

# Emotional Intelligence of Adolescents in Relation to Their Test Anxiety and Academic Stress

**Rizwan Hassan Bhat**

Department of Psychology, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India

**Email address:**

rizwanbhat08@gmail.com

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**Abstract:** The concept emotional intelligence (EI) has its roots in consideration that began as early as the late 1930s, when researchers began describing a non-intellective intelligence sometimes described as “social intelligence”. In simpler terms, emotional intelligence might be defined as the set of skills people use to read, understand, and react effectively to emotional signals sent by others and oneself. These are skills such as empathy, problem-solving, optimism, and self-awareness which allow people to reflect, react to, and understand various environmental situations. There is a strong relationship between the emotional intelligence with the anxiety and the stress. Over the decades there is strong discussion and research going on what happens to the emotional intelligence when there is increased anxiety and academic stress among adolescents. Taking in consideration the above facts, an investigation will be carried out on the “Emotional intelligence among adolescents in relation to their test anxiety and academic stress”. This study will be conducted to examine the role of the emotional intelligence and its relation with test anxiety and academic stress among adolescents. We seek to test hypothesis that in adolescents at the time of test anxiety and in academic stress, emotional intelligence (EI) decreases. To test our hypothesis, a sample of around 250 adolescents (both boys and girls in equal ratio) in the age group of 18 to 23 years with nonclinical history of anxiety and stress was taken from the different colleges of Kashmir valley. The level of emotions was quantified in relation to all variables (test anxiety and academic stress) using emotional intelligence scale by schute et al. scales. Taking in consideration our objective and hypothesis, data collected is analyzed by (one way ANOVA) analysis of variance. After analyzing the data my result showed the significance difference among gender in emotional intelligence as well as in test anxiety.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Adolescents, Test Anxiety, Academic Stress

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## 1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others. It is generally said to include 3 skills: 1. Emotional awareness, including the ability to identify your own emotions and those of others; 2. The ability to harness emotions and apply them to tasks like thinking and problem-solving; 3. The ability to manage emotions, including the ability to regulate your own emotions, and the ability to cheer up or calm down other person. Emotional intelligence competencies are typically focused on recognition and regulation of emotions in one's self and social situations, yielding four categories: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. Emotional intelligence is a social intelligence that enables people to recognize their own, and

other peoples' emotions. Moreover, emotional intelligence enables people to differentiate those emotions, and to make appropriate choices for thinking and action. It is intelligence that may be learned, developed and improved. According to Salvoes and Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence includes an "ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions". There are three models of EI. The *ability model*, developed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer, focuses on the individual's ability to process emotional information and use it to navigate the social environment. The *trait model* as developed by Konstantin Vasily Petridis, "encompasses behavioral disposition and self perceived abilities and is measured through self report". The final model, the *mixed model* is a combination of both ability and trait EI. It defines EI as an array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership

performance, as proposed by Daniel Goleman

Studies have shown that people with high EI have greater mental health, exemplary job performance, and more potent leadership skills. For example, Goleman's research in his book, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, indicated that EQ accounted for 67% of the abilities deemed necessary for superior performance in leaders, and mattered twice as much as technical expertise or IQ. Markers of EI and methods of developing it have become more widely coveted in the past few decades. In addition, studies have begun to provide evidence to help characterize the neural mechanisms of emotional intelligence. Researchers have shown that emotional intelligence predicts academic performance and other cognitive outcomes (Adenuga & Ayodele, 2009; Deniz Tras & Aydogan, 2009; Berenson, Boyles & Weaver, 2008; Harrod & Scheer, 2005). Emotional Intelligence has garnered attention from psychologist, educators, leadership theorists and business leaders (Burbach, et. al 2003).

#### *Test anxiety*

Test anxiety is a psychological state in which people experience intense distress and anxiety in testing situations. While many people experience some degree of stress and anxiety before and during exams, test anxiety can actually impair learning and affect test performance. A little bit of nervousness can actually be helpful, making you feel mentally alert and ready to tackle the challenges presented in an exam. Excessive fear, on the other hand, can make it difficult to concentrate and one might struggle to recall things one has studied. Test anxiety is a type of performance anxiety. In situations where the pressure is on and a good performance counts, people can become so anxious that they are actually unable to do their best. While people have the skills and knowledge to do very well in these situations, their excessive anxiety impairs their performance. The severity of test anxiety can vary considerably from one person to another. Some people might feel like they have "butterflies" in their stomach and while others might find it difficult to concentrate on the exam. Others might experience a racing heartbeat and a sense of shakiness. In the most severe cases, people can feel nauseous and short of breath or might even experience a full-blown panic attack.

Anxiety is a phenomenon that people frequently encounter in their lives. Anxiety can be described as a feeling of uneasy suspense (Rachman, 2004). Researchers have provided a classification of this phenomenon into different sub-categories such as test anxiety. Test taking can become a major source of stress, especially when test scores serve as a key factor to future opportunities and career pathways (Peleg & Klingman, 2002).

It is a combination of perceived physiological over-arousal, feelings of worry and dread, self-deprecating thoughts, tension, and somatic symptoms that occur during test situations. It is a physiological condition in which people experience extreme stress, anxiety, and discomfort during and/or before taking a test. Test anxiety is prevalent amongst the student populations of the world, and has been studied formally since the early 1950s beginning with researchers

George Mandler and Seymour Sarason. Sarason's brother, Irwin G. Sarason, then contributed to early investigation of test anxiety, clarifying the relationship between the focused effects of test anxiety, other focused forms of anxiety, and generalized anxiety. Test anxiety can also be labeled as anticipatory anxiety, situational anxiety or evaluation anxiety. Test anxiety has been shown to have a consistently negative relationship with test performance, and test-anxious students are found to perform about 12 percent below their non-anxious peers. Inferior performance arises not because of intellectual problems or poor academic preparation, but because testing situations create a sense of threat for those experiencing test anxiety; anxiety resulting from the sense of threat then disrupts attention and memory function. Researchers suggest that between 25 to 40 percent of students experience test anxiety. Students with disabilities and students in gifted education classes tend to experience high rates of test anxiety. Students who experience test anxiety tend to be easily distracted during a test, experience difficulty with comprehending relatively simple instructions, and have trouble organizing or recalling relevant information.

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1. Research Design**

The course of this study first was to select the sampling group to carry out the study. In this case, the sample included a group of adolescents of the age group 18-23 years. The study then included the selection of the appropriate methods like scales to assess the variables to be measured. Following the assessment of the variables, a right statistical approach was taken to authenticate the results for their significance. At last, the proposed hypothesis as well as the old literature was crosschecked with the original results to elucidate the purposeful result.

### **2.2. Sampling**

The focus of this investigation included adolescent group of people in the age group of 18 to 23 years. A stratified random sample of about 200 adolescents with equal male to female ratio participated in this study, enrolled in different colleges of Kashmir.

### **2.3. Tools**

Keeping our variables, the aims of the study, and the nature of the sample, appropriate tools were selected. In this study we selected the following tools:-

Emotional intelligence scale by Schutte –et-al (1997) this tool consist of 33 items starting from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree' on a five point scale. Nicola Schutte and colleagues' self-report measure of emotional intelligence. Based on Peter Salovey and John Mayer's model of emotional intelligence, the scale items are designed to assess:-

- The appraisal and expression of emotion in self and others.
- The regulation of emotion in self and others.

- The utilization of emotion in solving problem self-report scales might even be better viewed as personality assessments rather than as self-estimates of EI.

FRIED BEN Test Anxiety Scale (FTAS) developed by Friedman and Bendas Jacob (1997).

It is a multidimensional nature of the test anxiety construct (Friedman and Bendas-Jacob 1997), test anxiety need to be developed to help identify test-anxious students. In Friedman and Bendas-Jacob's (1997) three dimensional model of test anxiety. It is 23 items self report scale measuring test anxiety on 3 dimensions namely:

- Cognitive obstruction
- Social derogation
- Tenseness

Student academic stress scale (SASS) developed by AO Busari consists of 50 items on 4 dimensions namely.

- Affective
- Behavioral
- Cognitive
- Physiological

**2.4. Data Analysis**

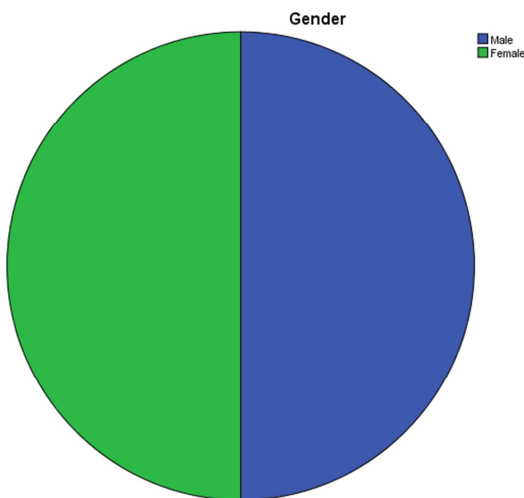
Keeping in view the variables, objectives and hypothesis and in order to signify our results a three variables we will use following techniques.

- PEARSONS PRODUCT MOMENT METHOD – Significant Correlation
- T-TEST – Significant Difference

**3. Result and Discussion**

*Table 1. Frequency distribution of Gender.*

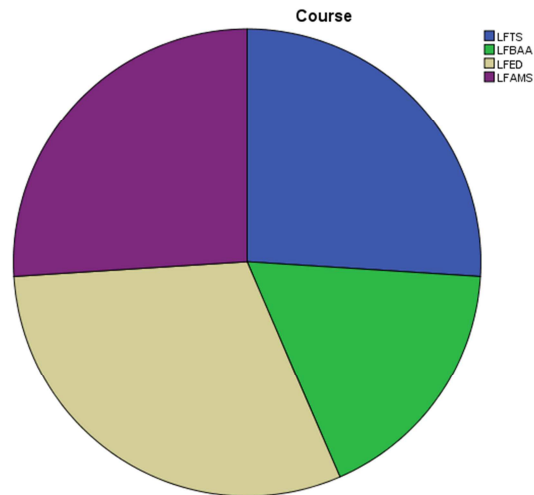
Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	100	50.0	50.0	50.0
	Female	100	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



*Figure 1. Gender.*

*Table 2. Frequency distribution of Course.*

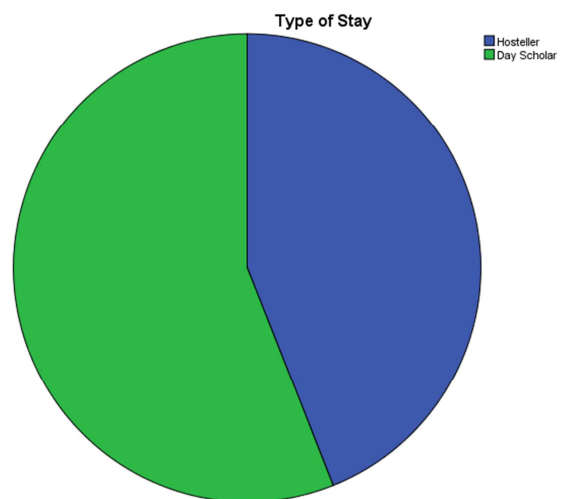
Course		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	LFTS	52	26.0	26.0	26.0
	LFBA	35	17.5	17.5	43.5
	LFED	61	30.5	30.5	74.0
	LFAMS	52	26.0	26.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



*Figure 2. Course.*

*Table 3. Frequency distribution of Type of Stay.*

Type of Stay		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hosteller	88	44.0	44.0	44.0
	Day Scholar	112	56.0	56.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	



*Figure 3. Type of stay.*

Hypothesis 1 Students differ in their emotional intelligence based on their gender

**Table 4.** Differences in emotional intelligence of students based on their gender.

Variable	Gender (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- value
Emotional Intelligence	Male (100)	110.46	19.327	4.480
	Female (100)	121.07	13.692	

It is inferred from the Table (4) that male students have a mean score of 110.46 with standard deviation of 19.327, where as female students have a mean score of 121.07 with the standard deviation of 13.692 which is higher hence calculated t-value of 4.480 clearly displaces the significant differences. Emotional intelligence is generally high in females than males. Existing literature (Ahmad et. al, 2009) reveals the same information about the emotional intelligence of females. The reason behind increasing levels of emotional intelligence of female may be due to neurological and psychological difference between male and female. Also our culture equips female children to be more involved in emotional training within the family.

Hypothesis 2 Students differ in their test anxiety based on their gender.

**Table 5.** Differences in test anxiety of students based on their gender.

Variable Test Anxiety	Gender (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- value
Social	Male (100)	25.05	8.396	0.155
Derogation	Female (100)	24.86	8.938	
Cognitive	Male (100)	23.14	7.318	1.195
Obstruction	Female (100)	21.92	7.113	
Tenseness	Male (100)	17.20	6.344	2.708
	Female (100)	19.69	6.654	
Total Test Anxiety	Male (100)	65.39	14.802	0.494
	Female (100)	66.47	16.117	

**Table 7.** Relationship among emotional intelligence, test anxiety and academic stress of students.

	Social Derogation	Cognitive Obstruction	Tenseness	Test Anxiety Total	Academic Stress
Emotional Intelligence	-.034	-.433**	-.107	-.267	-.163*
Academic Stress	.141*	.302**	.293**	.346*	

It is inferred from Table (7) that there is a significant relationship among emotional intelligence, test anxiety and academic stress of students and hence hypothesis is accepted.

Several studies showed that there is a strong positive relationship between academic stress of students and their test anxiety. Also substantial evidence is in abundance to support the inverse relationship between emotional intelligence and test anxiety. Emotional intelligence is said to be perception and regulation of personal as well as others' emotions. Test anxiety being a worrisome arousal state is the resultant of emotional intelligence and hence the reported inverse relationship is logical.

## 4. Conclusion

This study introduced Emotional Intelligence model as explanatory of the development of emotional intelligence in young adolescents to the literature. It contributed to the research evidence an insight about emotional intelligence and

It is observed from the Table (5) most of the dimensions of test anxiety among students do not significantly differ on the basis of their gender except tenseness. Female students do have more tension and physical rigidity when they face exams. Existing literature in the field to test anxiety (Lufi et. al, 2009) revealed the possibility of significant differences in the dimensions of the test anxiety based on gender. However, our study revealed the absence of significant difference in most of the dimensions may be considered as an alternative finding. Since test anxiety is dynamic in nature varying from context to context the results seem to be dependent on selection of sample.

Hypothesis 3 Students differ in their Academic stress based on their gender

**Table 6.** Differences in Academic stress of students based on their gender.

Variable	Gender (N)	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- value
Academic Stress	Male (100)	120.83	24.032	0.737
	Female (100)	118.39	22.797	

It is obvious from Table (6) that there is no significant difference in the academic stress of students based on their gender hence hypothesis (3) is rejected. Studies (Backovic. et. al, 2009) showed that female students have more academic stress than male students, however the present study revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female students on their academic stress. This result may be projecting the equal suffering of students in their academics irrespective of their gender.

Hypothesis 4 There is a significant relationship among emotional intelligence, test anxiety and academic stress.

gender differences. It demonstrated that there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence among male and female sample of young adolescents.

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