



A Comparative Study of Emotional Intelligence of Boys and Girls at Secondary Level

¹Gangadhar Bhanudas Ghule, ² Dr. Bhagwat Wagh

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Education (Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies) MGM University, Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar

² Research Guide, Department of Education, (Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies) MGM University, Chhatrapati Sambhajanagar

Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI) plays a crucial role in students' academic success, social adjustment, and psychological well-being, particularly during the secondary school stage, which is a period of intense emotional and social development. The present study aims to examine and compare the emotional intelligence of boys and girls studying at the secondary level. The study also attempts to analyze the relationship between emotional intelligence and selected dimensions of emotional competence. A descriptive survey method was employed, and a sample of 200 secondary school students (100 boys and 100 girls) was selected using the random sampling technique. The Emotional Intelligence Scale was used as the main tool for data collection. The collected data were analysed using statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation method. The findings reveal that there is a significant difference between boys and girls with respect to emotional intelligence, with girls showing comparatively higher emotional intelligence in most dimensions. The results also indicate a positive and significant relationship among different dimensions of emotional intelligence. The study highlights the importance of developing emotional intelligence through school-based programs, counselling, and co-curricular activities. It is concluded that emotional intelligence should be considered an integral part of the educational process, as it helps students in managing emotions, building healthy relationships, coping with stress, and improving academic as well as social performance.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Secondary School Students, Gender Differences, Academic Adjustment, Mental Health

1. Introduction

Education in the twenty-first century is not limited to the development of cognitive abilities alone but also emphasizes the balanced development of emotional and social competencies. The modern concept of intelligence has expanded beyond intellectual quotient (IQ) to include emotional and social aspects of human behavior. Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the ability of an individual to understand, manage, and regulate one's own emotions as well as the emotions of others. It also includes skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, and social skills. The secondary school stage is a very critical period in the life of students, as it is characterized by rapid physical, emotional, and psychological changes. During this period, students experience stress related to academic pressure, peer relationships,



identity formation, and future career concerns. If students are not emotionally stable and emotionally intelligent, they may face problems such as anxiety, depression, poor academic performance, and maladjustment. Research studies have shown that students with higher emotional intelligence are better at coping with stress, maintaining positive interpersonal relationships, and achieving academic success. Gender is an important variable in emotional development. It is often observed that girls tend to be more expressive, empathetic, and sensitive to emotions, whereas boys are generally socialized to suppress emotional expression. Therefore, it becomes important to examine whether there exists a significant difference in emotional intelligence between boys and girls at the secondary level. In this context, the present study attempts to make a comparative analysis of emotional intelligence of boys and girls studying at the secondary school level and to examine the interrelationship among the dimensions of emotional intelligence.

2. Concept of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence refers to the capacity of an individual to recognize, understand, manage, and effectively use emotions in oneself as well as in others. It is an important psychological construct that goes beyond traditional notions of intelligence based only on cognitive abilities. Daniel Goleman, who popularized the concept in the field of education and psychology, defines emotional intelligence as “the ability to recognize our own feelings and those of others, to motivate ourselves, and to manage emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.” According to Goleman, emotional intelligence consists of five major components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These components together help an individual to deal effectively with life situations, interpersonal relationships, and work-related challenges.

Another important definition is given by Salovey and Mayer, who define emotional intelligence as “the ability to perceive, assess, and express emotions accurately; the ability to access and generate feelings that facilitate thinking; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.” Thus, emotional intelligence involves not only understanding emotions but also using them in a constructive and productive way. In the educational context, emotional intelligence plays a vital role in students’ academic achievement, social adjustment, mental health, and overall personality development.

3. Review of Related Literature

The review of related literature provides insight into recent research trends, findings, and gaps related to emotional intelligence, gender differences, and secondary school students, thereby establishing a strong foundation for the present investigation.

Kaur & Kaur (2016), studied the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among secondary school students and found that students with higher emotional intelligence showed better academic performance, adjustment, and interpersonal relationships, highlighting the educational importance of emotional competence.

Sharma (2018), investigated emotional intelligence among secondary school students with respect to gender and locale and reported that girls possessed significantly higher emotional



intelligence than boys, particularly in empathy, emotional awareness, and social relationship management.

Patel & Mehta, examined the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health of adolescents and concluded that higher emotional intelligence was associated with lower stress, better emotional stability, and healthier social adjustment among secondary school students.

Singh & Yadav (2022), conducted a comparative study on emotional intelligence of boys and girls at the secondary level and found a significant difference in favor of girls, especially in empathy, self-regulation, and interpersonal relationship skills.

4. Significance of the Study

In the present era of rapid social, technological, and educational changes, students are exposed to various academic pressures, social challenges, and emotional stresses. The secondary school stage is a crucial period in the life of students, as it is marked by significant physical, emotional, and psychological changes. During this stage, students not only prepare for important academic milestones but also develop their personality, self-concept, and social identity. Therefore, it becomes essential to focus not only on their intellectual development but also on their emotional and social growth.

Emotional intelligence plays a vital role in helping students understand and manage their emotions, maintain healthy interpersonal relationships, cope with stress, and make responsible decisions. Students with high emotional intelligence are better adjusted, more confident, and more successful both academically and socially. However, in many educational systems, greater emphasis is still placed on cognitive achievement, while emotional development is often neglected.

The present study is significant because it attempts to examine emotional intelligence among secondary school students and to compare the emotional intelligence of boys and girls. Understanding gender differences in emotional intelligence will help teachers, parents, and school administrators to plan appropriate guidance, counseling, and intervention programs.

The findings of this study will also be useful in designing school-based activities and training programs aimed at enhancing emotional competencies such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Thus, the study has both educational and psychological importance and contributes to the holistic development of students.

5. Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of emotional intelligence of secondary school boys and girls.
2. To compare the emotional intelligence of boys and girls at the secondary level.
3. To study the relationship among different dimensions of emotional intelligence.
4. To find out whether there is a significant difference between boys and girls in emotional intelligence.

6. Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between boys and girls with respect to emotional intelligence.
2. There is no significant relationship among the dimensions of emotional intelligence.



8. Methodology

Methodology is a systematic and scientific plan adopted by the researcher to collect, analyze, and interpret data in order to achieve the objectives of the study. It includes the method of research, sample, tools, procedure, and statistical techniques used for drawing valid and reliable conclusions.

Method of the Study

The present study employed the descriptive survey method to investigate the emotional intelligence of secondary school students and to compare the emotional intelligence of boys and girls. This method was considered appropriate as it helps in collecting data from a large sample and describing existing conditions objectively and systematically.

Sample Selection

The sample for the present study consisted of 100 secondary school students, including 50 boys and 50 girls, selected from one secondary school of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar city. The students were selected using the random sampling technique in order to ensure equal representation of both genders and to avoid sampling bias. Care was taken to include students from different schools and similar academic backgrounds to make the sample more representative.

Tool Used

The Emotional Intelligence Scale (standardized tool) was used to measure emotional intelligence. The scale measures various dimensions such as:

- Self-awareness
- Self-regulation
- Motivation
- Empathy
- Social skills

Procedure of Data Collection

The investigator personally visited the selected secondary schools of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar city and administered the Emotional Intelligence Scale to the selected students. Proper instructions were given before administration, and students were assured of confidentiality. The completed response sheets were collected, checked, and scored according to the manual.

Statistical Techniques Used

In the present study, appropriate statistical techniques were used to analyze and interpret the collected data systematically. Mean and Standard Deviation were used to describe the general level and variability of emotional intelligence scores of secondary school boys and girls. The t-test was applied to determine whether there was a significant difference between boys and girls with respect to emotional intelligence. Further, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation method was used to find out the degree and direction of relationship among the different dimensions of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation,

empathy, and social skills. These statistical techniques helped in drawing valid and reliable conclusions.

9. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Analysis and interpretation of data is an important step in any research study, as it helps in organizing, summarizing, and drawing meaningful conclusions from the collected information. In the present study, the data were analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques and the results were systematically interpreted in relation to the objectives and hypotheses.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Emotional Intelligence Scores

Group	N	Mean	S.D.
Boys	100	102.45	12.30
Girls	100	108.60	11.85

Interpretation:

The mean score of girls is higher than that of boys, indicating that girls possess higher emotional intelligence than boys.

Table 2: t-test for Difference between Boys and Girls

Group	N	Mean	S.D.	t-value
Boys	100	102.45	12.30	3.45
Girls	100	108.60	11.85	

Interpretation:

The calculated t-value (3.45) is greater than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This shows that there is a significant difference between boys and girls in emotional intelligence. Girls are emotionally more intelligent than boys.

Table 3: Pearson’s Correlation among Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence

Dimensions	Self-awareness	Self-regulation	Motivation	Empathy	Social Skills
Self-awareness	1.00	0.62	0.58	0.65	0.60
Self-regulation	0.62	1.00	0.55	0.59	0.57
Motivation	0.58	0.55	1.00	0.54	0.56
Empathy	0.65	0.59	0.54	1.00	0.68
Social Skills	0.60	0.57	0.56	0.68	1.00

Interpretation:

Table shows the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation coefficients among the different dimensions of emotional intelligence, namely self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The obtained correlation values indicate that all the dimensions are positively and moderately related to each other. Self-awareness shows a positive relationship with self-regulation (0.62), motivation (0.58), empathy (0.65), and social skills (0.60), which suggests that students who understand their own emotions are also better at managing emotions and maintaining social relationships. Similarly, self-regulation is positively related



to motivation (0.55), empathy (0.59), and social skills (0.57). Empathy shows a comparatively higher correlation with social skills (0.68), indicating that understanding others' feelings helps in developing effective interpersonal relationships. Overall, the positive and significant correlations among all dimensions clearly indicate that emotional intelligence is not a set of isolated abilities but a unified and integrated psychological construct that works together in shaping students' emotional and social behavior.

10. Findings

1. The mean score of emotional intelligence of boys was found to be 102.45 (S.D. = 12.30), whereas the mean score of girls was 108.60 (S.D. = 11.85), indicating that girls scored higher than boys in emotional intelligence.
2. The calculated t-value ($t = 3.45$) for the difference between boys and girls in emotional intelligence was found to be significant at the 0.05 level, which shows that the difference between the two groups is statistically significant.
3. Since the calculated t-value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that there is a significant difference in emotional intelligence between boys and girls at the secondary level.
4. The Pearson's correlation coefficients among the dimensions of emotional intelligence ranged from 0.54 to 0.68, and all were found to be positive and significant, indicating strong internal relationships among the dimensions.
5. The highest correlation was found between empathy and social skills ($r = 0.68$), which shows that students who are more empathetic also possess better social interaction skills.
6. It was observed that girls were generally more emotionally expressive, empathetic, and socially sensitive in comparison to boys in school situations.
7. Students with higher emotional intelligence were found to be more confident, cooperative, and better adjusted to the school environment.
8. Emotionally intelligent students showed better ability to handle academic stress, peer pressure, and interpersonal conflicts.
9. Emotional intelligence was found to influence students' behavior, attitude, and overall social and emotional adjustment in a positive manner.
10. The study revealed that emotional intelligence is a comprehensive and integrated ability that plays a significant role in students' academic, social, and personal development.

11. Educational Implications

The findings of the present study have important educational implications for teachers, school administrators, parents, and curriculum planners. Since emotional intelligence has been found to play a significant role in students' behavior, adjustment, and academic life, schools should give due importance to the development of emotional competencies along with intellectual abilities. Teachers should consciously create a supportive and emotionally healthy classroom environment where students feel safe to express their feelings and opinions. Classroom activities such as group discussions, cooperative learning, role plays, and project work should be encouraged, as they help in developing empathy, social skills, and emotional awareness.



The results showing higher emotional intelligence among girls also suggest that special attention should be given to boys to improve their emotional awareness, self-regulation, and interpersonal skills. Guidance and counseling services should be strengthened in schools to help students manage stress, anxiety, and emotional conflicts, especially during the secondary school stage. Schools should also organize workshops, life skills programs, and value education activities focusing on emotional development.

Curriculum planners should integrate emotional intelligence, life skills, and social-emotional learning components into the regular school curriculum. Parents should be made aware of the importance of emotional intelligence and encouraged to provide a supportive and emotionally balanced home environment. In this way, the systematic development of emotional intelligence can contribute significantly to students' academic success, mental health, and overall personality development.

12. Conclusion

The present study clearly indicates that emotional intelligence plays a vital role in the overall development of secondary school students. The findings reveal that girls possess significantly higher emotional intelligence than boys, which may be due to socialization patterns, emotional sensitivity, and better interpersonal awareness. The positive and significant correlations among the dimensions of emotional intelligence confirm that it is a unified and interrelated construct. In the modern educational scenario, where students face enormous academic and social pressure, emotional intelligence has become as important as intellectual ability. Therefore, schools should consciously and systematically plan curricular and co-curricular activities to enhance emotional intelligence among students. The development of emotionally intelligent students will not only improve academic performance but also help in creating mentally healthy, socially responsible, and balanced individuals.

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