
Emotional Stability Amongst Adolescent Students- A Comparative Study of Boys and Girls in Manipur.

Konika Khuraijam

Associate Professor DM College of Teacher Education, Manipur University Manipur, India
konikhur@hotmail.com

How to cite this article: Konika Khuraijam (2024) Emotional Stability Amongst Adolescent Students- A Comparative Study of Boys and Girls in Manipur.. *Library Progress International*, 44(3), 20109-20115.

ABSTRACT

The significant influence of emotional well-being on an adolescent's life is pivotal in determining their future aspirations-ideals of self-concept and emotional stability and *prima facie* to contemporary emotional instability which may lead to serious illnesses if not addressed. This research paper aims to investigate the levels of emotional stability of adolescent students in Manipur. Through discursive modes of inquiry, and quantifiable analysis, an overall idea of the major concern areas affected by emotional stability have been highlighted. Moreover, areas of intervention by state, peer and parents for recognition of the emotional conditions of adolescents have been provided in the study.

KEYWORDS

Emotional Stability; Adolescent Age; Well-being; North East Indian Students; New Age Education

Introduction

The adolescent age, popularly known as 'teenage' is a crucial time for growing adults, for it begins to take into account the beginning of emotional stability and self-concept in a multidimensional construct. While emotions have been highly significant in forming these constructs among several adolescents, the transition period from childhood to adulthood is relatively linear for a majority, but for others, this transition period is characterised by the onset of emotional instability, and several forms of mental illnesses which may also lead towards suicide and depression (M. Cole & Cole, 2001). According to Konjengbam (2023), adolescents are more susceptible to mental health illnesses due to continuing hormonal changes and physiological changes in their neural alteration. Further, these physiological changes in the adolescent brain are more susceptible to a range of mental health illnesses due to their significant influence on the adolescent's physical, social, and psychological aspects. The concept of 'mental health' has emerged as the primary public health priority among all adolescents, and its effect on emotional health concerns is directly relevant to their future. The influence of external agents like social media, peer pressure, and future expectations in the modern world have pro rapid breakthroughs in short attention spans and long-term emotional longevity.

While adolescents can distinguish between external influence and internal feelings, the difference between what adolescents perceive as reality and what they want to achieve in the future can become blurred with emotionally destabilising agents (Cole & Cole, 2001). It is concerning when mental conditions like depression, anxiety, and stress are present at this point since they might result in poor academic performance, a breakdown in contact with friends and family, substance misuse, suicide ideation, homicidal thoughts, and school dropout. Therefore, contemporary developments must keep healthy parallel connections with the emotional stability of adolescents. While researchers continue to face significant challenges in identifying and quantifying mental health conditions and disorders since a significant portion of the burden remains subclinical, the burden of mental health can be estimated using a variety of verified instruments, and a subjective approach.

For adolescents of Manipur, a diverse state in the Indian subcontinent, there is a significant knowledge gap on the recognition and action against mental health disparities. Due to a multitude of societal and environmental factors, which include the dynamics of the family, cultural influences, geography, ethnicity, and socioeconomic level, a culturally appropriate approach to identifying the emotional stability of adolescents is an important contribution towards development, growth and well-being studies. Ali et. Al's (2024) study marks 14% of Manipuri adolescents engaged in substance abuse, and over this, Indira (2014), mentions the problem of high insurgency in the state, often involving young adolescents. Such social problems, economic depravity and inadequate state intervention make it important to carry out enquiries related to the emotional stability of Manipur's adolescents.

2. Objectives

1. To find out the significant difference in emotional stability of adolescent boys and girls of private secondary schools in the Imphal area of Manipur
2. To find out the significant difference in emotional stability of adolescent boys and girls of private and government secondary schools of Imphal area of Manipur.
3. To find out the significant difference in emotional stability of adolescent boys of private and government schools in the Imphal area of Manipur
4. To find out the significant difference in emotional stability of adolescent girls of private and government schools in the Imphal area of Manipur.

3. Methodology

This study aims to investigate the levels of emotional stability in both government and private schools situated in Imphal area which is the total area of both Imphal East district and Imphal West district. For this research, stratified simple random sampling was adopted and 160 respondents (comprising 80 boys and 80 girls) were undertaken. A questionnaire was developed with 30 statements with yes/no options to determine the level of emotional stability. The survey incorporates a series of questions that measure attitudes and information about emotional well-being, concerns, peer and parental pressures, and self-confidence in their personal and educational life. Dimensions of optimism, calm, autonomy, and empathy incorporated via the Emotional Stability Test for Children by A Sengupta and A.K. Singh and the Emotional Stability Scale by A.K. Singh and Shruti Narain were used for reference for the standardised questionnaire.

4. Literature Review

Cognition studies in early adolescence have been studied in both historical and contemporary contexts, primarily in domains of emotional experience. In terms of psychological shifts in adolescence, Thorndike (1920) and Cronbach (1960) attempted to devise models for emotional and social functioning. However, early developments in the quantification of early adolescents were unable to reach a comprehensive definition for inquiry-based research. It was only in 1983, in which we see Gardner's (1983) book '*Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*' through discussions of the use of symbols and tools, that children started evolving mastery over several unique domains, marking the possibility of 'multiple intelligence'; sighting a revolutionary form of discussion over the years.

Early Adolescence as a Transitional and Disruptive Period

During a period of great changes, disruption and transition, Anna Freud (1946, 1958) focussed on the physical and internal aspects of the adolescent. It brings to light the several physical unpredictable increases in libidinal drive related to puberty and new demands of the superego, the creation of emotional upheaval marked an evidentiary period of change and transition. Related to this,

A significant period of transition in early adolescent studies came with the association of social and emotional intelligence. While emotional intelligence, defined by several scholars (e.g., Goleman, 1998; Mayer & Salovey 1997; Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002) was an enabler of daily competencies which related to Adaptability, General Mood, Interpersonal and Self-Awareness and

Social intelligence, emerged as a key instrument in defining relations between men and women, boys and girls, citing environmental adaptability and influence on the emotions of individuals. The interrelation of social and emotional intelligence marked significant inquiries on the development of emotional stability of young

adolescents, through case studies and research with could be further quantified. According to Szabó (2010), quantifying emotions could be done via the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale 21 (DASS21) which emerged as a commonly used tool for evaluating the link and impact of stress, anxiety, and depression across a range of age groups, populations, and clinical and non-clinical respondents

Studies on emotional stability increased among young adolescents, and the fragility of emotional quotient became evidentiary with the environment and the society of the individual. A significant development came about with the onset of the part peers and parents play in helping adolescents socialise, in which two schools of thought developed over the years. According to one perspective, 'youth culture'; contrary to parental expectations and culture, shaped popular opinions among adolescents which set a direct impact on the emotional impact and is dominant with its its own set of beliefs, customs, and preferences (Gecas & Seff, 1990). According to the second viewpoint, parents and peers often collaborate with adolescent perspectives and add to the social settings of the adolescent, making it easier for the development of an interpersonal social setting. According to this second viewpoint, teenagers undergo a process known as individuation in which they progressively shift their emotional relationship from parents to peers (Feiring & Taska, 1996; Grotevant, 1998; Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). Nevertheless, both viewpoints do not negate the importance of parental influence and role in an adolescent's life. Moreover, Larson et. Al. (2002) discusses parental support which further affects people's eventual academic success and psychological health both directly and indirectly. It was revealed in their study that a student's academic self-concept declined if their test results were lower than the class average.

Hay & Ashman's (2023) contemporary research on emotional stability amongst adolescents also relates to interpersonal boys-girls adaptability to social pressures. While adolescent males produced higher test scores in the domain of physical appearance than females (D.A. Cole et al., 2001), however, in this study physical attractiveness significantly influenced females 'and males 'sense of self-worth. In the domain of physical appearance studies have revealed that female bodies are scrutinised far more than men's bodies (Polivy & Herman, 1987; Silberstein, Striegel-Moore, & Rodin, 1987) bringing out several complexities in their overall well-being, as societal expectations and unrealistic beauty standards often hindered women's self-concept.

Western notions of emotional stability have a sense of universality but in the case of India, a large area of universal factors can be attributed to the Indian youth, alongside its socio-economic, and political factors. Environmental factors, societal expectations, parents and peer influence, can be attributed to a vast country such as India as well. While this country inhibits the largest adolescent population, there is a significant gap in understanding their psychological stress, handling peer pressure, dealing with emotions, and conflict resolution, and developing self-confidence. According to Verma et. Al (2022), students and adolescents in India face several problems related to physical, mental and emotional challenges. The collective academic burden in this competitive world, alongside the economic burdens of the parents, have become major concerns of clash and conflict between parent-peer relations and adolescents, and formulations of a good emotional bond required for adolescent's emotional stability, with the need to understand the level of their emotional stability has been highlighted.

On a wider level, state measures to recognise the emotional process of the teaching-learning process through the National Policy on Education National policy helps in establishing a social contribution to their overall well-being (Indira, 2014). However, in the Indian context, to recognise adolescent level of emotional stability, a standardised recognition of emotional stability of adolescent with relation to their personal lives, academic goals and aspirations, and mental stability efforts have been absent.

Studies Conducted in Manipur

Several inquiries conducted in case studies of educational institutes in Manipur state have contributed towards an understanding of adolescent's emotional conditions. In Tomba Ch's (2014) inquiry conducted on the emotional intelligence of Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, the student's self-confidence was associated with a trustful environment, confidence in emotion, conscientiousness and adjustment. Sobhita K (2018) investigated the emotional intelligence of Manipur University students in which the difference between emotional intelligence between male and female students and between hostellers and day scholars was not significant. Sameeta Ng. Sharmila B.'s (2019) studies revealed that the global emotional intelligence of the study samples was found maximally under the category of average emotional intelligence. Out of 190 study samples, 138 were considered to have emotional intelligence with a percentage of 73%.

According to Indrani (2014), adolescents involved in a plethora of cultural activities like dance, martial arts, athletics, etc. are well-known around the world. However, the diminishing condition of persistent conflict within the state, and conventional schools, are bringing several socio-environmental problems that further affect the emotional stability of adolescents. Additionally, lack of employment opportunities, poverty and family negligence are some of the major causes of emotional instability. Under such circumstances, there is an increasing number of adolescents being coerced, or voluntarily leaving school to join rebel organisations. Several adolescents are engaged in substance abuse, causing larger concerns about increasing HIV infections in the state.

While Indrani's inquiries face the larger social concerns of Manipur state, including poverty, unemployment, population growth, ethnic strife, politics of exclusion, youth discontent, violence, corruption, gender issues, and so forth. It is important to take into account a more detailed, and enlarged focus to receive a pragmatic approach to adolescent emotional stability.

5. Result and Discussion

Table 1.1. Difference in Emotional Stability of Adolescent Boys and Girls of Private Secondary Schools in Imphal area

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Std. Error Difference	df	t-radio
Boys	40	93.63	10.77	1.70	2.75	78	2.27
Girls	40	99.88	13.65	2.16			

From the table 1.1, it has been found that adolescent girls students have greater emotional stability on average than adolescent boys. The calculated value of t is 2.27 which is greater than the value of 1.99 at $df=80$ with 0.05 level of significance.

There exists a significant difference in emotional stability in adolescent boy students and adolescent girl students of private secondary schools.

The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the emotional stability of adolescent boys of private and government secondary schools in Imphal area is accepted. Amongst the major obstacles towards an emotionally stable lifestyle, was the increased use of alcohol, narcotics, and drugs which was found much greater in boys, as compared to the girl's students. To cater to the prominent possibility of a socio-political scenario, an analysis according to Indira (2014) pertains to the state of Manipur being highly deprived of income-earning opportunities for several adolescents belonging to lower income categories, which possibly explains the rising alcoholism and drug abuse forms. Moreover, in many places where Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes Imphal area are inhabited, alcohol is customarily included in all the social functions, such as ceremonies related to birth, marriage, death, etc, making the easy availability of alcohol and narcotics, without a collective and stringent form of substance control. This brings to light the need to incorporate rehabilitation centres and education drives against substance abuse in the state, as the adolescent age has been considered a fragile stage in every individual's life.

In terms of political effects related to the emotional unbalance of adolescent boys, a large proportion of feelings related to insecurity and fear in the minds of the people that stem from the death of youths, especially boys of insurgent groups have been reported by the local media (Indrani, 2014). The increased criminal activities of kidnapping, rising number of child soldiers, and lack of social and financial security have led to an increased emotionally negative state of mind among male adolescents.

Table 1.2. Difference in Emotional Stability of Adolescent Boys and Girls of Government Secondary Schools in Imphal area

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Std. Error Difference	df	t-radio
Boys	40	91.28	9.16	1.45	2.36	78	1.40
Girls	40	94.58	11.79	1.86			

From Table 1.2, it has been found that adolescent girls have more emotional stability on average than adolescent boy students of government secondary schools of Imphal. The comparison of emotional stability between 40 adolescent boy students of government secondary schools and 40 adolescent girls students by using a t-test shows a value of 1.40, which is less than the table value of 1.99 at $df=80$ with 0.05 level of significance. Hence, there exists no level of significance.

Amongst the adolescent boy students, the study's sociodemographic factors—such as biological changes, being the eldest in some cases, having economic burdens, absence of physical activities, and living in a joint family—were found to be substantially linked to depression amongst the teenage population. A significant number of adolescent girls were also associated with severe depression due to societal pressures of early marriage, household chores and socio-environment safety issues. In a study conducted by Khuraijam (2024), patriarchal interconnected in cases of family abuse, and neglect of effective justice systems in sexual assault cases are now becoming areas of concern for adolescent girls in nuclear as well as joint families. For girls, it was noticed that biological changes such as menstruation and its hormonal effects created major concerns. While both boy and girl adolescents possessed different arenas of factors that deteriorated their emotional stability, overall, the girls skilfully demonstrated adaptability towards destabilising environmental factors that affected their overall health.

Table 1.3. Difference in Emotional Stability of Adolescent Boys of Private Secondary Schools and Adolescent Boys of Government Secondary Schools in Imphal area

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Std. Error Difference	df	t-radio
Boys	40	93.63	10.78	1.70	2.24	78	1.05
Girls	40	91.28	9.16	1.45			

From Table 1.3, the difference in emotional stability of adolescent boy students of private schools is greater than the emotional stability of boys from government secondary schools. The comparison of emotional stability between 40 adolescent boy students of private secondary schools and 40 adolescent boy students of government secondary schools conducted by using a t-test, presents a clear picture of difference and stability level. At 0.05 level of significance, there is no significant difference in emotional stability in adolescent boy students of private secondary schools and adolescent boy students of government secondary schools. For boy students of government secondary schools and their counterparts in the study, there have been variations in parameters related to their socio-cultural, political and personal domains of influence. As boys from government schools majorly belonged to lower-income families, their emotional, mental and physical burdens of studies and performance were found to be greater. The uncertainty of future and daily emotions were at equilibrium for both categories of analysis. Therefore, anxieties and forms of depression were noticed in some cases, citing room for a deeper understanding among boys, who are generally discouraged from sharing their feelings in a communal sense. Verma et. Al (2002)

has further related this problem of school stress among boys, and emotional misbalance in his study, and the stigma of hiding one’s emotions among the boy adolescent population, must be eradicated to promote inclusive depth in facing emotional instability.

Table 1.4. Difference in Emotional Stability of Adolescent Girls of Private Secondary Schools and Girls of Government Secondary Schools in Imphal area

Category	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Std. Error Difference	df	t-radio
Boys	40	99.88	13.65	2.16	2.85	78	1.85
Girls	40	94.58	11.79	1.86			

From the above table, it has been found that adolescent female students of private secondary schools have more emotional stability on average than adolescent female students of government secondary schools. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the emotional stability of adolescent girls of private and government secondary schools in Imphal area is accepted.

Dynamics of issues related to the emotional stability of girls in private and government schools were related to family relationships, socio-cultural limitations, school environment, future aspirations, and personal issues. While several girls from private secondary schools had hopeful aspirations and supporting family members, adolescent girls from government schools were less hopeful for their future due to personal restraints. However, both girls of each section possessed similar household duties which often hindered their hobbies and interests, preventing them restricted to pursuing their dreams and aspirations. An increased number of adolescent girls from government schools were engaged in outdoor activities and sports, while girls from private secondary schools were more inclined towards indoor activities like painting, crafts dance, etc. Both sections of adolescent girls had a sense of ‘responsible nature’ which made them determined towards their studies, household duties, and their future. As they were more understanding of one another’s needs, emotions like compassion and care were significantly high in both sections of the female adolescents.

6. Conclusion

This research confirms the interactive relationship of gender, parents, peers, and their schools in the formation of adolescents’ general self-concept (confidence and self-worth) and emotional stability (calmness, freedom from anxiety, and depression). By studying the emotional stability that brings out insights into the hardships of secondary school students, the study has found that there is a significant difference in emotional stability in adolescent boy students and adolescent girl students of private secondary schools. While adolescent girls are more emotionally stable than boys and private secondary school students have more stable emotions than government school students, there is evidence of socio-economic constraints and barriers for boys, and patriarchal attitudes which are leading causes of emotional instability among girls. There is a need to incorporate ‘emotional health facilities’ in educational institutes for affected adolescents, that extend emotional aid alongside career counselling sessions.

Physical well-being is an important determinant of a healthy emotionally stable adolescent. Lack of proper exercise and lethargy in adolescents has been found a major contributor towards emotional instability in the adolescents studied above. Furthermore, due to lower income conditions of families in government schools, a nutritional lack can be attributed towards their incomplete well-being. Singh et. Al (2013) has provided a detailed impact of nutrition transition and the overall lifestyle affected by socio-economic status. For girls, the prominence of physical appearance for adolescents’ overall sense of self-worth, the implication is that interventions need to be encouraged to counter unrealistic expectations about female and male attractiveness and body shape. Of particular note is the growing importance that peers have on the formation of adolescents’ emotional stability. Thus, unlearning the mainstream ideal of ‘being happy’ if you look a certain way, can be beneficiary for the longer-term emotional well-being, especially for growing girls.

In medical terms, contemporary adolescent issues related to depression, anxiety and ADHD, must be addressed with an open attitude. Moreover, there is a need to incorporate into the regular secondary school curriculum programs that address issues of changing gender role expectations and peer communication skills. Such programs in Imphal area would have the benefit of assisting adolescents to achieve a more secure sense of personal identity and reduce the probability that they will confront a variety of psychological problems in later life. The adolescents' parents also should be provided adequate assistance and support in managing the transition period and more community and school-based counselling and guidance services need to be available to adolescents and their parents. This way, a collective effort towards the emotional stability of adolescents can be incorporated.

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