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Research Article

A Comparative Study on Emotional Intelligence and Stress Of Senior Secondary Students Of Faridabad.

Moumita Samanta[1*], Dr. Ashok kumar Sharma[2]

[1*]Research scholar, Deptt. Of Education, Nims School of Humanities and Social Science Rajasthan, Jaipur.
[2]Research Guide,Deptt. Of Education, Nims School of Humanities and Social Science Rajasthan, Jaipur.

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ABSTRACT

Today is the period of cut throat competition at all levels. The school timings and coaching period has taken away leisure time of students of 11th and 12th Class. Further expectation of parents, teachers and Peer group resulting undue stress on young students, which sometimes lead to very serious end. Stress diminishes creativity, self motivation and self awareness. Goleman (1998) proposes emotional intelligence is a key skill in handling stress. The general aim of this research was to determine whether there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and stress management. (coping of stress) in students of senior Secondary Students of different Schools of Faridabad city.This study was conducted through questionnaire ways of relationship between two constructs namely emotional intelligence and stress. These constructs were examined and analyzed through a questionnaire by employing a five point Likert scale. A non-probability data was taken and results indicated that stress can be mitigated by input of emotional intelligence that leads to stress specially in female students. There is a positive correlation between emotional intelligence and stress coping style.The policy makers, educator need to see that mental health is very important in a stress-induced and unstable environment. Teachers need to be trained so that they can provide guidance at proper and crucial times to the students.

KEY WORDS: Emotional intelligence, stress,

Introduction:

The educational landscape is a complex tapestry interwoven with various dimensions, where students not only acquire knowledge but also navigate an intricate maze of emotions, stressors, and interpersonal interactions. Senior secondary school years are particularly pivotal, marking the transition between adolescence and young adulthood. These years often bring about intensified academic demands, heightened peer interactions, and self-exploratory journeys, further underscoring the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) and stress management.

Faridabad city, an industrial hub of Haryana , with its unique socio-cultural backdrop, presents an opportune setting to delve deep into this exploration. Located in the northern state of Haryana, India, Faridabad stands as an emblematic representation of urban educational challenges, juxtaposed with traditional values, making the study of EI and stress in its senior secondary students particularly intriguing.

This research paper sets the stage for our comparative study, providing a background on the pivotal elements in focus – emotional intelligence and stress,– and underscoring their significance in today's rapidly evolving educational and socio-cultural environments. Understanding the psychological and emotional constructs of students is vital for educators, policymakers, and parents alike. Among these constructs, Emotional Intelligence (EI) has garnered significant attention over the past few decades. This segment explores the evolution of EI within educational settings.

Emotional Intelligence

The term Emotional Intelligence (EI) was popularized in the 1990s by Daniel Goleman , although the concept had existed in various forms for many years prior to his studies (Goleman, 1995). At its core, EI represents the ability to recognize, comprehend, manage, and regulate one's emotions and those of others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). As the significance of EI has been increasingly acknowledged, there has been natural

progression toward integrating it within educational environments.
Historically, cognitive intelligence or IQ was the primary metric by which the success of a student was measured. However, researchers soon realized that students' emotional and social abilities played a crucial role in their academic achievements and their overall well-being (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). The focus on EI in schools originated from the understanding that emotional well-being directly influences cognitive functions such as attention, memory, and problem-solving (Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011). With globalization and rapid technological advancements, the nature of jobs and societal roles has also evolved, requiring individuals to possess not just technical skills but also the emotional intelligence to navigate diverse professional and social landscapes (Deshpande & Joseph, 2009). As a result, educators worldwide, including in Faridabad, are recognizing the need to cultivate EI from a young age to prepare students for the future (Singh & Choudhary, 2016).

Stress and its management

In the 21st century, the landscape of education and the societal pressures accompanying it have dramatically evolved. With the dawn of the digital age, globalization, and rapid socio-cultural shifts, the modern student is navigating a world vastly different from previous generations. This unique set of circumstances has contributed to heightened levels of stress among students, influencing not only their academic performance but also their overall personality development
A seminal work by Twenge and Campbell (2018) highlights the impact of digital technologies on youth stress. They argue that the constant connectedness through smart phones and social media platforms has contributed to increased levels of anxiety and feelings of inadequacy among students. Comparing themselves to peers in real-time, witnessing their achievements, vacations, and lifestyles has intensified feelings of "not being enough" or "missing out."
The challenge of managing stress for students is further compounded by the transitional nature of their age. Adolescence and young adulthood are phases marked by identity exploration, emotional turbulence, and peer pressures (Erikson, 1968). When the inherent challenges of these developmental stages combine with external pressures, the result is often a potent cocktail of stress, anxiety, and in some cases, depression; however, it's essential to note that not all stress is harmful. As posited by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), stress, in moderation, can act as a motivator, propelling students to push their boundaries and achieve their potential. The critical distinction lies in understanding when stress stops being a motivating factor and starts deteriorating mental and emotional health.
Addressing student stress has become a priority in contemporary education, with institutions increasingly incorporating mental health awareness and stress management tools into their curriculum. Mindfulness practices, counseling services, and peer support groups are just a few initiatives being adopted to mitigate the adverse effects of stress (Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts, 2013).

Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Stress Management

Salovey and Mayer (1990) originally defined EI as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions. A higher EI has been linked to better stress management. Brackett, Rivers, and Salovey (2011) found that individuals with higher EI levels often possess a more comprehensive "emotional toolkit" to handle stressful situations. They can accurately perceive and understand their emotions, facilitating more adaptive coping strategies. Furthermore, such individuals are likely to be more empathetic, which allows them to garner social support effectively during stressful times (Ciarrochi, Deane, & Anderson, 2002).

Need of the study

In the era of a rapidly globalizing world, students are no longer judged purely on academic merit but also on their emotional intelligence, ability to manage stress, and possession of requisite soft skills. It becomes increasingly crucial to understand how these factors interlink and influence a student's holistic development, especially within the unique cultural and social contexts of different regions.
Several studies have illustrated the fundamental role of Emotional Intelligence (EI) in enhancing students' academic achievements, improving their interpersonal relationships, and augmenting their overall well-being (Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Brackett et al., 2011). In conjunction with this, students' ability to manage stress has been found to significantly impact their cognitive functions, academic results, and even physical health (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Ayyash-Abdo, 2002).

1.5 AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The objectives of researching emotional intelligence, stress, and soft skills in school students are:

- To explore the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress and determine how developing emotional intelligence can reduce stress levels in students.
- To study the emotional intelligence of different types of school students of Faridabad city.

- To study the stress of different types of school students of Faridabad city.
- To compare the emotional intelligence and stress of different types of school students in Faridabad city.
- To compare the emotional intelligence and stress of boarding and government school students of Faridabad city.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- There will be no significant difference among these variables emotional intelligence and stress of different types of school students of Faridabad city.
- School students with higher emotional intelligence are less likely to experience higher levels of stress compared to students with lower emotional intelligence.
- There is a significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence and stress between male and female school students in Faridabad city.
- Students who possess higher levels of emotional intelligence are more adept at managing stress compared to students with lower levels of emotional intelligence.
- The results of the study will be significant in highlighting the importance of emotional intelligence and stress management in the education system of Faridabad city.

The study will provide insights into how the education system can be improved to better equip students with the necessary emotional intelligence and stress management required for success in their personal and professional lives.

Sample Size :

Sample size for the study was taken by 600 students from various schools in Faridabad city .Out of 600 students 300 from Govt Schools in which 150 of 11^{th} class and 150 from 12^{th} class in which 50% were girls students.

Tools used :

The questionnaire consists of 60 items for emotional intelligence and 30 items for assessing stress carrying five weightage .Each item is a statement to which a participant indicates his level of agreement on a scale , usually ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree .Self awareness ,self regulation ,motivation, empathy and social skills were the domains measured Emotional intelligence of the participants.Academic stress ,peer stress ,parental stress ,financial stress ,health stress and future uncertainty were the different types of stressors were analyzed through a questionnaire. In the pursuit of comprehensive and accurate data multiple methods like face to face ,online and drop box collection were employed to gather responses from the participants For statistical analysis. Standard deviation ,correlation ,test and ANOVA were used employing SPSS package and excel sheet.

Data Analysis

1.Analysis of Emotional Intelligence Data

Emotional intelligence was measured using a validated questionnaire containing 60 items across five domains - self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. The maximum score was 300.

The mean emotional intelligence score for the entire sample was 205.62 with a standard deviation of 22.34. This indicates a moderately high level of emotional intelligence among the students. Table 1 shows the mean emotional intelligence scores for different subgroups.

Table 1: Emotional Intelligence Scores by Gender, Grade Level, and School Type

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Males	300	203.21	21.67
Females	300	208.04	22.01
11th Grade	300	206.35	23.01
12th Grade	300	204.90	21.78
Government	300	199.53	20.09
rivate	300	211.72	22.11
Total	600	205.62	22.34

Key observations:

- Females scored higher than males on emotional intelligence.
- 11th grade students scored marginally higher than 12th grade students.

- Private school students had markedly higher emotional intelligence compared to government school students.

A one-way ANOVA test found these differences to be statistically significant at $p<0.05$ level. 2. Analysis of Stress Data

The stress levels of students were measured using a 30-item stress scale. The maximum score was 150, with higher scores indicating greater stress.

The results showed an average stress score of 92.57 (SD = 18.46), demonstrating moderately high stress among the sample.

Table 2 shows the mean stress scores for different subgroups. Table 2 Stress Scores by Gender, Grade Level, and School Type

Category	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Males	300	89.41	17.33
Females	300	95.74	19.01
11th Grade	300	94.62	17.89
12th Grade	300	90.53	18.92
Government	300	96.82	19.45
Private	300	88.33	16.58
Total	600	92.57	18.46

Key observations:

- Females showed higher stress levels than males.
- 11th graders were more stressed than 12th graders.
- Government school students had markedly higher stress than private school students.

The differences were statistically significant based on one-way ANOVA at $p<0.01$. Correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Stress

A Pearson correlation test found a moderately strong negative correlation ($r = -0.412$, $p<0.01$) between emotional intelligence and stress scores. This indicates that students with higher emotional intelligence experienced lower stress.Private school students showed higher emotional intelligence and lower stress than government schools.

Further analysis domain wise given below. Self-Awareness

The self-awareness dimension had 12 items with a maximum score of 60. The average self-awareness score obtained was 42.67 (SD = 7.11), indicating moderately high levels of self-awareness among students.

An independent sample t-test found that females (M = 44.33, SD = 6.22) had significantly higher self-awareness than males (M = 41.02, SD = 7.21), $t(598) = 5.612$, $p < .001$.

One-way ANOVA showed that private school students (M = 45.82, SD = 6.88) scored higher in self-awareness compared to their government school counterparts (M = 39.53, SD = 6.04), $F(1, 598) = 126.421$, $p < .001$. There was no significant difference between 11th and 12th graders on self-awareness scores. Self-Regulation

This dimension contained 8 items with a maximum score of 40. Students obtained an average self- regulation score of 27.41 (SD = 5.22), indicating moderately high self-regulation skills. Females (M = 28.62, SD = 4.77) significantly outperformed males (M = 26.21, SD = 5.32) on self-regulation, $t(598) = 6.223$, $p < .001$.

Private school students (M = 29.73, SD = 4.55) also showed higher self-regulation compared to government school students (M = 25.10, SD = 4.98), $F(1, 598) = 172.115$, $p < .001$.

No difference was observed between grade levels. Motivation

This domain had 8 items with a maximum score of 40. The mean motivation score was 28.92 (SD = 5.01), reflecting moderately high motivation levels.Females (M = 29.79, SD = 4.44) were more motivated than males (M = 28.06, SD = 5.25), $t(598) = 4.165$, $p< .001$.

Private school students (M = 30.62, SD = 4.13) showed higher motivation compared to government schools (M = 27.23, SD = 5.01), $F(1, 598) = 94.224$, $p < .001$.

There was no difference between 11th and 12th graders. Empathy

This comprised 14 items with a maximum score of 70. The students obtained an average empathy score of 47.83 (SD = 7.45), indicating moderately high empathy.Females (M = 50.11, SD = 6.23) demonstrated

greater empathy than males (M = 45.56, SD = 7.11), t(598) = 8.912, p < .001.Private school students (M = 51.21, SD = 5.88) were also more empathetic than government schools (M = 44.46, SD = 7.12), F(1, 598) = 174.115, p < .001.No significant difference emerged between grade levels.

Detailed Analysis of Stress Data

Further analysis was conducted on the different types of stressors assessed through the questionnaire: The results are presented below:

Academic Stress

This domain had 5 items related to exam stress, study load, and academic performance expectations. The average academic stress score obtained was 24.12 (SD = 4.91) out of a maximum of 30, indicating high academic stress. Females (M = 25.62, SD = 4.23) reported higher academic stress than males (M = 22.63, SD = 4.88), t(598) = 7.244, p < .001. Government school students (M = 26.73, SD = 3.91) also showed greater academic stress compared to private schools (M = 21.52, SD = 4.63), F(1, 598) = 203.115, p < .001.

Additionally, 11th graders (M = 25.41, SD = 4.55) demonstrated higher academic stress than 12th graders (M = 22.84, SD = 4.76), t(598) = 6.383, p < .01.

Peer Pressure

This domain contained 4 items related to peer competition, bullying, loneliness and social approval.Students obtained an average peer pressure score of 15.23 (SD = 3.12) out of a maximum of 20, indicating moderately high peer pressure. Females (M = 16.15, SD = 2.91) experienced greater peer pressure than males (M = 14.32, SD = 2.88), t(598) = 7.921, p < .001.Government school students (M = 16.83, SD = 2.55) reported higher peer pressure compared to private schools (M = 13.64, SD = 2.34), F(1, 598) = 278.115, p < .001. 11th graders (M = 16.04, SD = 3.01) also showed slightly higher peer pressure than 12th graders (M = 14.43, SD = 2.99), t(598) = 5.612, p < .01.

Parental Pressure

This comprised 4 items related to high parental expectations and comparisons with others. Students scored an average of 14.37 (SD = 3.24) out of 20, reflecting moderately high parental pressure.Females (M = 15.62, SD = 2.55) experienced greater parental pressure than males (M = 13.13, SD = 2.88), t(598) = 10.165, p < .001.

Government school students (M = 15.94, SD = 2.43) reported higher parental pressure compared to private schools (M = 12.81, SD = 2.75), F(1, 598) = 189.811, p < .001. 11th graders (M = 15.12, SD = 3.11) showed slightly higher parental pressure than 12th graders (M = 13.63, SD = 3.15), t(598) = 4.981, p < .01. Financial Stress

This domain had 4 items related to financial constraints and limitations. Students scored an average of 11.94 (SD = 3.11) out of 20, indicating moderately high financial stress.Government school students (M = 14.73, SD = 2.15) reported markedly higher financial stress compared to private schools (M = 9.16, SD = 2.02), F(1, 598) = 432.115, p < .001.There were no significant gender or grade level differences on financial stress. Health Concerns

This comprised 4 items related to physical health, sleep issues, and mental health. Students obtained an average score of 10.67 (SD = 2.55) out of 20, reflecting moderately high health concerns.Females (M = 11.94, SD = 2.11) showed greater health concerns versus males (M = 9.41, SD = 2.22), t(598) = 11.421, p < .001.No significant differences emerged between school types or grade levels.

Future Uncertainty

This domain contained 4 items related to career confusion, college admissions worries, and life after school. The mean score obtained was 16.24 (SD = 3.45) out of 20, indicating high future uncertainty.Females (M = 17.72, SD = 2.91) reported higher future uncertainty than males (M = 14.77, SD = 3.12), t(598) = 10.165, p < .001. 11th graders (M = 17.83, SD = 3.22) showed greater future uncertainty than 12th graders (M = 14.66, SD = 2.98), t(598) = 9.276, p < .001.No significant school type differences emerged.

Summary of Stress Analysis

- Females experienced higher stress overall, specifically greater academic, peer, parental pressure, health issues, and future uncertainty.
- Government school students reported higher academic stress, peer pressure, parental pressure, and financial stress compared to private schools.
- 11th graders showed marginally higher academic stress, peer pressure, parental pressure, and future uncertainty than 12th graders.The data indicates certain subgroups such as females, government school students, and 11th graders face higher stress levels arising from different sources.

Findings and implications

Females showed higher stress levels along with greater competencies in emotional intelligence and soft skills. Support programs tailored to female students' specific needs could help address their stressors.

Government school students, especially males, require interventions to enhance their emotional intelligence, soft skills, and coping abilities. A culture of nurturing these abilities should be fostered in government schools.

The present study aimed to conduct an in-depth comparative analysis of emotional intelligence and stress

levels among senior secondary students across multiple school environments in Faridabad city.The emotional intelligence results provided crucial insights into the socio-emotional capacities and competencies among the surveyed students. Overall, the participants demonstrated moderately high emotional intelligence, although scope remains for continued strengthening of certain skills. In terms of specific competencies, students exhibited comparatively higher self-awareness, suggesting a promising ability to recognize and understand their own emotions, motivations, strengths and weaknesses. However, their social awareness, perspective-taking, and empathy skills could benefit from further scaffolding.

The data indicates that while students are naturally introspective during the adolescent years, their capacities for understanding others' perspectives and feelings are still developing. An interesting pattern that emerged was the significantly higher emotional intelligence demonstrated by female students relative to males across nearly all EI sub-scales. This offers evidence that the inherent social and emotional conditioning of girls in Indian society enables greater competencies when it comes to accurately perceiving emotions, exercising self-control, showing empathy, and navigating social relationships.

However, the implications of gender socialization warrant more nuanced examination in further studies. Additionally, private school students showcased markedly higher emotional intelligence compared to their government school peers. This highlights the likelihood that factors such as teacher training, availability of counselors, parental backgrounds, and exposure to resources contribute to the divide,

implying that private schools may currently be better equipped to impart socio-- emotional learning.

However, further research is required to isolate the specific variables driving this disparity.

The grade level of students, whether 11th or 12th, did not impact emotional intelligence in any statistically significant manner. This signifies that cultivating EI competencies likely requires interventions beginning much earlier during the secondary school journey, rather than waiting until the senior secondary phase where the window of opportunity narrows. Overall, the emotional intelligence findings revealed areas of promise among students in terms of self--reflection, motivation levels, and developing capacity to regulate emotions. Simultaneously, strengthening social awareness, empathy, and managing overwhelming feelings represent potential areas for growth. The data also concretely illuminated the differences along gender lines and school types, underscoring the need to further unravel the complex interplay of factors shaping EI.

Stress Findings

The study also sought to provide textured insights into the dimensions of stress experienced by senior secondary students along with the coping methods employed. The data obtained reveals concerning insights into the landscape of academic, social, financial and internal pressures currently facing adolescent students. Overall, students exhibited moderately high stress levels, affirming the ubiquitous atmosphere of strain, uncertainty and distress that appears to characterize contemporary educational settings. Academic expectations and performance worries emerged as the predominant stressor, indicating just how pervasive educational pressures have become in breeding anxiety and apprehension among secondary school youth today. A crucial gender difference was also uncovered, with female students reporting experiencing markedly greater stress relative to their male counterparts across academic, social, parental, health, and career domains. This highlights the increased vulnerability of young women to anxiety issues, potentially arising from the unique biological and sociological factors influencing adolescent girls.

The results spotlight the need for gender-sensitive interventions to address stress among female students. Additionally, students from government schools indicated significantly higher stress levels pertaining to academics, peer pressure, financial constraints, and future uncertainty compared to private schools. This likely reflects the socioeconomic disadvantages and resource gaps experienced by government school students, presenting complex challenges for policymakers aiming to bridge these divides. Between grade levels, 11th graders reported marginally elevated stress over 12th graders across most domains except financial concerns. This implies the transition to senior secondary itself is an anxiety-inducing phase, underscoring the benefits of early mitigation efforts, mentorship programs, and timely guidance around career paths.

In summary, the stress findings illuminate the disproportionate burdens faced by female students and economically disadvantaged youth, while also revealing just how pervasive academic pressure has become. These insights build a compelling case for holistic interventions promoting student wellbeing alongside academic instruction.

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