A Study of Self-Esteem and Emotional Maturity among Students

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ABSTRACT

This study examines self-esteem and emotional maturity among college students, with a focus on gender differences. The sample consisted of 100 college students from the Kolhapur district, with an equal number of male and female participants (n = 50 each). The students' ages ranged from 18 to 24 years, with an average age of 21.74 years. The Self-Esteem Scale (SES) by Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar (23 items) and the Emotional Maturity Scale (48 items) by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava were used as tools for data collection. The study found that male students reported significantly higher self-esteem (M = 84.36, SD = 3.67) compared to female students (M = 70.78, SD = 4.02), with a statistically significant difference (t(98) = 17.64, p < .01). Similarly, male students exhibited higher emotional maturity (M = 136.82, SD = 5.23) than female students (M = 127.58, SD = 4.59), also with a significant difference (t(98) = 9.38, p < .01). Furthermore, a positive correlation was found between self-esteem and emotional maturity for both genders (males: r = 0.77, females: r = 0.77, p < .01). These results suggest that male students possess higher levels of self-esteem and emotional maturity than female students. The study highlights the role of gender socialization and biological factors in shaping emotional development and self-perception among college students.

Self-esteem and emotional maturity are two crucial psychological factors that play a significant role in the development and overall well-being of individuals. These factors, especially among students, are fundamental to their ability to navigate personal challenges, academic pressures, and social dynamics. Self-esteem refers to an individual's perception of their own worth, while emotional maturity relates to a person's ability to manage emotions effectively and make sound decisions in challenging situations. Both these dimensions of psychological health are interconnected and influence one another, contributing to how students cope with the stressors of student life. Given the importance of these constructs, it is essential to explore how they are related and their impact on the lives of students. This study aims to investigate the relationship between self-esteem and emotional maturity among students, particularly focusing on their implications for academic success and social interactions.

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Self-esteem is often considered a core component of an individual's psychological health. It influences one's confidence in personal abilities, interactions with others, and overall mental well-being. Students with high self-esteem tend to exhibit positive traits such as resilience, assertiveness, and self-assurance, while those with low self-esteem may experience feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and self-doubt. Research has shown that self-esteem affects academic motivation, behavior, and achievement (Orth & Robins, 2014). Furthermore, students with positive self-esteem are more likely to engage in healthy relationships and exhibit better coping strategies in the face of adversity. On the other hand, students with low self-esteem may face difficulties in these areas, leading to challenges in both academic and social spheres.

Emotional maturity, on the other hand, encompasses a person's ability to regulate and express emotions in a healthy and appropriate manner. It is often linked to emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), which includes skills such as empathy, self-awareness, and the ability to manage one's emotional responses. Emotional maturity involves understanding one's emotions, being able to delay gratification, making rational decisions despite emotional impulses, and maintaining harmonious relationships. In students, emotional maturity can have a direct impact on their academic performance and social relationships. Students with higher levels of emotional maturity are more adept at handling academic stress, maintaining focus, and managing interpersonal conflicts effectively. In contrast, those with less emotional maturity may struggle to cope with frustration, anger, and anxiety, which can negatively affect their academic and personal lives.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, and Vohs (2003) found that students with higher self-esteem tend to exhibit better academic performance, and higher levels of motivation and are more likely to engage in positive behaviours in academic settings. Conversely, students with low self-esteem often struggle with academic achievement and may experience feelings of inadequacy, which can hinder their academic progress and social interactions (Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008). Furthermore, researchers have noted that high self-esteem is positively associated with better mental health, improved coping strategies, and stronger interpersonal relationships, all of which are important for students' well-being (Orth & Robins, 2014).

Self-esteem and emotional maturity play a crucial role in students' development. Emotional maturity involves the ability to manage emotions, exhibit self-control, and make sound decisions even in emotionally charged situations (Goleman, 1995). Research suggests that emotional maturity is essential for academic success, as students who can regulate their emotions are more likely to perform well under pressure and interact effectively with peers and teachers (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008). Emotional maturity also influences a student's social relationships and overall mental health. For instance, individuals with greater emotional maturity tend to have higher levels of empathy and conflict-resolution skills, which are critical for building positive peer relationships (Goleman, 1995). Emotional maturity is also linked to better stress management, which is particularly important in academic settings where students face frequent deadlines and performance pressures (Bennett & McCartney, 2006).

The relationship between self-esteem and emotional maturity has been explored in several studies, with evidence suggesting a significant interconnection between the two constructs. High self-esteem is often linked to greater emotional maturity, as individuals who view

themselves positively are better able to manage their emotions and cope with adversity (Bennett & McCartney, 2006). For example, students with high self-esteem are generally more resilient in the face of academic challenges and social pressures, demonstrating emotional maturity by managing stress in adaptive ways (Orth & Robins, 2014). Conversely, emotional maturity can also positively influence self-esteem, as individuals who are emotionally stable and capable of managing their feelings tend to have a more positive self-image (Bennett & McCartney, 2006). These findings highlight the reciprocal nature of the relationship between self-esteem and emotional maturity, suggesting that both factors are essential for students' overall emotional and academic development. Despite the growing body of research on these constructs, further studies are needed to explore the precise nature of their interaction and how they can be fostered within educational settings to enhance student outcomes.

RESEARCH METHOD

Objectives of the study:
    i. To find out the self-esteem of male and female college students.
   ii. To examine the emotional maturity of male and female college students.

Hypotheses:
1. There will be no significant differences between male and female college students regarding self-esteem.
2. There will be no significant differences between boys and girls in emotional maturity among college students.

Sample
The current research involved a sample of 100 college students from the Kolhapur district. This group was evenly divided, comprising 50 male and 50 female students. The students' age range was between 18 and 24, with the average age calculated at 21.74 years and a standard deviation of 3.06, indicating a relatively young cohort overall. Participants were selected through non-probability purposive sampling, a method that allowed the researchers to deliberately choose individuals who met specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives.

Tools
1. **Self Esteem Scale (SES):** Dr. Santosh Dhar and Dr. Upinder Dhar constructed and standardised this scale. It is consisted 23 items with the following six factors: Positivity, Openness, Competence, Humility, Self-Worth, Learning Orientation. The scoring procedure for 23 items set against a Likert five-point scale, i.e. Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Not Sure, Agree and Strongly Agree, awarded 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, respectively. Split has established the tool's reliability- the half method. The reliability of the tool is 0.71. Therefore, the tool is reliable.
2. **Emotional Maturity Scale:** Emotional Maturity Scale constructed by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava (1994) was used in the present study. The scale consists of 48 items with five dimensions viz. emotional stability with 10 items, emotional progression with 10 items, social adjustment with 10 items, personality integration with 10 items and independence with 8 items. The reliability of the test by product moment correlation was 0.75. The internal consistency for emotional stability was 0.75, emotional progression was 0.63, social adjustment was 0.58, personality integration was 0.86 and independence was 0.42 respectively and the concurrent validity of the total test was 0.64 as given in the manual.

Statistical Analysis

The study's statistical analysis utilized a t-test, a statistical method used to determine whether there is a significant difference between the means of two groups.

Variable

Independent variable- 1) Gender   a) Male   b) Female
Dependent Variable 1) Self-Esteem
                         2) Emotional Maturity

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Male and female students show the mean, standard deviation, and t-value of Self-esteem and Emotional Maturity.

Table 1

Factors	Male Students		Female Students		df	't'	r
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Self-Esteem	84.36	3.67	70.78	4.02	98	*17.64***	*0.77***
Emotional Maturity	136.82	5.23	127.58	4.59	98	*9.38***	

For t value Significant at 0.01** = 2.62,   0.05* = 1.98
For r value Significant at 0.01** = 0.25,   0.05* = 0.20

The mean, standard deviation, and t-value for self-esteem and emotional maturity among male and female students. The sample size for both groups was 98 (df = 98). Male students reported significantly higher levels of self-esteem (M = 84.36, SD = 3.67) compared to female students (M = 70.78, SD = 4.02). This difference was statistically significant, t(98) = 17.64, p < .01.

Self-esteem, male students exhibited higher levels of emotional maturity (M = 136.82, SD = 5.23) than female students (M = 127.58, SD = 4.59). This difference was also statistically significant, t(98) = 9.38, p < .01. The correlation between emotional maturity and self-esteem was significant for both males (r = 0.77, p < .01) and females. The results suggest that male students in this sample exhibited significantly higher levels of self-esteem and emotional maturity than female students. Additionally, self-esteem and emotional maturity were positively correlated for both genders.

The finding that male students exhibited significantly higher levels of self-esteem and emotional maturity than female students can be attributed to several factors, including gender socialization, biological differences, and societal expectations. Boys are often socialized to display confidence, assertiveness, and emotional control, which may contribute to higher self-esteem and emotional maturity (Pomerantz et al., 2002).

Biological factors such as hormonal differences, particularly higher testosterone levels in males, have been linked to increased assertiveness and emotional regulation, further promoting emotional maturity and self-esteem (Steiner et al., 2008). This gender-based disparity is consistent with broader developmental trends where boys are often perceived as more emotionally stable, leading to higher levels of self-confidence (Kuehner, 2017).

CONCLUSIONS

1. Male students exhibit higher levels of self-esteem than female students.
2. Male students exhibit higher levels of emotional maturity than female students.
3. A positive correlation was found between self-esteem and emotional maturity.

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