



Review article

A Study of Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence “Among Rural Adolescents”

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Disparities by Gender
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Awareness of Emotions
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Empathy

Abstract

The study investigates how rural teenagers' emotional intelligence (EI) varies by gender. The capacity to recognise, comprehend, and control emotions is known as emotional intelligence, and it is essential to both societal and personal growth. The purpose of this study is to determine whether male and female teenagers in rural areas vary significantly from one another. Standardised EI assessment instruments were used to survey a sample of teenagers from rural regions. The findings show that while male adolescents may be better at self-regulation and stress management, female adolescents often score higher on emotional awareness, empathy, and interpersonal skills. The results point to the necessity of gender-sensitive emotional development programs that are adapted to the particular difficulties experienced by young people in rural areas in order to improve their emotional health and foster societal peace.

Introduction

Adolescence is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood, characterized by a complex series of bio- psycho-social changes. Adolescence is a key developmental period with significant changes in brain development, endocrinology, emotions, cognitions, behaviour and interpersonal relationships. Well-being in childhood and adolescence is a growing field of study and discussion; however, different authors use different concepts to refer to the well-being phenomenon. The concepts of well-being has been defined by (Andrews et al., 2002) as “healthy and successful individual functioning (involving physiological, psychological, and behavioural levels of organization), positive social relationships (with family members, peers, adult care givers and community and social institutions, for instance, school, faith and civic organizations), and a social ecology that provides safety”. Compared with young children, adolescents are stronger, bigger and faster

and are achieving maturational improvements in reaction time, reasoning abilities, immune function and the capacity to withstand cold, heat, injury and physical stress. (Dahl 2004) observed that in almost every measurable domain, this is a developmental period of strength and resilience. The studies conducted with well-being of adolescents reveal that the well-being of adolescents is related both to individual and contextual factors.

Emotional intelligence refers to the capability of a person to manage and control his or her emotions and possess the ability to control the emotions of others as well. In other words, they can influence the emotions of other people also. Emotional intelligence is a very important skill in leadership. It is said to have five main elements such as - self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Is the capability of individuals to recognize their own emotions and those of others discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour, and manage and/or adjust emotions to adapt to environments or achieve one's goal(s). Emotional intelligence has been defined, by Peter Salovey and John Mayer, as "the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour". This definition was later broken down and refined into four proposed abilities: perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions. These abilities are distinct yet related. Emotional intelligence also reflects abilities to join intelligence, empathy and emotions to enhance thought and understanding of interpersonal dynamics. Different models of EI have led to the development of various instruments for the assessment of the construct. While some of these measures may overlap, most researchers agree that they tap different constructs.

Objectives of study:

To study the level of differences on various dimensions of emotional intelligence between rural boys and girls. The raised problem was whether male and female rural adolescents differ significantly in emotional intelligence?

Hypotheses:

It was hypothesized that the female adolescents will exhibit better emotional intelligence as compared to their male counterparts.

METHODOLOGY

Sample:

The test was administered on a sample of 200 rural adolescents in which there were 100 male and 100 females studying in XII class.

Tools:

Emotional Intelligence Test:

Emotional Intelligence Test developed by (Ekta Sharma 2011) will be used. The test constitutes 60 items from five domains of Emotional Intelligence i.e. Self- Awareness, Managing Emotions, Motivating Oneself, Empathy, and Handling Relationships. The response pattern in the scale is of Likert Type i.e. on a five point continuum from always, most often, occasional, rarely to never. To control social desirability positive and negative statements have been used. The EIT is a reliable and valid instrument.

Data Collection and Analysis:

The data for boys and girls was collected after administering the tools in small groups. Data analysis was performed by using SPSS 20.0. To find out the significance of difference between both the groups, t test was calculated.

Results and Discussion:

Results indicated that obtained t value for self-awareness showed that no significant difference was found between male and female adolescents. The t value was: 1.81(Mean: males-50.16 and females 52.04). A significant t value (9.54) was found on the dimension of managing emotions. Females exhibited higher mean (41.01) than males (29.90). Females mean (12.05,) was higher than males (9.37). On self-motivation domain females scored higher (M =26.19) while males' mean was 24.70. t value 1.77 was found not significant. t value was 7.02 on empathy dimension which was significant at .01 level. Mean for females 12.95 was higher than males M = 9.30) the obtained results were discussed in the light of studies conducted in the area.

Conclusion

With an emphasis on five dimensions—self-awareness, emotion management, self-motivation, empathy, and relationship management—the study sought to investigate gender disparities in emotional intelligence (EI) among teenagers living in rural areas. The findings, which were based on a sample of 200 rural teenagers (100 males and 100 girls), showed notable differences in EI by gender along a number of variables.

According to the results, there was no discernible difference between male and female teenagers in the self-awareness area, indicating that both sexes had a comparable degree of emotional awareness and comprehension. On the other hand, women showed a markedly greater capacity for emotional regulation than individuals. This discrepancy could be a result of social pressure on women to better handle emotional complexity, especially in rural areas. Despite having somewhat higher scores than men in the self-motivation category, the difference was not statistically significant. This implies that teenagers in rural regions, both male and female, can have comparable levels of intrinsic desire and drive, possibly as a result of shared social and educational experiences.

However, there was a notable gender difference in empathy, with women showing more empathy than men. This result supports other studies that found women are often more sensitive to other people's feelings, a quality that may be fostered by the caring responsibilities that are frequently placed on girls in rural communities.

The study's overall findings indicate that although rural male and female teenagers are equivalent in certain aspects of emotional intelligence, females often demonstrate more emotional control and empathy. These findings highlight how crucial it is to create gender-sensitive emotional intelligence programs that address the unique emotional and social difficulties that both sexes confront in order to foster emotional development and well-being among young people in rural areas.

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