



Emotional Maturity and Academic Anxiety Among Senior Secondary School Students: A Correlational Study

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ABSTRACT:

The present correlational research study aims to investigate how emotional maturity relates to academic anxiety experienced by senior secondary school students. Researcher collected data from students aged 16 to 18 years throughout four different schools by utilizing the Emotional Maturity Scale and Academic Anxiety Scale for Children. The study results demonstrated a significant negative correlation between emotional maturity and academic anxiety with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.687$ and a p -value below 0.01 which showed that higher emotional maturity leads to decreased academic anxiety. The study found gender differences because female students reported more academic anxiety with an average score of 68.45 while male students had an average score of 61.32. The findings have important implications for educational interventions which aim to improve emotional competencies because this approach helps to decrease academic stress.

Keywords: Emotional Maturity, Senior Secondary Students, academic Anxiety.

INTRODUCTION:

The senior secondary phase represents a critical developmental period which shows students facing more academic challenges while making career choices and undergoing psychological changes. The academic requirements which students in grades 11 and 12 must satisfy come from their parents and teachers and themselves, which leads to increased academic pressure. Academic anxiety describes the negative emotional state which students experience in educational settings because they feel worried and tense and fearful about their academic performance and assessment.

Emotional maturity describes the capacity to manage emotions while showing compassion toward others and establishing enduring bonds with people and reacting suitably to what happens in their surroundings. The resource serves as a vital psychological asset which helps people handle stressful situations and combat anxiety. Researcher have conducted limited studies on the relationship between these two constructs even though theoretical links exist between them.

Rationale of the study

Understanding the relationship between emotional maturity and academic anxiety is essential for several reasons. First, academic anxiety leads to cognitive impairment which affects memory and test performance. Second, chronic anxiety during adolescence can lead to long-term mental health consequences. Third, protective factors such as emotional maturity help develop specific educational interventions which will benefit students.

Objectives of the study

- To evaluate the level of emotional maturity among senior secondary school students.
- To examine the prevalence of academic anxiety among senior secondary school students.
- To investigate the relationship between senior secondary school student's academic anxiety and emotional maturity.
- To examine academic anxiety and emotional maturity of male and female senior secondary school students.
- To determine how various aspects of emotional maturity predict student's level of academic anxiety.

Hypotheses of the study

- There is no significant difference in the level of emotional maturity among senior secondary school students.
- There is no significant level of academic anxiety among senior secondary school students.
- There is no significant relationship between emotional maturity and academic anxiety among senior secondary school students.
- There is no significant difference between male and female students with respect to emotional maturity and academic anxiety.
- Different dimensions of emotional maturity do not significantly predict academic anxiety among senior secondary school students.

Review of Literature

Previous research has established that emotional intelligence and maturity serve as protective factors which shield individuals from multiple types of psychological distress. The researcher studied adolescent populations in India whereas Kumar and Sharma (2018) discovered that people with advanced emotional maturity showed stronger abilities to handle stress because emotional development serves as the primary connection between emotional growth and resilience. The research findings support international studies which demonstrate that people with strong emotional regulation abilities face reduced risks of developing anxiety disorders (Gross & Muñoz, 2019). The ability to identify and understand and control one's emotions which serves as the fundamental aspect of emotional maturity helps people protect themselves from the harmful consequences of persistent stress which leads to anxiety.

Current research on academic anxiety in India shows that this problem exists throughout senior secondary student population. The studies show that examination stress affects 45% to 65% of students

according to the 2015 research of Deb, Strodl, and Sun. The widespread anxiety across this population exists because multiple factors work together with deep roots in the social and educational systems. The researcher identify four main factors which drive students to experience academic stress: parents who expect high academic performance, schools which create intense competition, students who fear failing, and students who worry about finding future employment (Chandrashekhar & Muralidhar, 2019). The combination of academic pressures creates a situation which exceeds students' ability to cope with stress.

The well-established existence of emotional maturity as a protective factor and academic anxiety as a common disorder needs a critical synthesis which remains absent. Research on emotional maturity's impact on academic anxiety within Indian educational systems remains limited according to Singh and Pandey 2021. Most studies treat these variables in isolation because they study either the predictors of academic anxiety or the correlates of emotional maturity without examining how those two elements interact with each other. A major research gap exists because researcher need to understand how emotional maturity functions as a potential solution which will help them design specific interventions. The research shows that when researcher find a strong negative relationship between two variables, this finding demonstrates the need for schools to teach social-emotional learning (SEL) programs, which will help students gain essential emotional skills to manage their academic challenges. The present study investigates the connection between emotional maturity and academic anxiety among senior secondary students to provide empirical evidence which will help develop educational strategies that support academic success and emotional health

Methodology

Research Design

The researcher used a correlational research design to investigate how emotional maturity as the independent variable affects academic anxiety which they measured as the dependent variable in their study of senior secondary school students.

Sample

The researcher studied a group of 200 senior secondary school students who included 100 male students and 100 female students. The study analyzed a group of respondents who were aged 16 years to 18 years because this age range represents the late adolescent stage which brings various emotional and psychological and academic hurdles. The study selected participants from Classes 11 and 12 because students at this level face increased academic demands which result from their board exams and career choices. The researcher selected participants from four Lucknow schools which had CBSE affiliation to achieve an authentic representation of urban educational settings. The researcher used stratified random sampling to achieve equal representation of different gender groups and academic levels which improved the study's findings through better generalization. The researcher employed stratification methods to decrease sampling bias while ensuring that essential population subgroups received proper representation in the research.

Inclusion Criteria

The study established clear inclusion criteria which ensured that all sampled subjects would meet necessary requirements for study objectives. The study selected participants who were currently enrolled in Classes 11 or 12 because it specifically studied students at the senior secondary level. The age requirement for participants required them to be between 16 and 18 years old so that developmental uniformity could be maintained. All participants provided informed consent which included obtaining necessary permissions from school authorities to conduct research according to ethical standards. The study required students to maintain at least 75 percent school attendance because researcher needed continuous academic contact to evaluate academic anxiety and emotional maturity.

Exclusion Criteria

The researcher established specific exclusion criteria because they needed to control for confounding variables which threatened to distort their study results. The study excluded students who had received formal psychological disorder diagnoses because those disorders would affect their ability to control emotions and manage anxiety at higher levels than typical teenage behavior. The study excluded students who needed psychiatric or psychological treatment because their treatment would impact study results. The study excluded students who refused to take part or who failed to give informed consent according to ethical research standards which require participants to join voluntarily.

Tools

Researcher used two psychological assessments which have become standard instruments in their research. The Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Yashvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava serves as the tool for measuring emotional maturity. The scale consists of 48 items which assess five fundamental characteristics of human behavior: Emotional Stability, Emotional Progression, Social Adjustment, Personality Integration, and Independence. The scale records user responses through its five-response option system which uses a Likert scale. The assessment shows excellent internal consistency because its Cronbach's alpha coefficient for reliability testing reaches 0.88. The EMS test shows that people with higher test scores demonstrate lower emotional maturity according to the results of the test.

Researcher used the Academic Anxiety Scale for Children (AASC) which A.K. Singh and A. Sen Gupta developed to assess students' academic anxiety levels. The scale contains 20 items which measure academic anxiety through three specific types of anxiety: worry, emotionality, and test-related anxiety. The responses are obtained using a 5-point Likert scale. The AASC testing showed acceptable reliability with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient which reached 0.84. The scale shows that students who achieve higher scores experience increased academic anxiety levels. The research study used these assessment tools to obtain valid and reliable measurements which matched its research goals.

Procedure

Data collection happened during school hours after the researcher received both institutional ethical approval and informed consent from participants. The students completed both questionnaires in a quiet classroom environment which lasted 40 to 45 minutes. The study protected participant confidentiality and

anonymity throughout the research process. The researcher collected data during two months which lasted from September until October of the year 2025.

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS software version 26.0. The researcher calculated descriptive statistics which included mean values and standard deviation measurements. Pearson's correlation coefficient examined the relationship between variables. The independent samples t-test was used to assess differences between genders. The multiple regression analysis tested whether the variables could predict the outcome. The researcher established statistical significance at p values below 0.05.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1- presents the descriptive statistics on 200 participants' Emotion Maturity and Academic Anxiety.

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Maturity (Total)	156.34	18.67	112	198	0.23	-0.45
Emotional Stability	32.45	4.82	21	43	0.18	-0.38
Emotional Progression	30.78	4.56	19	42	0.31	-0.29
Social Adjustment	31.23	5.12	18	44	0.26	-0.41
Personality Integration	33.12	4.91	22	45	0.15	-0.52
Independence	28.76	4.34	17	39	0.29	-0.33
Academic Anxiety (Total)	64.89	12.45	35	92	0.17	-0.48

Here are two elements from the research report from the report insofar as they indicate a moderate degree of emotional immaturity (which may be viewed as a higher score on the maturity scale), and moderate-to-high levels of academic anxiety within the group of students studied.

Gender-wise Analysis

Table 2- Gender -Related Differences for Emotional Growth and Educational Anxiety

Variable	Male (n=100)	Female (n=100)	t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
	M (SD)	M (SD)			
Emotional Maturity	151.23 (17.89)	161.45 (18.23)	3.98	<0.001**	0.56
Academic Anxiety	61.32 (11.67)	68.45 (12.34)	4.23	<0.001**	0.59

**p < 0.01; Effect size: Cohen's d

The study found that female students showed higher emotional immaturity through their results (M = 161.45) than male students who achieved (M = 151.23) according to t(198) results, which showed a statistical significance at p < 0.001 and a medium effect size (d = 0.56). The research results showed that female students experienced higher academic anxiety (M = 68.45) than their male counterparts who reported (M = 61.32) according to t(198) results, which showed a statistical significance at p < 0.001 and a medium effect size (d = 0.59).

Correlation Analysis

Table 3- The correlation of emotional maturity dimensions wi.

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Emotional Stability	-						
2. Emotional Progression	0.643**	-					
3. Social Adjustment	0.587**	0.612**	-				
4. Personality Integration	0.671**	0.698**	0.634**	-			
5. Independence	0.523**	0.556**	0.601**	0.612**	-		
6. Total Emotional Maturity	0.876**	0.891**	0.847**	0.903**	0.782**	-	
7. Academic Anxiety	0.623**	0.591**	0.548**	0.634**	0.489**	0.687**	-

**p < 0.01 (2-tailed)

The study found a strong positive relationship between total emotional maturity scores and academic anxiety when researcher calculated their correlation coefficient which resulted in $r = 0.687$ and p value lower than 0.01. The positive correlation between the two variables shows that academic anxiety increases when students show lower emotional maturity based on their EMS scores. All dimensions of emotional maturity showed significant positive correlations with academic anxiety, with personality integration demonstrating the strongest association ($r = 0.634$).

Regression Analysis

Various regression analysis was applied to examine that the relationship of the dimensions of emotional maturity predicts academic anxiety.

Table 4 - shows the results of the multiple regression analysis for anxiety.

Predictor	B	SE B	β	t	p	VIF
Constant	12.34	4.56	-	2.71	0.007	-
Emotional Stability	0.89	0.18	0.34	4.94	<0.001**	2.12
Emotional Progression	0.67	0.19	0.24	3.53	<0.001**	2.34
Social Adjustment	0.45	0.17	0.18	2.65	0.009*	1.98
Personality Integration	0.78	0.16	0.31	4.88	<0.001**	2.45
Independence	0.38	0.20	0.13	1.90	0.059	1.76

$R^2 = 0.542$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.530$, $F(5, 194) = 45.89$, $p < 0.001$

*p < 0.05, **p < 0.01

The regression model showed statistical significance because $F(5, 194)$ reached the value 45.89 with a p-value less than 0.001. The model explained 54.2% of the variations in academic anxiety. The three factors of emotional stability ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.001$), personality integration ($\beta = 0.31$, $p < 0.001$), and emotional progression ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.001$) served as important prediction factors.

Distribution of Anxiety Levels

Table 5: the Classification of Students by Academic Anxiety Levels

Anxiety Level	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage
Low	20-45	28	14.0%

Moderate	46-70	118	59.0%
High	71-100	54	27.0%
Total		200	100%

The researcher found that 59% of students experienced moderate academic anxiety while 27% of students showed high anxiety levels which resulted in clinically significant anxiety for a significant portion of the study sample.

Discussion

Main Findings

The study found its main result which showed a strong negative relationship between emotional maturity and academic anxiety with a correlation coefficient of minus 0.687 which confirmed the first hypothesis and matched theoretical predictions. Students who develop higher emotional maturity levels gain superior emotional control abilities which help them handle academic stress more successfully. The finding supports previous research which Sharma and Kaur (2019) conducted to demonstrate similar trends among Indian adolescents. The regression analysis delivers more profound understanding through its results which show emotional stability and personality integration serve as the primary factors that determine academic anxiety. Students who maintain emotional balance with complete personality development can better manage both examination stress and academic demands. These dimensions represent core competencies in stress management and psychological resilience.

Gender Differences

The second hypothesis receives support from important gender differences which researcher have documented. Female students showed less emotional maturity and more academic anxiety than male students. The pattern shows how Indian society actually operates because it exhibits different socialization methods at home which lead parents to expect more academic success from their daughters while boys use different ways to handle their problems.

Hormonal changes that occur during the adolescent years lead to increased emotional responses among females. Previous Indian research has documented similar gender patterns which indicate that these findings represent cultural norms instead of being exception cases.

Practical Implications

The findings have multiple essential consequences which affect educational methods of teaching.

1. The educational system needs to establish organized programs which create emotional competency through dedicated training programs that develop emotional stability and help students build their complete personality.
2. The school needs to establish dedicated counseling services which provide female students with appropriate support because they experience higher levels of anxiety than other students.
3. The training program for teachers needs to include instructions about how to identify students who show signs of emotional development and anxiety disorders so they can give students necessary assistance.

4. Parent education programs enable parents to decrease their unrealistic academic expectations while creating home environments which provide emotional support to their children.
5. The implementation of psychological screening tests at regular intervals enables schools to detect students who need immediate intervention because they show signs of being high-risk.

Theoretical Implications

The results of this research support emotional regulation theory because people with advanced emotional processing skills experience reduced psychological distress. The research applies this framework to academic anxiety by showing that emotional skills protect students during high-pressure educational situations.

Limitations

Several limitations warrant consideration:

1. Cross-sectional Design The study design uses correlation which prevents researcher from establishing causal relationships between variables.
2. Self-Report Measures The assessment results face two main issues because respondents tend to answer according to their desired image and answer according to their true thoughts.
3. Geographic Limitation The study results only apply to one city because the researcher used participants who lived in that particular city.
4. Cultural Context The study results only apply to Indian populations and do not extend to other cultural groups.
5. Unmeasured Variables The study did not measure two factors which included family environment and socioeconomic status.

Conclusion

This study establishes through empirical research that emotional maturity negatively affects academic anxiety which impacts senior secondary school students. The research demonstrates that emotional maturity functions as a protective psychological resource which reduces academic anxiety because 54.2% of anxiety variance is explained by emotional maturity dimensions. The research shows that female students experience greater academic stress than male students which requires additional support to help them cope with their academic responsibilities.

The results demonstrate that educational systems need to adopt comprehensive educational methods which combine emotional development with academic achievement for their programs to succeed. Schools must recognize that fostering emotional maturity is not ancillary to education but integral to students' academic success and psychological well-being.

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