents

It is clear from Table-3 that happiness and sadness domain of emotional competence is significantly correlated with emotional adjustment where  $R_1 = .447$  at 0.000 level and  $R_2 = .495$  at .035 level respectively. Happiness and sadness are also emerged as significant predictors of emotional adjustment as  $R^2 = .20$  for happiness which account for 2% of variation in emotional adjustment and  $R^2 = .045$  for sadness which accounts for 4.5% of variation in emotional adjustment. Further,  $F = 19.484$  for happiness which is significant at 0.000 level and  $F = 4.612$  which is also significant at .035 level.

One study conducted by Kumar and Thapar (2015) on emotional competence and adjustment of secondary school students belonging to nuclear families found a significant positive relationship between emotional competence and adjustment. Another study was done by Kour and Soni (2018) on adjustment problems of adolescence concerning Emotional Intelligence and their result reveals a significant positive relationship.

### DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted to see the influence of emotional competence on the adjustment of adolescents. The study showed that emotional competence was significantly correlated with adjustment, and interest emerged as the significant predictor of social adjustment, where interest accounts for 8.1% of the variation in social adjustment. In the case of emotional adjustment, happiness and sadness emerged as significant predictors where happiness accounts for 2% of the variation in emotional adjustment and sadness accounts for 4.5% of the variation in emotional adjustment. The result also found the mean score of emotional competence and adjustment insignificant for males and females. Numerous studies have been conducted, such as one study conducted by Kumar and Thapar (2015) on emotional competence and adjustment of secondary school students belonging to nuclear families. They found results that showed a significant positive relationship between emotional competence and adjustment. Another study was done by Kour and Soni (2018) on adjustment problems of adolescence in relation to Emotional Intelligence, and their result reveals a significant positive relationship. Thus, the result of this study accepted Hypothesis 1 & 2 and rejected Hypothesis 3 & 4.

#### *Limitations*

The sample size of the study was very small, and participants belong to the small city of Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. So, it is difficult to generalize over the population of this age group.

### CONCLUSION

Various things are responsible for the development of emotional competence and adjustment of adolescents, such as type of parenting adolescents are receiving, type of family and environment, educational background, and socioeconomic status. Adolescents raised with responsive parenting have a significant influence on emotional competence, and it could help them be better-adjusted individuals and enhance their self-efficacy. Emotional Competence helps overcome many psychological and emotional problems and helpful in maintaining the relationship. Adolescents need a favorable environment to reach their full potential, improve mental health, and excel in academic and other domains of life.

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## Influence of Emotional Competence on Adjustment of Adolescents

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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