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EXPLORING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN ADOLESCENTS RESIDING IN RAIGANJ BLOCK, UTTAR DINAJPUR DISTRICT

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence (EI), encompassing the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize emotions effectively, is a critical skill during adolescence—a developmental stage marked by rapid biological, cognitive, and social changes. This study investigated gender differences in overall EI and its subcomponents like innovation and self-confidence among adolescents in Raiganj Block, Uttar Dinajpur District. Using a quantitative, descriptive-comparative research design, the sample comprised 100 school-going adolescents (50 boys, 50 girls), aged 12–18 years, selected through simple random sampling from randomly chosen schools. Data were collected using Dr. Sheetal Prasad's Emotional Intelligence Scale (2009), which measures five domains of emotional ability. Statistical analysis was carried out using independent samples t-tests to assess gender-based differences.

Findings revealed that girls scored significantly higher than boys in overall EI ($p = .04$), suggesting greater emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills. Conversely, boys outperformed girls in the innovation dimension ($p = .003$), indicating stronger tendencies toward novel thinking and problem-solving. No significant gender difference emerged in self-confidence ($p = .10$). These results highlight the multidimensional nature of EI and suggest that socio-cultural context may differentially shape emotional competencies in adolescent boys and girls. The study underscores the need for gender-sensitive emotional development programs to enhance adolescent well-being and adaptability.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Adolescence, Gender differences, Innovation, Self-confidence

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI) is a critical area of psychological research, referring to an individual's ability to recognize, understand, manage, and utilize their own emotions and those of others (Goleman, 1995). Mayer and Salovey (1997) define EI as the capacity to

perceive access, generate, understand, and reflectively regulate emotions to foster emotional and intellectual growth. Goleman (1995) further breaks EI into five key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

Adolescence marks a pivotal developmental stage characterized by rapid biological, cognitive, and psychosocial changes as individuals' transition from childhood to adulthood (Erikson, 1986). This period is often associated with heightened emotional intensity, increased stress, and the pursuit of identity and independence (Hall, 1904; Seiffge-Krenke, 2000). Adolescents experience significant challenges, including physical maturation, academic pressures, evolving peer and family relationships, and the navigation of romantic interests (Erikson, 1986; Pardeck & Pardeck, 1990). These transitions demand considerable adaptation and can be sources of strain for both adolescents and their families.

Given the complexity of adolescent development and the importance of emotional skills, understanding and fostering emotional intelligence during this stage is essential for promoting healthy adjustment and well-being. In this present study researcher want to investigate Emotional Intelligence in Adolescents Residing in Raiganj Block, Uttar Dinajpur District.

2. Objective of the Study

- To evaluate the levels of emotional intelligence among adolescent boys and girls.
- To explore gender-based differences in innovative thinking among adolescents.
- To determine if self-confidence varies significantly between male and female adolescents.

3. Hypothesis of the study

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the overall emotional intelligence scores of adolescent boys and girls.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the innovation scores of adolescent boys and girls.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in self-confidence scores between adolescent boys and girls.

4. Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value as it explores emotional intelligence among adolescents a critical developmental stage marked by intense emotional experiences and challenges. Adolescents often struggle to understand and regulate their emotions, leading to heightened stress and impulsivity, a phenomenon famously described by Stanley Hall as a “period of storm, strain, and stress.” By assessing emotional intelligence, this research provides insights that can help adolescents better manage their emotions, enhance self-motivation, and improve social adjustment. Ultimately, the findings can guide interventions to support adolescents in navigating this turbulent phase of life.

5. Delimitations of the Study

- **Geographical Limitation** – The study is confined to adolescents residing in Raiganj Block of Uttar Dinajpur District, limiting the applicability of results to other regions.

- **Sample Size and Composition** – The sample is restricted to 100 school-going adolescents (50 boys and 50 girls), and findings may not represent adolescents who are out of school or from different educational backgrounds.
- **Age Range** – Only adolescents aged 12–18 years were included; results may not apply to younger children or older youth.
- **Measurement Tool** – Emotional intelligence was measured solely using **Dr. Sheetal Prasad's Emotional Intelligence Scale (2009)**, which emphasizes five specific domains and may not capture all aspects of Emotional Intelligence conceptualized by other models.
- **Research Design** – This study is limited by its cross-sectional design and regional focus, which may limit generalizability.

6. Research Methodology

Quantitative research method was used in this study. The researchers employed a cross-sectional design to assess and compare emotional intelligence levels and its subcomponents (innovation and self-confidence) among adolescent boys and girls in Raiganj Block, Uttar Dinajpur District. A total of 100 adolescents (equal numbers of boys and girls) between the ages of 12 and 18 participated in this research. Schools were randomly selected from Raiganj Block, Uttar Dinajpur, and students were chosen via simple random sampling. The study focused on gender as the independent variable and emotional intelligence as the dependent variable. All respondents were attending school during the study period.

• Tools used

The study employed **Dr. Sheetal Prasad's Emotional Intelligence Scale (2009)**, a 40-item questionnaire designed to evaluate emotional abilities across five domains: self-confidence, trustworthiness, innovation, conscientiousness, and adjustment. This tool was selected for its relevance to the emotional experiences of adolescents and its suitability for capturing nuanced differences in emotional intelligence.

• Procedure of data collection

The research procedure began with obtaining official consent from school authorities. The researcher then visited the participating schools, where students were randomly selected for inclusion. The nature and intent of the study were communicated to the students, and their assent was secured. The Emotional Intelligence Scale was distributed, accompanied by clear oral instructions. After collection, questionnaires were examined for any missing responses, scored as per the manual, and the resulting data were prepared for statistical analysis.

7. Results

Table 1: Comparison of adolescent boys and girls on emotional intelligence

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t (df=98)	p
Boys	50	101.29	20.35	-2.10	.04
Girls	50	114.87	41.03		

(The negative t-value indicates boys' mean is lower than girls')

The mean score for girls ($M = 114.87$, $SD = 41.03$) was significantly higher than for boys ($M = 101.29$, $SD = 20.35$), $t(98) = -2.10$, $p = .04$. Since $p < .05$, **H₀₁** (no difference in overall EI) is **rejected**. Girls in this sample were, on average, more emotionally intelligent than boys.

Table 2: Comparison of adolescent boys and girls on sub-area innovation of emotional intelligence

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t (df=98)	p
Boys	50	10.61	2.42	3.03	.003
Girls	50	9.20	2.23		

Boys ($M = 10.61$, $SD = 2.42$) scored significantly higher than girls ($M = 9.20$, $SD = 2.23$) on the innovation subscale, $t(98) = 3.03$, $p = .003$. Since $p < .05$, **H₀₂** (no difference in innovation) is **rejected**. Boys in this study were, on average, more innovative than girls.

Table 3: Comparison of adolescent boys and girls on sub-area self-confidence of emotional intelligence

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t (df=98)	p
Boys	50	8.66	2.14	-1.66	.10
Girls	50	9.31	1.76		

Although girls ($M = 9.31$, $SD = 1.76$) scored slightly higher than boys ($M = 8.66$, $SD = 2.14$) on self-confidence, the difference was not statistically significant ($p = .10$). Since $p > .05$, **H₀₃** (no difference in self-confidence) is **accepted**. There is no sufficient evidence to conclude that self-confidence differs between genders in this sample.

8. Discussion

This study examined gender differences in overall Emotional Intelligence (EI) and its subcomponents likes- innovation and self-confidence among school-going adolescents in Raiganj Block, Uttar Dinajpur. The findings provide a nuanced picture:

Table 4: Nuanced picture on the basis of Findings

Hypothesis	P-value	Decision	Interpretation
H₀₁ : No difference in overall EI	0.04	Reject H₀₁	Girls have significantly higher EI than boys.
H₀₂ : No difference in innovation	0.003	Reject H₀₂	Boys are significantly more innovative than girls.
H₀₃ : No difference in self-confidence	0.10	Accept H₀₃	No significant gender difference in self-confidence.

• Emotional Intelligence: Girls Outperform Boys

The rejection of **H₀₁** indicates that girls had significantly higher EI scores than boys ($p = .04$). This supports prior research suggesting that adolescent girls often demonstrate stronger emotional awareness, empathy, and social skills (Mayer et al., 2008). Cultural norms in the region may encourage emotional expression and interpersonal sensitivity in girls, fostering

higher EI. However, the wide SD in girls' scores suggests variability, indicating that not all benefit equally from these influences.

- **Innovation: Boys Show Greater Strength**

The rejection of **H₀₂** indicates that boys had significantly higher innovation scores than girls ($p = .003$). This could be linked to gendered socialization, where boys may be encouraged to take more risks, experiment, and propose novel solutions skills that contribute to innovation. Opportunities both at home and school might foster these abilities, reflecting societal expectations in rural West Bengal.

- **Self-Confidence: no Significant Gender Difference**

The acceptance of **H₀₃** shows no statistically significant gender gap in self-confidence ($p = .10$). This contrasts with research indicating higher self-confidence in boys (Bleidorn et al., 2016). In this particular socio-cultural context, it is possible that both genders face similar school-related pressures and receive comparable encouragement, leading to equal levels of self-confidence development.

Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development posits that adolescence is a critical period for identity formation, during which emotional skills are honed through social interaction and personal challenges. The current findings suggest that, while girls in this sample may be more attuned to the emotional nuances of their environment, boys may excel in applying their emotional intelligence to novel, problem-solving situations. This duality underscores the multidimensional nature of EI and the importance of considering both global and facet-level differences.

The socio-cultural environment of Raiganj Block, with its mix of traditional values and evolving educational opportunities, likely plays a role in shaping these developmental trajectories. For instance, girls' higher overall EI may be a protective factor against the stressors of adolescence in a changing rural society, while boys' innovative strengths could reflect adaptive responses to expectations of future economic roles.

9. Conclusion

The present study on adolescents in Raiganj Block, Uttar Dinajpur District, reveals important gender-related patterns in emotional intelligence. Findings indicate that adolescent girls possess significantly higher overall emotional intelligence compared to boys, suggesting stronger emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills. In contrast, boys outperform girls in the innovation dimension, reflecting a greater inclination toward creative problem-solving and novel thinking. However, no significant gender difference was found in self-confidence, indicating that both boys and girls in this socio-cultural context share comparable levels of self-assurance.

These results highlight the multidimensional nature of emotional intelligence and underscore the influence of socio-cultural norms on different aspects of emotional development. The patterns observed suggest the need for gender-sensitive emotional skill development programs in schools-programs that nurture both emotional awareness in boys and innovation in girls, while reinforcing self-confidence equally across genders.

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