



EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF ADOLESCENT BOYS AND GIRLS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In the present study, an attempt was made to compare adolescent boys and girls on emotional competence and its competencies. Adolescent boys and girls (N=50 each) were selected randomly from three private high schools of Darrang district, Assam. The Scale of Emotional Competencies developed by Dr. H.C. Sharma and Dr. R.L. Bharadwaj (2007) was used for data collection. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test were used for analysis and interpretation of data. The findings revealed that adolescent boys and girls differ significantly on emotional competence (EC) and its three competencies, namely, adequate expression and control of emotions (AECE), ability to function with emotions (AFE) and ability to cope with problem emotions (ACPE).

KEYWORDS : Emotional Competence, adolescent boys, adolescent girls

INTRODUCTION

Emotions play a vital role in directing and shaping the behavior and personality of the individual. Adolescence is that stage of human development when individuals experience more frequent and intense emotions. The emotional restlessness and instability of adolescents sometimes make them optimistic, pessimistic, moody and sometimes depressed, desperate, violent and delinquent (Sharma & Goswami, 2014). Adolescents' risky behaviors, such as hard drug use, sexual partners, behavior problems, are associated with deficits in emotional skills like emotional awareness, expressivity, and regulation (Hessler & Katz, 2010). Developing emotional competence is an essential task during adolescence. Emotional competence is that area of human abilities which protects people from stress, anxiety, and depression (Ciarrochi & Scott, 2006). It enhances the emotional management, self-esteem and adaptive resilience during the stressful circumstances (Saarni, 1999). It also improves self-confidence and life satisfaction (Singla, 2015). It is central to interact with others and form relationships, and intimately related to mental health (Denham & Burton, 2003). For star performance, in all jobs, in every field, emotional competence is twice important as purely cognitive abilities (Goleman, 1998).

Emotional competence refers to the efficiency of an individual to deal with emotional situations effectively. It is a blending of five competencies such as adequate depth of feeling, adequate expression and control of emotions, ability to function with emotions, ability to cope with problem emotions and enhancement of positive emotions (Sharma & Bharadwaj, 2007). It can also be regarded as a person's ability to express or release inner feelings or emotions. According to Goleman (1998), "An emotional competence is a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work." Saarni (1999) defines emotional competence as the capacity for self-efficacy in emotion-eliciting social transactions. It includes an awareness of own emotions and those of others, an ability to use the vocabulary of emotions, empathy as well as sympathy, the differentiation of internal subjectivity from outward expression, adaptive coping with aversive or distressing emotions, awareness of emotional communication within relationships, and emotional self-efficacy (Saarni, 1999).

Evidence shows that adolescent boys and girls differ significantly from each other in emotional expression and functioning. In an empirical review, Chaplin and Aldao (2013) have explored that adolescent girls express more externalizing emotions than adolescent boys. Researchers, such as Katyal and Awasthi (2005), Naghavi and Redzuan (2011) have found that girls are higher in emotional intelligence than boys. Khan and Bhat (2013) have explored that adolescent boys are more responsive, better able to make the intelligent decision using the healthy balance of emotions and reasons as compared to adolescent girls. Sati and Gir (2016) have explored that

adolescent girls are better in interpersonal awareness and intrapersonal awareness whereas the adolescent boys are better in intrapersonal management and interpersonal management skills of emotional intelligence. Kumar (2015) has explored that girl students of secondary schools are more emotionally competent than their counterpart. However, researchers such as Mohani (2008), Sarma and Lata (2013) have found no significant difference in emotional competence between adolescent boys and girls.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study were

- (1) To compare adolescent boys and girls on emotional competence.
- (2) To compare adolescent boys and girls on different emotional competencies.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- H₀1: Adolescent boys and girls do not differ significantly on emotional competence.
- H₀2: Adolescent boys and girls do not differ significantly on different emotional competencies.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sample

A sample of 100 adolescents (50 boys and 50 girls) studying in class IX was selected from the three private high schools of Darrang district, Assam using stratified random sampling. The age range of the sample adolescents was from 14 to 15 years.

Tool used

The Scale of Emotional Competencies developed by Dr. H. C. Sharma and Dr. R. L. Bharadwaj (2007) was used in the present study. The scale contains 30 items, and it measures five emotional competencies. These are -adequate depth of feeling (ADF), adequate expression and control of emotions (AECE), ability to functions with emotions (AFE), ability to cope with problem emotions (ACPE) and enhancement of positive emotions (EPE) separately as well as a whole. It is a five-point scale.

Procedure

As the present study was designed to investigate the emotional competence of adolescent boys and girls, this study used Descriptive survey method of research. The investigators of the present study, at first, sought the cooperation of the Headmasters of the private high schools and the students. After that, the scale of emotional competencies was administered on the selected sample.

Statistical techniques used

For the present study, Mean, Standard deviation and t-test were used to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table No.1: Mean, Standard deviation, t-value, and level of significance of adolescent boys and girls on emotional competence

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value
EC	Boys	50	94.80	11.20	2.03*
	Girls	50	90.20	11.49	

* Significant at 0.05 level

Table 1 depicts that the mean score of adolescent boys (94.80) is higher than the mean score of adolescent girls (90.20) on total emotional competence (EC). The obtained 't'-value is 2.03, which is significant at 0.05 level. Thus it may be inferred that adolescent boys and girls differ significantly from each other on emotional competence. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table No.2: Mean, Standard deviation, t-value, and level of significance of adolescent boys and girls on different emotional competencies

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value
ADF	Boys	50	17.56	3.99	1.80 ^{NS}
	Girls	50	16.12	4.02	
AECE	Boys	50	19.46	3.53	3.18**
	Girls	50	17.30	3.29	
AFE	Boys	50	17.58	3.12	3.01**
	Girls	50	15.90	2.40	
ACPE	Boys	50	21.48	3.95	2.15*
	Girls	50	19.92	3.27	
EPE	Boys	50	17.82	3.03	1.19 ^{NS}
	Girls	50	17.10	2.99	

** Significant at 0.01 level

* Significant at 0.05 level

^{NS} Not Significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 shows that the mean score of adolescent boys (19.46) is higher than the mean score of adolescent girls (17.30) on the adequate expression and control of emotions (AECE). The obtained 't' value is 3.18, which is significant at 0.01 level. Further, the mean score of adolescent boys (17.58) is higher than the mean score of adolescent girls (15.90) on the ability to function with emotions (AFE). The obtained 't' value is 3.01, which is significant at 0.01 level. Furthermore, the mean score of adolescent boys (21.48) is higher than the mean score of adolescent girls (19.92) on the ability to cope with problem emotions (ACPE). The obtained 't' value is 2.15, which is significant at 0.05 level. Thus it may be inferred that adolescent boys and girls differ significantly from each other on the adequate expression and control of emotions, ability to function with emotions and the ability to cope with problem emotions.

Table 2 also shows that the mean score of adolescent boys (17.56) is higher than the mean score of adolescent girls (16.12) on the adequate depth of feeling (ADF). The obtained 't' value is 1.80, which is not significant at 0.05 level. Again, the mean score of adolescent boys (17.82) is higher than the mean score of adolescent girls (17.10) on the enhancement of positive emotions (EPE). The obtained 't' value is 1.19, which is not significant at 0.05 level. Thus it may be inferred that adolescent boys and girls do not differ significantly from each other on the adequate depth of feeling and the enhancement of positive emotions. Hence, the null hypothesis is partially accepted.

The present study reveals that adolescent boys are emotionally more competent than adolescent girls. It means that adolescent boys are more efficient in dealing with emotional situations effectively as compared to adolescent girls. Further, adolescent boys are found more competent on the adequate expression and control of emotions, function with emotions and cope with problem emotions than the adolescent girls. It means that adolescent boys have more controlled and organized emotionality, the adequate pattern of emotional reactivity and better skill to resist harmful effects of unpleasant emotions in their life orientations as compared to adolescent girls. However, adolescent boys and girls are found equally competent on the adequate depth of feeling and the enhancement of positive emotions. It means that both adolescent boys and girls have an almost

similar feeling of being confident or capable of all reality assumptions, and ability to develop a predominance of positive emotions in their personality make-up. The findings of the present study remain in line with the findings of the study reported by Jadav (2010), Saini (2013), and Karmvir (2015). In a study with college going students, Jadav (2010) found that male students scored higher than the female students on emotional competence and its dimensions. Saini (2013) explored that male successful and unsuccessful athlete and non-athlete adolescents demonstrated better on emotional competence than female successful and unsuccessful athlete and non-athlete adolescents. Further, non-athlete male adolescents were more competent than non-athlete female adolescents on all emotional competencies except enhancement of positive emotions. In the same line, Karmvir (2015) reported that learning disabled boys obtained higher mean score than learning disabled girls on all emotional competencies except enhancement of positive emotions.

CONCLUSION

The present study explores that adolescent boys and girls differ significantly from each other on emotional competence and its three competencies, namely, the adequate expression and control of emotions, the ability to function with emotions, and the ability to cope with problem emotions. However, adolescent boys and girls do not differ significantly on the adequate depth of feeling and the enhancement of positive emotions. The findings of the present study will be helpful for parents and teachers to understand the emotional competence of the adolescents and help them in improving the level of emotional competence among those who lack it.

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