



## A study of stress, anxiety and depression in secondary school students in relation to their emotional intelligence

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### Abstract

Emotional pressure is increasing at an alarming rate leading to unrest and frustration which has a negative impact on the mental health. We human beings are constantly striving to establish a satisfactory relationship with our environment through the process of adjustment in order to live happily and function effectively. Today's school life develops anxieties, tensions, frustration and anger leading to a negative impact on the mental health of students. As a result more and more students are facing adjustment problems in every sphere of life- personal, social and emotional. The present study aimed to find out the Stress, Anxiety and Depression in adolescents and relation with Emotional Intelligence. For collection of data, Stress, Anxiety & Depression Scale (Bhatnagar, Singh, Pandey, Sandhya and Amitabh, 2011) and Emotional intelligence Scale by (Hyde, Pethe and Dhar, 2001) were used. The results of study revealed that Emotional Intelligence is negatively related stress, anxiety and Depression. Moreover significant differences were found in the stress, anxiety and depression of students scoring high and low on Emotional Intelligence. The study has implications for adolescents, parents and teachers.

**Keywords:** stress, anxiety, depression, emotional intelligence, adolescents

### Introduction

With complexities increasing in life, youth as well as children are facing psychometric problems such as anxiety, tension and emotional upsets in day to day life. Emotional pressure is increasing at an alarming rate leading to unrest and frustration which has a negative impact on the mental health. We human beings are constantly striving to establish a satisfactory relationship with our environment through the process of adjustment in order to live happily and function effectively. To say that the process of adjustment or of attaining and enjoying mental health is not easy would be an understatement. We have to face other's attitudes that are sometimes hostile like criticism, fault finding, nagging, scolding, scorn and ridicule. Developing emotional skills surely can lead to better mental health leading to effective living. People who are emotionally intelligent, who know how to manage their feelings well and who can deal effectively with others' feelings are at an advantage in every domain of life.

### Stress

Stress typically describes a negative concept that can have an impact on one's mental and physical well-being, but it is unclear what exactly defines stress and whether or not stress is a cause, an effect, or the process connecting the two. With organisms as complex as humans, stress can take on entirely concrete or abstract meanings with highly subjective qualities, satisfying definitions of both cause and effect in ways that can be both tangible and intangible.

In general, stress is related to both external and internal factors. External factors include the physical environment, including one's job, one's relationships with others, home, and

all the situations, challenges, difficulties, and expectations one is confronted with on a daily basis. Internal factors determine one's body's ability to respond to, and deal with, the external stress-inducing factors. Internal factors which influence one's ability to handle stress include nutritional status, overall health and fitness levels, emotional well-being, and the amount of sleep and rest one gets.

### Anxiety

Anxiety is an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behavior, such as pacing back and forth, somatic complaints and rumination. It is often accompanied by restlessness, fatigue, problems in concentration, and muscular tension. David Barlow defines anxiety as "a future-oriented mood state in which one is ready or prepared to attempt to cope with upcoming negative events," and that it is a distinction between future and present dangers which divides anxiety and fear.

### Depression

Depression in adolescence has become a subject of considerable research over the past few decades. The spectrum of the disease can range from simple sadness to major depressive disorder. The clinical features of adolescent depression are similar to those of adult depression. Depression literally means 'state of being sad and hopelessness' (Hornby, 2005), it is defined "as psychoneurotic disorder or psychotic disorder marked especially by sadness, inactivity, difficulty in thinking and concentration, a significance increase or decrease in appetite and time spent sleeping, feeling of dejection and hopelessness and sometimes suicidal tendencies, a lowering of vitality or functional activity."

### **Emotional Intelligence**

The extent to which an adult gives evidence of mastery over his emotions is rooted in his emotional development, emotional experiences, parental attitudes, their stimulation and their treatment from early childhood through adolescence. The background at home and emotional atmosphere are important contributory factors towards emotional maturity. According to Modern Dynamic Psychology, emotional maturity is characterized by the ability to become interested in things and persons, to appreciate things for their own sake and to give love to other persons. Thus, acquiring emotional maturity is not a simple matter which comes automatically with growing older.

Singh, (2001) defined Emotional Intelligence” as knowing what feels good, what feels bad and how to get from bad to good.”

### **Justification of the study**

Today’s school life develops anxieties, tensions, frustration and anger leading to a negative impact on the mental health of students. As a result more and more students are facing adjustment problems in every sphere of life- personal, social and emotional.

The present study aimed to find out the Stress, Anxiety and Depression in adolescents. Not much work had been done on Emotional Intelligence of school going adolescents, who are at a stage when their emotions are controlling their decision making capacity.

### **Statement of the study**

A study of stress, anxiety and depression in secondary school students in relation to their emotional intelligence

### **Operational definitions of key terms**

- **Stress:** Stress is simply a fact of nature forces from the inside or outside world affecting the individual. The individual responds to stress in ways that affect the individual as well as their environment. Because of the overabundance of stress in our modern lives, we usually think of stress as a negative experience, but from a biological point of view, stress can be a neutral, negative, or positive experience. In the present study, the investigator used scale by Pallavi Bhatnagar, Megha Singh, Manoj Pandey, Sandhya and Amitabh (2011) to measure stress in students.
- **Anxiety:** Anxiety is an unpleasant state of inner turmoil, often accompanied by nervous behavior, such as pacing back and forth, somatic complaints and rumination. It is the subjectively unpleasant feelings of dread over something unlikely to happen, such as the feeling of imminent death. Anxiety is not the same as fear, which is felt about something realistically intimidating or dangerous and is an appropriate response to a perceived threat; anxiety is a feeling of fear, worry, and uneasiness, usually generalized and unfocused as an overreaction to a situation that is only subjectively seen as menacing. It is often accompanied by restlessness, fatigue, problems in concentration, and muscular tension. In the present study, the investigator used Anxiety scale by Pallavi Bhatnagar,

Megha Singh, Manoj Pandey, Sandhya and Amitabh (2011) to measure anxiety in students.

- **Depression:** Depressive mood state is influenced by the life style and social factors. Negative mood state increases with the age. Adolescence is a period of intensive growth and development with respect to physical, cognitive, social, emotional and sexual aspects of their personality. In the present study, the investigator used Depression scale by Pallavi Bhatnagar, Megha Singh, Manoj Pandey, Sandhya and Amitabh (2011) to measure depression in students.
- **Emotional intelligence:** According to Daniel Goleman (1995) <sup>[11]</sup>: “Emotional Intelligence is the ability of realizing one’s own feelings as well as the feelings of others in order to build up self-inducement to manage personal emotions and the emotions aroused from various associations.” In the present study, Emotional intelligence Scale by Anukool Hyde (Indore), Sanjot Pethe (Ahmedabad) and Upender Dhar (Indore) (2001), was used.
- **Secondary School Students:** Secondary school level is an educational level, not beyond grade 12, at which secondary education is provided. In the present study the investigator considered students of 9th and 10th grades as secondary school students.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To study the emotional intelligence of secondary school students.
2. To study the stress, anxiety and depression in secondary school students.
3. To study the difference in the stress of students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.
4. To study the difference in the anxiety of students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.
5. To study the difference in the depression of students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.
6. To study the relationship between stress and Emotional intelligence of secondary school students.
7. To study the relationship between anxiety and Emotional intelligence of secondary school students.
8. To study the relationship between depression and Emotional intelligence of secondary school students.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

1. There exists no relationship between stress of secondary school students and their Emotional intelligence.
2. There exists no relationship between anxiety of secondary school students and their Emotional intelligence.
3. There exists no relationship between Depression of secondary school students and their Emotional intelligence.
4. There exists no significant difference in the stress of students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.
5. There exists no significant difference in the anxiety of students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.
6. There exists no significant difference in the depression of students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.

**Methodology**

The present study has been conducted by employing descriptive survey method of research.

**Population**

The present study was conducted in schools of Ambala district and all the students studying in IX and X classes in the schools of Ambala form the population of the present study.

**Sample**

In the present study, a sample of 160 students of Class IX and X was chosen randomly from three schools of Ambala viz. M.D.A.V. Public school, Ambala city, Dayanand public School, Ambala city and Ambala Public School, Ambala City.

**Tools used**

For the present study two standardized tests were used. These are –

1. Emotional Intelligence Scale by Arun Kumar Singh and Shruti Narain (2014).

2. Stress, Anxiety and Depression scale by Pallavi Bhatnagar, Megha Singh, Manoj Pandey, Sandhya and Amitabh (2011)

**Statistical techniques used**

The data based upon Emotional Intelligence, Stress, Anxiety and Depression for Class IX and X students was processed statistically for its interpretation and testing the hypotheses. Following statistical techniques were used for analysis of data–

1. Co-efficient of Correlation was calculated to see the relationship between the variables.
2. t-ratio was calculated to see the significant difference between students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.

**Testing of Hypotheses**

Hypothesis I: There exists no relationship between stress and emotional Intelligence of students.

**Table 1:** The coefficient of correlation between Stress and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	N	df	Pearson’s Coefficient of Correlation
Stress	160	318	-0.314(**)
Emotional Intelligence	160		

(\*\*)Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels.

**Discussion**

Table 1 shows that the coefficient of correlation between stress and emotional intelligence is -0.314. The calculated value of correlation is more than the table value at 0.01level of significance. Hence null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the

relationship between stress and emotional intelligence is negative and significant. This means that high emotional intelligence leads to less stress.

Hypothesis II: There exists no relationship between anxiety and emotional Intelligence of students.

**Table 2:** The coefficient of correlation between Anxiety and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	N	df	Pearson’s Coefficient of Correlation
Anxiety	160	318	-0.219(**)
Emotional Intelligence	160		

(\*\*)Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels.

**Discussion**

Table 2 shows that the coefficient of correlation between anxiety and emotional intelligence is -0.219. The calculated value of correlation is more than the table value at 0.01level of significance. Hence null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the

relationship between anxiety and emotional intelligence is negative and significant. This means that high emotional intelligence leads to less anxiety.

Hypothesis III: There exists no relationship between depression and emotional Intelligence of students.

**Table 3:** The coefficient of correlation between Depression and Emotional Intelligence

Variable	N	df	Pearson’s Coefficient of Correlation
Depression	160	318	-0.234(**)
Emotional Intelligence	160		

(\*\*)Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels.

**Discussion**

Table 3 shows that the coefficient of correlation between depression and emotional intelligence is -0.234. The calculated value of correlation is more than the table value at 0.01level of significance. Hence null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the relationship between depression and emotional

intelligence is negative and significant. This means that high emotional intelligence leads to less depression.

Hypothesis IV- There exists no significant difference in the Stress of students scoring high and low on Emotional Intelligence.

**Table 4:** Significance of difference between mean scores on stress of students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.

Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	t ratio	Level of Significance
High	48	10.6	4.2	1.38	3.19	0.01
Low	42	6.2	2.3			

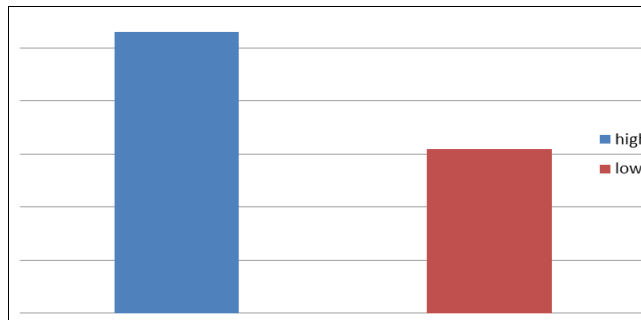
Degree of freedom value =  $48+42-2 = 88$

Tabular value of 't' = {1.96. at 0.05 level} {2.62 at 0.01 level}

**Discussion**

Table 4 shows that the t-ratio of stress of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence is 3.19 at 88 degree of freedom. This score is found to be significant at 0.05 level of

significance. Hence null hypothesis which states that there exists no significant difference between the stress of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence is rejected.



**Fig 1:** Graph showing mean scores on stress of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence

Hypothesis V- There exists no significant difference in the anxiety of students scoring high and low on Emotional Intelligence.

Tabular value of 't' = {1.96. at 0.05 level} {2.62 at 0.01 level}

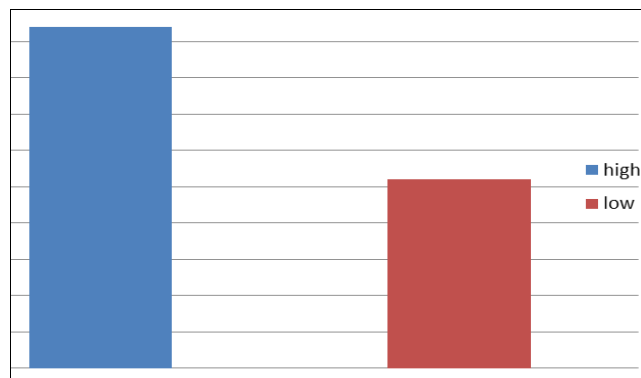
**Table 5:** Significance of difference between mean scores on anxiety of students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.

Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	t ratio	Level of Significance
High	48	9.4	3.5	1.21	3.5	0.01
Low	42	5.2	2.3			

Degree of freedom value =  $48+42-2 = 88$

**Discussion**

Table 5 shows that the t-ratio of anxiety of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence is 3.5 at 88 degree of freedom. This score is found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance. Hence null hypothesis which states that there exists no significant difference between the anxiety of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence is rejected.



**Fig 2:** Graph showing mean scores on anxiety of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence

Hypothesis VI- There exists no significant difference in the depression of students scoring high and low on Emotional

Intelligence.

**Table 6:** Significance of difference between mean scores on depression of students scoring high and low on Emotional intelligence.

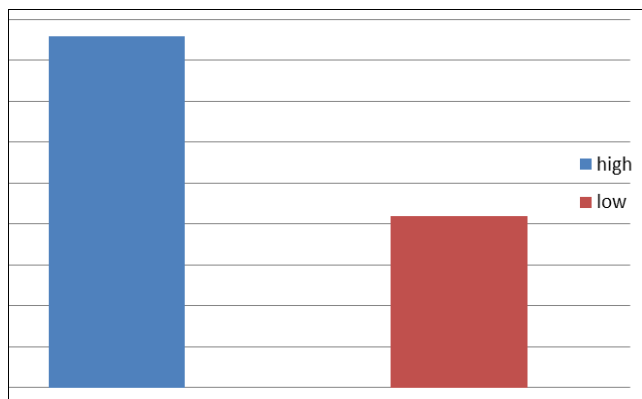
Group	N	Mean	SD	SED	t ratio	Level of Significance
High	48	8.6	3.6	1.22	3.60	0.01
Low	42	4.2	2.5			

Degree of freedom value =  $48+42-2 = 88$

Tabular value of 't' = {1.96. at 0.05 level} {2.62 at 0.01 level}

## Discussion

Table 6 shows that the t-ratio of depression of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence is 3.6 at 88 degree of freedom. This score is found to be significant at 0.01 level of significance. Hence null hypothesis which states that there exists no significant difference between the depressions of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence is rejected.



**Fig 3:** Graph showing mean scores on depression of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence

## Conclusions

### Hypothesis – I

There exists no relationship between emotional Intelligence and stress of students. From the findings, it was clear that the coefficient of correlation is significant which means that the relationship is significant and the relationship is negative which means that increase in emotional intelligence leads to decrease in stress. It concludes that the emotional intelligence helps in managing stress.

### Hypothesis – II

There exists no relationship between emotional Intelligence and anxiety of students. From the findings, it was clear that the coefficient of correlation is significant which means that the relationship is significant and the relationship is negative which means that increase in emotional intelligence leads to decrease in anxiety. It concludes that the emotional intelligence helps in managing anxiety.

### Hypothesis – III

There exists no relationship between emotional Intelligence and depression of students. From the findings, it was clear that the coefficient of correlation is significant which means that the relationship is significant and the relationship is negative which means that increase in emotional intelligence leads to decrease in depression. It concludes that the emotional intelligence helps in managing depression.

### Hypothesis–IV

There exists no significant difference in the stress of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence. The calculated value of t is greater than the table value of t which means that both the groups differ significantly on their level of stress.

### Hypothesis–V

There exists no significant difference in the anxiety of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence. The calculated value of t is greater than the table value of t which means that both the groups differ significantly on their level of anxiety.

### Hypothesis–VI

There exists no significant difference in the depression of students scoring high and low on emotional intelligence. The calculated value of t is greater than the table value of t which means that both the groups differ significantly on their level of depression.

## Implications

- Adolescent is an age where child needs more concentration and affection from the family. Therefore parents should treat children as a friend so as adolescents get an open environment to express him /her.
- School environment should be encouraging for adolescents. They should be counseled for their career ahead as teenage is a stage of choosing next upcoming career. This counseling may help a child to get serious for their future.
- Parents should allow children to go for excursion so as they may become more expressive and responsible.
- Adolescents should not be burdened for extra classes other than studies to face competition as this may make a child lag behind others.
- Parents should not compare child's performance with other as every child has an ability which can be harnessed properly if given direction.
- A teenager should be given open family environment where he can think for himself/ herself. This may help a child.

## Delimitations of the study

- The study was delimited to the schools of Ambala district only.
- Number of students were delimited to 160 (80 boys and 80 girls).
- The study was confined to students of Class IX and X only.

## Suggestions for further study

- A similar study can be done with students of higher age group.
- A study of stress, anxiety and depression in relation to school environment can be conducted.
- A study of stress, anxiety and depression in relation to social environment can be done.
- A comparative study of stress, anxiety and depression of students of arts and science can be done.

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