

A STUDY OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, ANXIETY AND GENDER AMONG CHILDREN

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The present study was to examine the emotional intelligence, state anxiety, trait anxiety and gender among children. 100 children selected for the study in which 50 boys and 50 girls. The age of the children ranging 11-12 years studying in secondary school especially, 5th and 6th grade located in Kolhapur district. Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale – 2004 (MEIS) of Shanwal was used to measure emotional intelligence. And anxiety is measured by State-Trait Anxiety inventory for Children by Speilberger. Data was analyzed by using various statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, t test and Person's product moment correlation of coefficient significance through SPSS. Results show that the boys and girl children do not differ significantly in state anxiety as well trait anxiety; they perceive equal level of state and trait anxiety. The emotional intelligence is significantly influence on state anxiety among children but such influence not found regarding with trait anxiety among children. Study also revealed that the state anxiety related with trait anxiety among children. The results found in the present study will beneficial to parent, teachers and students to accelerate the children overall performance.

In a current era children of various age group facing variety of problems such as psychological, physiological, social, emotional etc. and these problems tends to minimize their educational outputs any overall child development. So it was very crucial to help or assist them towards positive direction during his/her early stage. In this regard anxiety and emotional intelligence taken into consideration in the present study.

Anxiety

An 'anxiety' is a state of agitation or depression with feeling of distress. In everyday contexts the term anxiety is used to describe uncomfortable and unpleasant feelings

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that an individual experience when in demanding or worried situations. As an emotion it is characterized primarily by feeling of dread, worry fear and apprehension. Anxiety is experienced by every individual in his/her various life situations. In addition, anxiety may be triggered in response to specific situations, people or event, as well in anticipation of an event.

There are various descriptions given by experts with respect to process of anxiety. According to May (1950) anxiety as “the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value which the individual holds essential to his existence as personality”. Horney reported it as “the dynamics center of neurosis”. Manddler and Sarason (1966) have proposed that anxiety occurs when an individual is interrupted in the course of executing desired behaviour sequence and has no alternative course of action available. Spielberger (1972) stated that anxiety is an emotional process which has four components viz. phenomenological, physiological, task performance, and the conditions under which anxiety is increased or decreased. According to Nijhawan (1972) anxiety is “one of the most pervasive psychological phenomenon of the modern era refers to a “persistent distressing psychological state arising from an inner conflicts”.

Drever (1958) stated that “it is a chronic complex emotional state with apprehension or dread as its most prominent component, characteristic of various nervous mental disorders”. Neumann (1859), in his influential textbook of psychiatry, developed on interpretation of anxiety as a danger signal. Anxiety, according to Neumann, arises when a person becomes aware of threats of vital concern. In view of Freud (1924), anxiety was “something felt” a fundamental, unpleasant affective (emotional) state or condition. Freud observed it in his patients of anxiety neuroses and found that it was characterized by apprehension or anxious expectations, “all that is covered by the word nervousness”, and efferent discharge phenomena. In his early theoretical formulation believed that anxiety resulted from the discharge of repressed, somatic sexual tensions, which he called libido. When libidinal energy was blocked from normal expression, it accumulated and was automatically transformed into anxiety, or into symptoms that were anxiety equivalents. Freud subsequently modified that view in favour of a conception of anxiety which emphasized that anxiety was an internal reaction or response that served as a signal to indicate the presence of a danger situation. Matsumoto, D (2009) stated four various explanations with respect to anxiety in the Cambridge Dictionary of Psychology. First is that the anxiety is a fearful mood that has a vague or no specific focus and is accompanied by bodily arousal. Second in learning theory anxiety is a secondary or conditioned drive which leads to an avoidance

response. Third, in Freudian theory it can be realistic fear of possible events, a conscious expression of unexpressed and usually conflicted energy, or moral qualms. And finally in existential theory, anxiety is the emotional aspect of the constant state of uncertainty of human beings who have to choose courses of action in a world in which there are no inherent guidelines.

Gender Differences in Anxiety

Generally, it is believed that females have a greater likelihood of experiencing anxiety. Some theorize that this is because society has different expectations for the genders. Many children are reared according to societal norms and mores that determine which roles are appropriate for which gender (Silvestri, 1986). Due to this biased upbringing, children perceive activities to be either masculine or feminine in nature. This early conditioning encodes certain gender-specific behavior and activities, as well as gender-specific expectations. Generally, males are expected to achieve in math, science, and technology, whereas females are reared to be interested in the Arts and humanities (Silvestri, 1986). The expected success of females in a given scientific task is generally lower than that of competent. This societal belief has led to the theory that females are more highly Test Anxious than males. There has been some research to support the assertion that females are more Test Anxious. With regard to math studies and have lower level of Test Anxiety with regard to verbal exams than their male counterparts (Benson & Bandalos, 1989) however, in other research, these differences have been no significant and slight (Graham, 1999). It can be comfortably asserted that more research must be conducted to determine whether this is a result of gender-based differences in Test Anxiety or if the etiology is rooted in the different type of academic disciplines (Furst, Gershon, & Weingarten, 1985).

The Concept of EI

Emotion is an affective process which is the great important in human life. Emotions are ultimately associated with feelings. If we suppress our feelings, it leads to abnormal behavior in the life (Plutchik, 2000). So it is very necessary to express the feelings for our well being. But it is very important and difficult to express the emotions at the right time, at the right place, to the right person and up to proper degree. It is the ability or skill to understand one's own emotions and that of others, to deal effectively with them; more specifically it is called as 'emotional intelligence'. The merging of EI is the cognitive ability which is known as 'emotional intelligence'. It was formerly proposed by Yale psychologist Peter Salovey and Jon Mayer in 1990 in the journal 'Imagination and

Personality'. The concept was popularized by Goleman's (1995) bestselling book 'Emotional Intelligence' and thereafter by other popular books. At the most general level, EI refers to the ability to recognize and regulate emotions in ourselves and others (Goleman, 1997). He again defined EI as the ability to know, manage one's own emotions, and recognize them in others and to handle relationships. His framework includes 25 emotional competencies which can be grouped into five clusters: (a) Self-awareness; (b) self regulation; (c) self motivation; (d) empathy; and (e) social skills. Goleman (1995) reported that "worldwide trend for the present generation of children to be more troubled emotionally than the previous generation, more lonely and depressed, more angry and unruly, more nervous and prone to worry, more impulsive and aggressive". These results indicate that there is an increasing need to address the emotional health of children and adolescents. A lot of researches over two decades intended to find out the role of EI in various life dimensions. It is found that EI influence behavior in a wide range of human life domains.

Objectives

1. To study the gender difference in state anxiety among the children.
2. To examine the effect of children emotional intelligence on state anxiety among them.
3. To study the gender difference in trait anxiety among the children.
4. To examine the effect of children emotional intelligence on trait anxiety among them.
5. To study the relationship between state and trait anxiety among children

Hypotheses

1. There would be significant difference in boys and girls with respect to state anxiety among them.
2. Emotional intelligence would be significantly influence on state anxiety among children.
3. There would be significant difference in boys and girls with respect to trait anxiety among them.
4. Emotional intelligence would be significantly influence on trait anxiety among children.

5. There would be significant relationship between state and trait anxiety among children.

METHOD

Sample

Taken into consideration major objectives of the study a sample of 100 children studying in 5th and 6th grade in different English medium school from Kolhapur district were incorporated in the study. Male and female ratio is kept constant; it means it is exactly 1 : 1. It means 50 boys and 50 girls incorporated in the study. A technique of simple random sampling method was employed to collect the data. Selected sample were more or less similar with respect to socioeconomic status and cultural background. Data was analyzed by using various statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation and t test of significance, correlation through SPSS.

Tool used in the study

1. Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS - 2004)

MEIS is developed by Shanuwal (2004) to measure the emotional intelligence of children having age range of 8 to 12 years. This scale consists of 141 items and four dimensions of emotional intelligence, with different number of items namely, (1) Identification of emotion (50 Items), (2) Assimilation of emotion (57 Items), (3) Understanding of emotion (25 Items) and (4) Regulation of emotion (9 Items). High score is the indication of high emotional ability and vice-versa. The scales provide sound psychometric properties.

The scorer reliability is calculated by the author and it is mentioned in the technical manual of the test. The norms of the test are developed by randomly adopting test on 400 boys and girls from different schools age 9 to 12. The psychometric properties are mentioned in the test manual and which are found to be satisfactory. Especially, the reliability coefficient of the test is 0.70 by using second level inter-rater reliability. Time limit of the test is approximately 30 to 40 minutes.

2. State-Trait Anxiety inventory for Children (STA)

State and Trait Anxiety inventory is developed by Spielberger to measure the level of anxiety among children. This inventory measures two types of anxiety namely, State Anxiety and Trait Anxiety. Both type of anxiety taken into consideration in the present

study. This inventory consists 20 items in both type of inventory. It takes approximately 20 minutes. The reliability of the test is determined by different methods and all values are ranging from 0.65 to 0.87. Inventory is validated by using external criteria. Hence the inventory proves sound psychometric properties.

Statistical tools :

Mean, standard deviation, *t* test and Pearson's product moment correlation were used to interpret the collected data of the study.

Statistical Interpretation of Results and Discussion

Table 1 : Shows the comparison of scores of state anxiety among children across the gender.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	Sign
State Anxiety	Boys	50	33.28	5.69	98	0.61	NS
	Girls	50	34.00	6.12			

Table-1 shows the gender differences in terms of mean scores of state anxiety among children. Mean score of state anxiety for male children is 33.28 (SD = 5.69) and for female children is 34.00 (SD = 6.12). Female children achieve slightly higher mean score but it is not statistically significant because *t* value is 0.67 when *df* are 98. So it can be inferred that, the male and female children do not differ in state anxiety, they perceive equal level of state anxiety. Hence the first alternative hypothesis 'there would be significant difference in boys and girls with respect to state anxiety among them' is rejected.

Table-2 : Shows the comparison of scores of state anxiety among children across the two levels of emotional intelligence.

Variable	EI	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	Sign
State Anxiety	High EI	50	32.24	5.08	98	2.44*	0.05
	Low EI	50	35.04	6.35			

Table-2 show the mean and standard deviation of state anxiety against two levels of emotional intelligence. The mean score of state anxiety for children having high emotional intelligence is observed 32.24 with 5.08 standard deviation and for children

having low emotional intelligence is 35.04 with 6.35 standard deviation. Hence it is found that the mean score for children having low emotional intelligence is significantly high than for children having high emotional intelligence ($df = 98$, $t = 2.44$ – significant at 0.05 level). Taken into account observed statistical value we can conclude that the emotional intelligence is significantly influence on state anxiety among children. Hence we can retained the second alternative hypothesis ‘emotional intelligence would be significantly influence on state anxiety among children’.

Table-3 : Shows the comparison of scores of trait anxiety among children across the gender.

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	Sign
Trait Anxiety	Boys	50	37.96	5.05	98	0.64	NS
	Girls	50	37.26	5.81			

Table-3 shows the gender differences in terms of mean scores of trait anxiety among children. Mean score of trait anxiety for male children is 37.96 (SD = 5.05) and for female children is 37.26 (SD = 5.81). Male children achieve slightly higher mean score but it is not statistically significant because t value is 0.64 when df are 98. So it can be inferred that, the male and female children do not differ in trait anxiety, they perceive equal level of trait anxiety. Hence the third alternative hypothesis ‘there would be significant difference in boys and girls with respect to trait anxiety among them’ is rejected.

Table-4 : Shows the comparison of scores of trait anxiety among children across the two levels of emotional intelligence.

Variable	EI	N	Mean	SD	df	t value	Sign
Trait Anxiety	High EI	50	37.38	5.70	98	0.42	NS
	Low EI	50	37.84	5.19			

Table-4 show the mean and standard deviation of trait anxiety against two levels of emotional intelligence. The mean score of trait anxiety for children having high emotional intelligence is observed 37.38 with 5.70 standard deviation and for children having low emotional intelligence is 37.84 with 5.19 standard deviation. Hence it is found that the mean score for children having high emotional intelligence and low emotional intelligence is do not differ significantly ($df = 98$, $t = 0.42$). Taken into account

observed statistical value we can conclude that the emotional intelligence is not significantly influence on trait anxiety among children. Hence we can reject the fourth alternative hypothesis 'emotional intelligence would be significantly influence on trait anxiety among children'.

Table-5 : Shows correlation between state anxiety and trait anxiety among children.

Variable	Mean	SD	N	df	Correlation	Sign
State Anxiety	33.64	5.889	100	98	0.36*	0.05
Trait Anxiety	37.61	5.427				

Table-5 shows the score of mean and standard deviation of state and trait anxiety. Table also shows the correlation between state anxiety and trait anxiety among the children. Correlation coefficient is 0.36. When df are 98 it is significant at 0.05 level. It is observed that the state anxiety related with trait anxiety among children. Hence we can retain the fifth hypothesis 'there would be significant relationship between state and trait anxiety among children'.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The boys and girl children do not differ significantly in state anxiety; they perceive equal level of state anxiety.
2. The emotional intelligence is significantly influence on state anxiety among children.
3. The male and female children do not differ significantly in trait anxiety; they perceive equal level of trait anxiety.
4. The emotional intelligence is not significantly influence on trait anxiety among children.
5. The state anxiety related with trait anxiety among children.

Implication

The results found in the present study will beneficial to parent, teachers and students to accelerate the children overall performance.

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