

Gender differences in emotional maturity among urban adolescents

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■ **ABSTRACT :** The present research was conducted to study the gender differences in emotional maturity. In the present study, a sample of 100 students (50 boys and 50 girls) in the age group of 16-18 was drawn from the Govt. Higher Secondary School of Ludhiana city. Emotional Maturity Scale (Singh and Bhargava, 1990) was used to collect data. Overall results indicated that both boys and girls were emotionally unstable. In comparison to girls, boys were found to be more emotionally mature than girls.

■ **KEY WORDS:** Gender differences, Emotional maturity, Adolescents, Schools

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In today's scientific and technological world the development of new technology is very fast in almost every field. These rapid changes affect the life of people in every stage positively as well as negatively. The present study focused on the gender differences in emotional maturity among adolescents. Adolescent period is a period of rapid physical, cognitive, social changes. In this period adolescents are expected to behave appropriately and in socially acceptable way. The period is also known as the period of "stress and storm". In this age adolescent are very curious to do or get everything in a short span and if they fail to meet those needs it will lead to emotional upsets, stress anxiety and tensions. To cope up from such situations adolescents have to be emotionally mature. An adolescent is said to be emotionally mature when he is able to express his emotions in a balanced, appropriate and socially acceptable way. Here, expressing emotions in acceptable

way does not mean that one should hide or repress their emotions. A person said to be emotionally mature when he has control over his emotions and does not let his emotions to override him. Emotional maturity is expected to grow with age but conditions apply: conducive home environment, democratic parenting, and healthy relationships helps in gaining maturity. Emotions expressed by emotionally matured individual are never fake. So they lead well-adjusted life, have good interpersonal relationships. A lot of researches on emotional maturity shows that emotional maturity significantly affect the mental health of adolescent (Joshi, 2017). Another study on emotional maturity and adjustment of senior secondary school students with the type of school (private or government) found no significant difference between boys and girls (Jain and Pasrija, 2014). Similar results found in another study which revealed that there was no significant difference

in various dimensions of emotional maturity of boys and girls of government and private senior secondary school students from rural and urban areas (Dutta *et al.*, 2015).

It may be concluded that emotional maturity plays an indispensable role in making adolescents' personality as well as achieving academic success, educational adjustment.

Objectives:

- To study the gender differences in emotional maturity among urban adolescents.
- To study the mean differences across the different dimensions of emotional maturity among adolescents.

RESEARCH METHODS

The present study was carried out in Govt. Senior Secondary School of Ludhiana City (Punjab). A sample of boys (n = 50) and girls (n = 50) was selected for completing the sample size (n=100). Selected respondents were in the age group of 16-18 years studying in 11th and 12th classes. The emotional maturity scale by Singh and Bhargava (1990) was used to assess emotional maturity. It contains 48 items under five dimensions: emotional instability, emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence. Test responses were scored according to weight 5 to 1 (very much; much; undecided; probably; never). The interpretation of scores is lower the score

on the scale, more is the degree of emotional maturity and vice versa. Analysis was done by using the statistical techniques like percentages, means, standard deviations and t- test were applied.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results in Table 1 depicted that 28 per cent of all the respondents were in "extremely unstable" category, 27 per cent of respondents were in "unstable" category, twenty two per cent of respondents in "moderately stable" category and twenty three per cent of respondents were found to be "extremely stable". It was found that in age 16-18 years the condition of unstable maturity may be due to physical changes occurring in adolescents which may further lead to behavioural changes in them. Results indicated that respondents had a higher capacity to tolerate stress, control their emotions and can withstand delay in satisfaction of needs.

Results on gender differences indicated that twenty eight per cent of girls were extremely stable in comparison to their male counterparts (18%) this can be attributed to the fact that girls were more adaptive in nature and good at controlling their emotions. More number of girls (30%) in comparison to boys (24%) were unstable which meant though girls were good at controlling their emotions but cannot withstand too much of the stress.

From the table it is also cleared that large proportion (28%) of boys in comparison to girls (16%) were

Sr. No.	Score	Interpretation of scores	No. of boys (n=50) n %	No. of girls (n=50) n %	Total n %
1.	50-80	Extremely stable	9 (18)	14 (28)	23 (23)
2.	81-88	Moderately stable	14 (28)	8 (16)	22 (22)
3.	89-106	Unstable	12 (24)	15 (30)	27 (27)
4.	107-240	Extremely unstable	15 (30)	13 (26)	28 (28)

Sr. No.	Dimensions of emotional maturity	Boys Mean ± SD	Girls Mean ± SD	t-test value
1.	Emotional instability	20.96 ± 5.15	21.78 ± 5.94	0.47
2.	Emotional regression	22.6 ± 5.37	21.2 ± 6.06	0.35
3.	Social maladjustment	19.0 ± 3.2	18.52 ± 5.34	0.63
4.	Personality disintegration	19.38 ± 4.09	17.3 ± 5.59	0.06
5.	lack of independence	16.48 ± 4.17	14.68 ± 5.49	0.08
	Total emotional maturity	98.42 ± 16.87	93.5 ± 20.38	0.24
	Overall level	Unstable	Unstable	

moderately stable. Similar results were found in extremely unstable variable that is more number of boys (30%) in comparison to girls (26%) were extremely unstable. The reason may be attributed to cultural gender - biased practices where boys were expected to curve their emotions of crying of being too polite whereas girls were expected not to show their emotions like not to laugh openly and loudly. Similar results were found in study on "girl child and family in Maharashtra" shows that 70 per cent of parents restricted their daughters in laughing out loud (Pandey, 1995).

The mean scores of different dimensions of emotional maturity were calculated for both the gender and their differences were tested by calculating the t-values. Except in emotional instability dimension, mean scores of boys were found to be higher than the girls in all of the dimensions of emotional maturity. In emotional instability dimension girls had more scores than boys which indicated that girls were emotionally more unstable and results further indicated that girls lack the capacity to dispose of problem, need constant help for their day to day work, were more stubborn and throw more temper tantrum than boys. Same results were reported by Aleem (2005) and Hay and Ashman (2003) reported that male students were more emotionally stable than female students.

Conclusion :

Results showed that number of boys in the age group of 16-18 years were more emotionally mature in comparison to the girls. In emotional unstable dimension, mean scores of girls were high than boys which may be interpreted as higher the score higher is the instability. On the contrary, mean score of boys found to be high in "emotionally regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration and lack of independence which indicated that boys were more restless, aggressive, self-centered, indulge more in boasting and they react to environment through destruction in comparison to their counterparts.

Suggestions :

– It is of paramount importance that the family which plays an important role in the development of a child should provide best possible environment in home, so as to promote their emotional development. By

providing love and affection, child feels more secure and in turn, he/she is more emotionally balanced.

– Care must be taken by teachers also to respect their students' emotions and help the students to understand and control their innate emotions.

– As girls found to be emotionally more unstable than boys that means girls need support from their parents, teachers and peers. They need to be sensitized regarding expressing their emotions comparatively to be more vocal about their emotions to prevent harmful outcomes of emotional immaturity.

– In the present study boys found to be more emotionally regressed, socially maladjusted and suffer from personality disintegration than girls, interventions can be planned, executed at school and college level by different stakeholders

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