

Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence among Adolescents: An exploratory research in Manipur.

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ABSTRACT

Researchers have shown that possessing higher Emotional Intelligence (EI) is crucial for ascending the ladder of success in one's life and fostering a conducive and supportive environment in schools and colleges. We have seen that EI enables leaders to understand themselves, connect with others, and navigate the complexities of interpersonal relationships, ultimately contributing to their success as effective and inspiring leaders. The present study explored Emotional Intelligence among males and females, with a research sample of two hundred participants categorized into two groups: one hundred males (n = 100) and one hundred females (n = 100) from three different schools in Imphal. Purposive sampling technique was employed for subject selection, and demographic information was gathered using data sheets. Dr.Ekta Sharma's Emotional Intelligence Test questionnaire was utilized to assess the subjects' emotional intelligence levels. The findings indicate a gender difference in the Emotional Quotient Inventory, with males demonstrating higher emotional intelligence than females (t (198) =2.842, p<.01).

Keywords: *emotional intelligence, adolescent, gender*

INTRODUCTION

"Emotional Intelligence is the ability to sense, understand, value and effectively apply the power of emotions as a source of human energy, information, trust, creativity and influence" -DANIEL GOLEMAN

In the early 20th century, psychologists initiated the study of intelligence to understand individual variations, with the primary goal of efficiently placing students within the French public school system. Spearman (1927) proposed a shared underlying ability present in all intelligence tests, coupled with a distinct factor in each test that is entirely independent of other factors. Emotional Intelligence

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(EI) represents a recent advancement in the field of intelligence, and this paper delves into the current state of research on EI. Maslow (1954), stated that the concept of IQ is deemed "highly vexing" because it lacks any association with wisdom. Maslow illustrates this by referencing Goering, who, despite having a high IQ, was unquestionably a malicious man and simultaneously a foolish man. The roots of EI can be traced back to discussions in social intelligence and multiple intelligences. Emotional Intelligence is an emerging and growing field in behavioral research, attracting attention from the general public, the business sector, and the scientific community. Emotional Intelligence intersects with several advanced areas in psychological science, such as the neuroscience of emotion. Self-regulation theory studies on metacognition and the exploration of human cognitive capabilities beyond traditional academic intelligence. The phrase 'Emotional Intelligence' was initially coined by psychologists Salovey & Mayer in 1990, gaining widespread acknowledgment when Daniel Goleman used it as the title for his bestselling 1995 book, "Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ." Goleman's conceptualization of emotional intelligence encompasses understanding one's own emotions, expressing empathy for others' feelings, and skillfully managing emotions to enhance overall well-being. Bar-On (1997) proposed a model of Emotional Intelligence, depicting it as a collection of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence an individual's success in adeptly handling environmental demands and pressures. Emotional Intelligence (EI) involves the capacity to identify, comprehend, and regulate one's own emotions, along with the ability to perceive, interpret, and impact the emotions of others. It encompasses a range of abilities and capabilities that empower individuals to navigate social interactions, establish positive relationships, and make sound decisions. Prayeen et al. (2012), states that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is characterized as an innate ability to sense, utilize, convey, perceive, recall, articulate, recognize, learn from, manage, comprehend, and elucidate emotions. They also posited that these inherent attributes can be molded and modified through interactions with others. According to Goleman, Emotional Intelligence (EI) involves "abilities such as self-motivation and persistence in the face of challenges, impulse control and delayed gratification, mood management to prevent emotional distress from overwhelming cognitive abilities, empathy, and hope." The primary domains include a) self-awareness, b) emotion regulation, c) selfmotivation, d) empathy, and e) managing interpersonal relationships.

Self-awareness: This pertains to the recognition and comprehension of one's own emotions, along with an awareness of how these emotions can impact one's thoughts and actions. Emotional self-awareness, as termed by Goleman (2011), extends to an individual's understanding of their values and objectives.

Individuals with a high level of self-awareness are knowledgeable about and comfortable discussing their strengths and limitations, often expressing a desire for constructive feedback (Goleman, 2011).

Managing emotions: Self-management involves establishing a trustworthy and fair atmosphere by controlling one's own emotions and the emotions of others, aiding students in building relationships to attain organizational objectives. However, it is acknowledged that there may be areas where individuals might struggle to enhance themselves effectively.

Motivating oneself: Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb, once stated, "I have not failed but found 10,000 other ways that don't work". Motivated individuals can set and work toward goals with energy and enthusiasm. They often possess a strong sense of purpose and resilience in the face of setbacks. To progress toward your goals, it's crucial to be self-driven and maintain motivation, transforming aspirations into tangible reality. Every journey encounters obstacles and setbacks, and self-motivation provides the fortitude to navigate through them, fostering perseverance. It instills a mindset of resilience, urging you to confront challenges and fears. Often, our biggest fears lead us to surrender, but self-motivation encourages making another attempt. Motivation imparts the skill of selfcompetition. As Mikhail Baryshnikov expressed, "I don't try to dance better than others, but only try to dance better than my previous steps." Your primary competition is with yourself, and self-motivation empowers you to evaluate your performance, pushing you to surpass your previous accomplishments. Empathy: It is the capacity to comprehend and share the emotions of others, requiring sensitivity to the feelings of those in your surroundings and responding with understanding and compassion. According to Greater Good in Education (2023), children who exhibit higher levels of empathy tend to be more well-liked among their peers. The presence of empathy contributes to a more secure school environment, with a potential decrease in bullying and aggression, fostering a culture of kindness and inclusivity among students. Moreover, empathy promotes acts of kindness and helpful behaviour, with more empathetic children demonstrating pro-social actions such as sharing, assisting, and comforting their peers. While recognizing their own emotions is foundational, it doesn't guarantee that youth will acknowledge others' feelings. Some struggle to accurately interpret emotions, like mistaking neutral comments for hostility. Teaching empathy, such as fostering understanding with immigrant groups, will helps students grasp the emotional impact of prejudice.

Handling relationship: Effective interpersonal skills are crucial for building and maintaining positive relationships. This includes communication skills, conflict resolution, and the ability to work well in a team. Managing relationships within a team involves the skill of motivating and influencing others, as

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noted by Goleman (2011), however, this proficiency might pose a challenge for certain educational leaders and students to fully grasp. Individuals who freely collaborate and value others' opinions differ from those employing an obligating style, as the latter group is more inclined to respect and align with others' viewpoints in an effort to fulfil their demands.

Adolescent: "Adolescence" is a dynamically evolving theoretical construct informed through physiologic, psychosocial, temporal, and cultural lenses. This critical developmental period is conventionally understood as the years between the onset of puberty and the establishment of social independence (Steinberg, 2014). The most commonly used chronological definition of adolescence includes the ages of 10-18 but may incorporate a span of 9 to 26 years depending on the source (Curtis, 2015). Every adolescent should initiate the acquisition of emotional skills essential for stress management and the ability to relate to others with sensitivity and effectiveness. These skills are commonly referred to as "emotional intelligence" by Goleman. Emotional intelligence encompasses self-awareness, but it primarily emphasizes relationship skills—the capacity to establish positive connections with others and foster friendships. Experts guiding adolescents in developing emotional intelligence equip them with valuable tools for future success in both personal and professional domains. Adolescents lacking these relationship skills will face a higher risk of various challenges, including the likelihood of dropping out of school, compared to their peers who possess such skills. Bar-On (2005), explored this concept, labelling it as Emotional-Social Intelligence, which involves a combination of interconnected emotional and social competencies dictating how effectively we understand and express our own emotions, engage with others, and navigate life's challenges. Hunt and Evans (2004) found in their study on individuals with traumatic experiences that males had higher emotional intelligence than females. Urquijoetal. (2019), explored the influence of emotional intelligence on career success at both initial and advanced career phases. More specifically, they assessed the forecasting and added value of emotional intelligence in career success, accounting for personality factors, within a cohort of 271 graduates. These results offer initial indications that incorporating emotional intelligence is a pertinent factor in steering the attainment of career success. Meshkat & Nejati (2017), reported no significant gender difference in total emotional intelligence scores but variations in specific components, with females scoring higher in emotional self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, self-regard, and empathy. Mishra and Ranjan (2008), investigated gender differences in emotional intelligence among adolescents, the finding have significant disparities favoring boys in interpersonal, intrapersonal, adaptability, and stress management skills. Patel S.K. (2017) studied college-level students, revealing significant gender differences in emotional intelligence, with girls exhibiting higher scores. Singh Chaudhary & Asthana (2008), found a significant association between emotional intelligence and gender, concluding that girls exhibited higher emotional intelligence than boys. Uzonwanne (2016) examined the influence of gender and age on emotional intelligence in Nigerian nursing students, noting no overall gender differences but higher scores in the appraisal of others' emotions among female students.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Urquijoetal. (2019), found that emotional intelligence is a relevant addition to the achievement of career success. The concept of emotional intelligence is evident when considering that individuals with moderate intelligence often lead more satisfying lives than their highly intelligent counterparts. Farooq (2003), maintains that higher emotional intelligence is associated with superior performance compared to students with lower emotional intelligence. Several studies suggest that girls tend to have stronger emotional intelligence than boys (Patel, 2017). However, Mishra & Ranjan (2008) found significant differences, with adolescent boys scoring higher in emotional intelligence than girls. Rao & Komala (2017) reported higher emotional intelligence in men compared to women, though statistically insignificant. Ahmad et al., (2009) also argue for higher emotional intelligence in men. Contrarily, Mokhlesi & Patil (2018), dispute these claims, asserting that both male and female children exhibit similar emotional intelligence levels. Given conflicting findings in other studies, more research is needed in this area. Additionally, there is no known existing research on gender differences in emotional intelligence in Manipur, prompting the current study to explore emotional intelligence on a gender basis.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Acknowledging the importance of emotional intelligence in daily life, it becomes essential to delve into, analyse and explore its dynamics among school students in Manipur. To achieve a clearer understanding on the impact of diverse cultures from different places on one's emotional intelligence, it is crucial to engage in a more thorough study, thereby enhancing clarity in understanding this concept. The aim of this study is to examine the gender differences of emotional intelligence among students in Manipur.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to fulfil the purpose of the study, it aims to explore the following objectives on EI:

- To investigate the self-awareness of school students based on gender,
- To examine the management of one's emotions based on gender,
- To explore self-motivation of school students according to gender,
- To assess the level of empathy among school students based on gender,
- To examine how students handle relationships based on gender,
- To analyses the overall emotional intelligence of school students according to gender.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

Aligned with the idea that accounting for gender differences is essential for a more thorough comprehension of emotional intelligence, our hypothesis posited that:

- H01: There will be no significant gender difference in *self-awareness* of school students.
- H02: There will be no significant gender differences in *managing emotion* of school students.
- H03: There will be no significant gender difference in *motivating oneself* of school students.
- H04: There will be no significant gender difference in *empathy* of school students.
- H05: There will be no significant gender difference in handling relationships of school students.
- H05: There will be no significant gender difference in *emotional intelligence* of school students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

The present study employed Quantitative and Descriptive research methods. A structured questionnaire was used to collect the raw data of the variable.

Population and Sample

Data were collected from schools in Imphal, the capital city of Manipur, serving as a representative hub for the diverse communities in the region. The research included 200 participants, evenly split between 100 males and 100 females, primarily from grades X, XI, and XII, aged 13 years to 16 years. The study aimed to provide insights into their scores and guidance for self-improvement. The collection of data occurred over ten days, and both groups showed homogeneity in socioeconomic status and cultural background.

Sampling technique

The present study used purposive sampling technique.



TOOLS

The data was collected with the help of following measures.

1. Personal Data Sheet

Personal data sheet of the sample was obtained by collecting demographic information namely age, sex, standard, stream of specialization (arts, science, commerce, combined), and familytype (nuclear / joint).

2. EIT questionnaire

Emotional intelligence test (EIT) was developed by Dr.Ekta Sharma in the year 2011 as an indigenous scale. The scale constitutes 60 items for five domains of emotional intelligence i.e., Self-awareness, Managing Emotions, Motivating oneself, Empathy and Handling relationships. The Scoring for each items in the scale is done in descending/ascending order by giving an score of 5 for always, 4 for often, 3 for occasional, 2 for rarely and 1 for never. The negative items are scored reverse of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 respectively.

PROCEDURE

The study was prepared by deciding the topic and arranging the questionnaire and other necessary documents appropriately; we sought permission from the respective school and college principals before collecting a group of students. To establish rapport, individual interactions were conducted with the subjects at their respective schools for data collection. Clear explanations of the research's purpose were provided, and subjects were invited to share comprehensive information. Additionally, subjects were informed about the research's confidentiality and its boundaries. Demographic information was collected for all subjects in the two groups, and a test was administered—the Emotional Intelligence Test (EIT)—to evaluate the emotional intelligence levels among the subjects.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED

Following the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test (p = 0.200), which indicated normal distribution of the data, the researchers employed a parametric statistical test: the independent sample t-test. The independent t-test, alternatively known as the two-sample t-test, is a statistical method used for inference. It assesses if there is a statistically significant difference between the means of two distinct and unrelated groups. In this study, the means difference between males and females were examined using the independent sample t-test.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results: To address the research question regarding the potential significant difference in Emotional Intelligence (EI) levels between male and female school students, a t-test was conducted. The tables below provide the means and standard deviations of the key variables in this study are presented in the following tables. Additionally, p-values associated with the t-scores are provided to examine the mean differences.

Table 1: Self-awareness between males and females.

	Gender	Mean	Std.	T	df	Sig.	Result
Self			Deviation				
Awareness	Male	47.05	6.597				
	Female	46.05	5.342	1.178	189.787	.240	Insignificant

Table 1 displays the mean scores of male and female school students (M = 47.05, 46.05), indicating a higher score for males than females. An independent t-test yielded a t (189.787) = 1.178, p =.240 which is statistically insignificant showing no significant difference in self-awareness between male and female students.

Therefore, based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H01: There will be no significant gender difference in self-awareness among school students) is accepted.

Table 2: Managing Emotionsbetween males and females.

	Gender	Mean	Std.	T	df	Sig.	Result
			Deviation				
Managing	Male	46.95	6.283	2.260	185.569	0.025	
Emotions	Female	45.16	4.822				Significant

Table 2 displays the mean scores of male and female school students (M = 46.95, 45.16), indicating a higher score for males than females. An independent t-test yielded a t (185.569) = 2.260, p<0.05, which is statistically significant showing that males manage emotions better than females.

Therefore, based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H02: There will be no significant gender difference in managing emotion among school students) is rejected.



Table 3: Motivating oneself between males and females.

	Gender	Mean	Std.	T	df	Sig.	Result
			Deviation				
Motivating	Male	37.86	4.447	1.82	198	0.070	
oneself	Female	36.71	4.484				Insignificant

Table 3 displays the mean scores of male and female school students (M = 37.86, 36.71), indicating a higher score for males than females. An independent t-test yielded a t(198) = 1.82, p > 0.05, which is statistically insignificant indicating no significant difference in motivation oneself among male and female students.

. Therefore, based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H03: There will be no significant gender difference in motivating oneself among school students) is accepted.

Table 4: Empathy between males and females.

	Gender	Mean	Std.	T	df	Sig.	Result
			Deviation				
Empathy	Male	21.12	3.911	2.855	198	0.005	
	Female	19.60	3.613				Significant

Table 4 displays the mean scores of male and female school students (M = 21.12, 19.60), indicating a higher score for males than females. An independent t-test yielded a t (198) = 2.855, p < 0.01, which is statistically significant indicating that males shows higher empathy than females. Therefore, based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H04: There will be no significant gender difference in empathy among school students) is rejected.

Table 5: Handling Relationship between males and females.

	Gender	Mean	Std.	T	df	Sig.	Result
			Deviation				
Handling	Male	59.77	6.871	2.570	198	0.011	
Relationship	Female	57.21	7.212				Significant

Table 5 displays the mean scores of male and female school students (M = 59.77, 57.21), indicating a higher score for males than females. An independent t-test yielded a t (198) = 2.570, p< 0.05, which is statistically significant indicating that males handles relationship better than females. Therefore, based



on these findings, the null hypothesis (H05: There will be no significant gender difference in handling relationship among school students) is rejected.

Table 6: Emotional Intelligence between males and females.

	Gender	Mean	Std.	T	df	Sig.	Result
			Deviation				
Emotional	Male	212.75	21.922	2.842	198	0.005	
Intelligence	Female	204.73	17.768				Significant

Table 6 displays the mean scores of male and female school students (M = 212.75, 204.73), indicating a higher score for males than females. An independent t-test yielded a t (198) = 2.842, p = < 0.01, which is statistically significant indicating that overall emotional intelligence is higher among males as compared to females. Therefore, based on these findings, the null hypothesis (H06: There will be no significant gender difference in emotional intelligence among school students) is rejected.

Discussion

This study aims to explore emotional intelligence (EI) among high school students, with a specific focus on gender differences in various EI domains and overall EI scores. The research question guiding the study is whether there is a noteworthy disparity in EI levels between male and female school students. Research conducted in Tamil Nadu, India, revealed that female medical graduates exhibit higher emotional intelligence than their male counterparts (Chandra et al., 2017), and a similar trend was observed among Sri Lankan medical undergraduates, where females had higher mean emotional intelligence scores (Ranasinghe et al., 2017). In Delhi, among 10th graders, it was found that female students' demonstrated higher emotional intelligence compared to their male counterparts (Joshi & Dutta, 2014). Contrary to the idea of gender distinctions in the comprehensive emotional intelligence of children, Mokhlesi & Patil (2018), rejected such claims, emphasizing that both male and female children display parity in various aspects of emotional intelligence, encompassing the recognition, assimilation, comprehension, and regulation of emotions. In line with this, D'Amico & Geraci (2022) found no gender disparities in self-assessment regarding performance scale, suggesting that when evaluating specific emotional tasks, boys and girls are equally adept at accurately assessing their own performance. Interestingly, the findings of the present study contradict those of the aforementioned studies.

However, in studies conducted by Mishera & Ranjan (2008) and Carr (2009), significant differences in emotional intelligence were found between adolescent boys and girls, with boys exhibiting markedly

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higher levels of emotional intelligence than girls. Ali et al. (2021), stated that male students demonstrated higher level of emotional intelligence compared to their female counterparts. Specifically, male students exhibited greater proficiency in emotional self-regulation and emotional self-awareness, while no significant differences were observed in the subscale of interpersonal skills. Rao & Komala (2017) contend that, in their examination of youth, males demonstrated superior emotional intelligence compared to females, although the findings were not statistically significant. Another study by Ahmad et al. (2009) also reported higher emotional intelligence in males compared to females. The findings of the present study align with these results, demonstrating that males exhibit significantly higher scores in the domains of managing emotion, empathy, handling relationships, and overall emotional intelligence compared to females.

The findings reignite the ongoing debate of nature and culture on the observed outcomes. As different researchers have found varying results from distinct regions, cultures, and societal roles, the differences in results may be attributed to their diverse regional and cultural influences on gender differences. Manipur is a place where gender equality strongly prevails between men and women, both holding equal importance in most aspects of society. However, there are some additional differences in roles and responsibilities with respect to culture. The equality prevalent in the society will be the prime factor in boosting the emotional intelligence of adolescents in Manipur. Let's delve deeper to understand more.

It is commonly believed that women are more empathetic than males, as suggested by various studies and findings in different parts of the world. However, this concept is not always true in other societies or places; for example, Manipur. Manipur is a unique place with a diverse culture where men play crucial roles in various social and cultural occasions, Culture imposes several pressures on men, necessitating them to earn, provide care, and take responsibility for the entire family and society. This heightened awareness among men improved emotional management skills, triggering their intelligence in handling relationships, empathy, and managing their emotions to meet public or societal demands while there is a greater expectation for girls and women to be exempt from such responsibilities. Therefore, in a comprehensive assessment, it becomes evident that men are expected to exhibit higher emotional intelligence than women. This inclination could play a role in fostering the development of perspective-taking skills and the ability to empathize with others as they become more attuned individuals. Erik Erikson, in his psychosocial theory (Stage V, Identity versus Role Confusion), posits that during adolescence, individuals seek to establish a role and identity accepted by society. The



colours of culture have painted the youngsters in their identity and role formation. The results that emerge are attributed to socio-cultural influences, leading us to assume that various forms of intelligence are also shaped by the socio-cultural makeup.

Therefore, the findings of the present study, wherein males exhibit higher emotional intelligence compared to females, can be well justified by the sociocultural expectations directed towards the males of Manipur. Males not only have many responsibilities but are also provided with privileges in making decisions about relationships and accomplishing goals, or at least they are motivated to accomplish goals in life compared to females. In the process of making decisions about relationships, they develop the skills to empathize, and in accomplishing a goal, they learn to manage their emotions. We can assume that with the expectations and privileges of males in society, males undoubtedly foster their emotional intelligence better than females. However, further studies to confirm these findings may be needed to generalize the results.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to explore the gender difference in the different domains of emotional intelligence and the overall emotional intelligence among students of Manipur. The research was conducted with 200 adolescent participants (school students). Statistical tools like t-test were used for quantitative analysis of the sample. The findings conclude that there is a significant difference between males & females in EI and males scored higher in managing emotions, self-motivation, handling relationships, empathy, and overall emotional intelligence. Although it was statistically significant in managing emotion, empathy, handling relationship and comprehensive EI score.

IMPLICATION

The findings of this study will support students in developing themselves for future career success, motivating them to enhance emotional understanding and behavioral management for improved adaptation. Additionally, individuals can promote awareness of others' emotions and encourage positive emotional expression. Furthermore, the findings of the study will assist school authorities in shaping a comprehensive curriculum for lifelong success. The mental and emotional well-being of students is fundamental to the nation's foundation, and prioritizing it contributes significantly to fostering national pride.



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