

## EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE OF HIGHER SECONDARY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER AND TYPE OF STREAM

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. V. K. Aruna, <sup>2</sup>Dr. M. Govindan

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar (P.T), Department of Educational Psychology, Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

<sup>2</sup>Former Professor & Head, Department of Educational Psychology, Tamil Nadu Teachers Education University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

### Abstract

This study aims to assess the level of emotional competence of higher secondary students, taking into account of differences in gender and type of stream. Participants in this study were 854 higher secondary students (46.83% of boys and 53.17% of girls) studying in different schools located at Chennai and Thiruvallur districts of Tamil Nadu. This study is non experimental descriptive study. The Emotional Competence Scale was used to collect the required data. The findings of the study revealed that the higher secondary students' level of emotional competence is moderate. The findings also revealed that the higher secondary boys and girls, and studying in Arts, Science and Vocational streams differ significantly in their level of emotional competence.

**Key Terms:** Emotional competence, Higher Secondary Students

### 1.Introduction

Adolescence is a critical period of development that is characterized by storm and stress, and susceptible to mental problems that could seriously affect the adjustment and performance of a student in and out of the school environment. In the everchanging world, the educational institutions are now more concern about the psychological wellbeing by managing the affective states of affairs of both teachers and students that can directly and indirectly enhance the teaching learning performance of the teachers and overall development of the students. One of the main educational purpose of schools is to guarantee the overall development of individuals, preparing them to be able to cope with social demands.

### 2.Emotional Competence -Concept

Educators, parents, and students would not deny the importance of the fundamentals of reading and math, but learning key social and emotional skills within the educational environment is critical given the social challenges that students and teachers face within the real world. Emotions and emotional competencies are critical to positive social and academic outcomes; students need to recognize, differentiate, and adaptively regulate their emotions to ensure the best opportunity for learning (Dell Angela et al., 2020). The term emotional competence is made-up of two words, i.e., 'emotion' and 'competence'. The word 'emotion' refers to the forces that direct human behaviour and govern an individual's personality. 'Competence' is the ability to do any task successfully or efficiently where one can produce the type of effect or one desires. Thus, it shall be deemed that the emotional competence happen to be the efficiently that an individual acquires in order to deal with emotional situations, affectively. Emotional competence is regarded as an

affect - related skill, which refers to the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of life in ways that enable one to cope with stressful and emotionally laden situations (Kotsou et al., 2011). Emotional competence refers to the capacities, skills and attitudes needed to be able to understand, express and regulate emotional phenomena in an appropriate way (Bisquerra and Prez- Escida, 2007). It also describes how people manage their intrapersonal and interpersonal emotions (Petrides and Furnham, 2003).

### 3.Review of Related Literature

**Bagyalakshmi and Catherine (2021)** determined the emotional competence of 1176 B.Edteacher trainees from various colleges of Teacher Education in Chennai district. The results of the study revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female teacher trainees' emotional competence. The study also found that the male and female teacher trainees were similar in balancing their emotions despite of the environmental conditions. Furthermore, in self-awareness, male was found to be better than female B.Ed teacher trainees but in empathy the female B.Ed teacher trainees were better than their male counterparts.

**Lopez Cassa et al., (2021)** studied the development of emotional competencies at school to improve students' school learning and wellbeing. The study was conducted among 2389 primary school students in the age group of 6 to 12 years from 21 public and semi-private schools in Spain. The findings of the study indicate that significant differences in favour of girls, in the development of most emotional competencies in all three educational cycles. Differences were also observed in academic performance by gender in the primary cycle, with girls achieving higher grades. Further, positive correlations were found between academic performance and emotional competencies among the students.

**Alagesan and Kasirajan (2017)** conducted a study on influence of type of schools on emotional competence of 300 high secondary students from 10 schools in Sivagiri Taluk, Tamil Nadu. The findings of the study showed that 7% of the students have low, 77% of them have moderate and 16% of them have high level of emotional competency. The study also shows that 18.3% of government school students have low, 71% of them have moderate, and 10.2% of them have high level of emotional competence. 10.7% of government aided school students have low, 81.4% of them have average, and 7.9% of them have high level of emotional competence. Further, 96.7% of private school students have moderate, and 3.3 % of them have high level of emotional competence. Finally, the government, government-aided and private school students differ significantly in their level of emotional competence.

**Luis Lopez and Xavier (2016)** studied the emotional competence, classroom climate and school achievement among 420 students in the Province of Barcelona and University of Barcelona. The results showed that there is a difference in emotional competence according to gender and educational level. The study also revealed that classroom climate is an influential variable in the

predictive value of emotional competence in relation to school achievement. Furthermore, emotional competence acts as a mediating influence on classroom climate and school achievement.

**Mehrotra and Dua (2014)** assessed the emotional competence of 600 adolescents. The findings of the study revealed that the students have average level of emotional competence on various dimensions of the emotional competence scale and girls showed more enhancements of positive emotions than the boys. The study also showed that the urban students showed more enhancements in positive emotions than the rural students. Furthermore, the overall emotional competence and its all dimensions, rural and urban students were found to be similar level of emotional competence.

#### **4. Objectives of the study**

1. To assess the level of emotional competence of higher secondary students with respect to gender and type of stream
2. To find if any significant difference in emotional competence of higher secondary boys and girls
3. To find if any significant difference in emotional competence of Arts, Science and Vocational stream higher secondary students
4. To find the relationship between higher secondary students' emotional competence and their gender and type of stream.

#### **5. Hypotheses of the study**

1. The level of emotional competence of higher secondary boys and girls, and Arts, Science and Vocational stream students is moderate.
2. There will be no significant difference on the level of emotional competence between higher secondary boys and the girls.
3. There will be no significant difference on the level of emotional competence among the Arts, Science, and Vocational stream higher secondary students.
4. There will be no significant relationship among the higher secondary student's emotional competence and their gender and type of stream.

#### **6. Operational definitions of the key terms**

##### **Emotional competence**

Goleman (1998) defined emotional competence as "a learned capability based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work".

In the present study emotional competence refers to "the scores obtained by the higher secondary students in the Emotional Competence Scale.

## 7. Method and Materials.

### 7.1 Method

The research method used for this study is descriptive survey.

### 7.2 Population and sample

The population of this study include all the higher secondary students studying in higher secondary schools located in Chennai and Tiruvallur districts of Tamil Nadu. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 854 students as sample.

### 7.3 Instrumentation

The research instrument used for this study has Likert scale which is an interval scale ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree, with quantitative values ranging from 4 to 1. The instrument used to collect data is entitled “Emotional Competence Scale”. There are 35 items in this scale.

### 7.4 Statistical Techniques Employed

The collected data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Percentage, Mean, Standard Deviation, ‘t’ test, ‘F’ test and Pearson product moment correlation were used.

## 8. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

**Table 1**  
**Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Emotional Competence of Higher Secondary Students based on their Gender and Type of Stream**

Variable	Demographic Variable	Sub-Sample	N	Mean	S.D
Emotional Competence	Gender	Boys	400	101.97	26.72
		Girls	454	114.47	18.42
	Type of stream	Arts	326	106.40	26.14
		Science	368	110.80	20.47
		Vocational	160	108.08	24.13

It could be observed from table 1, the Mean and SD scores of emotional competence of higher secondary boys and girls is found to 101.97 and 26.72, 114.47 and 18.42. Further, it is also observed from the table, the mean and the standard deviation scores of the higher secondary

students studying in Arts, Science and Vocational Stream is found to be 106.40 and 26.14, 110.80 and 20.47, and 108.08 and 24.13. It suggests that irrespective of gender and type of stream, the higher secondary students' level of emotional competence is moderate. Regarding to gender, the level of emotional competence of the girls is significantly higher than the boys and regarding to type of stream, the level of emotional competence of science stream students is slightly higher than the Vocational and Arts stream students.

**Table 2**  
**Mean difference between Emotional Competence among Higher Secondary Boys and Girls**

Variable	Sub-Sample	N	Mean	S.D	't' value	Level of significance
Emotional competence	Boys	400	101.97	26.72	8.03	0.01
	Girls	454	114.47	18.42		

Table 2 shows that the Mean and SD of emotional competence of boys and girls are 101.97, 26.72 and 114.47, 18.42 respectively. The computed 't' value 8.03 is greater than the table value at 0.01 level. It reveals that there exists a significant difference in the emotional competence of higher secondary boys and girls as the girls have higher level of emotional competence than the boys. Hence, the null hypothesis stated that there is no significant difference in emotional competence among boys and girls is rejected.

**Table 3**  
**Difference in Emotional Competence with respect to Type of Stream**

Variables	N	M	SD	Df	Table value	'F' Value	Level of Significance
Arts	326	106.40	26.14	2	3.00 (0.05 level)	3.08	0.05
Science	368	110.80	20.47	851	4.63		
Vocational	160	108.08	24.13		(0.01 level)		

Table 3 shows that the Mean, SD, and 'F' value of emotional competence of higher secondary students with respect to type of streams (Arts, Science and Vocational). The mean value of science (110.80) with SD (20.47) is higher than the mean value of vocational (108.08) with SD (24.13) and Arts (106.40) with SD (26.14) streams. The computed 'F' value (3.08) with  $df = 2$  (Between groups) and 851 (within groups) also states that it is higher than the table value and significant at 0.05 level.

Hence, the null hypothesis i.e., there is no significant difference in emotional competency of higher secondary students with respect to type of stream (Arts, Science and Vocational) is rejected. Thus, a significant difference exists between the group means.

As 'F' value is significant, 't' test has been applied to find the significant differences between the type of stream and emotional competency.

**Table 4**  
**Difference in Emotional Competence with respect to Type of Stream**

Demographic Variable	Groups	N	M	SD	't' Value	Level of Significance
Type of Stream	Arts	326	106.40	26.14	2.48	0.05
	Science	368	110.80	20.47		
	Arts	326	106.40	26.14	0.67	NS
	Vocational	160	108.08	24.13		
	Science	368	110.80	20.47	1.33	NS
	Vocational	160	108.08	24.13		

The calculated 't' value 2.48 is higher than the table value 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, it is significant. Thus, it can be said that the difference in emotional competence with respect to type of stream (Arts and Science) is significant. Further the calculated 't' values 0.67 and 1.33 are lesser than the table value 1.96 and 2.58 at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. Hence, it is not significant. Thus, it can be said that the difference in emotional competence with respect to type of stream (Arts and Vocational, Science and Vocational) is not significant.

**Table 5**  
**Relationship between Gender, Type of Stream and Emotional Competence**

Demographic Variables	Research Variable	'r' value	Level of Significance
Gender	Emotional competence	0.265	<b>0.01</b>
Type of stream	Emotional competence	0.043	<b>NS</b>

It could be observed from Table 5, there is statistically significant relationship exists between gender and emotional competence of the higher secondary students. But, there is no statistically significant relationship between type of stream and emotional competence of the higher secondary students. Hence, the null hypothesis 4 is rejected for gender and accepted for type of stream.

## 9. Findings of the Study

- ❖ Irrespective of gender and type of stream the higher secondary students' level of emotional competence is moderate. This finding is supported by the findings of Mehrotra and Sai (2014) who found that the student's level of emotional competence is average.
- ❖ The level of emotional competence of girls is significantly higher than the boys.
- ❖ The level of emotional competence of Science Stream students is slightly higher than the Vocational and Arts Stream students.
- ❖ There is a significant difference between the higher secondary boys and girls level of emotional competence. This result is corroborated with the findings of the studies done by Lopez Cassa et al., (2021), and Luis Lopez and Xavier (2016) who found that there is a difference in emotional competence according to gender.
- ❖ The higher secondary Arts, Science and Vocational stream students differ significantly in their level of emotional competence. Further, there is a significant difference between the Arts and Science stream students' level of emotional competence, whereas the Arts and Vocational, and Science and Vocational students do not differ significantly in their level of emotional competence.
- ❖ There is statistically significant relationship exists between higher secondary students, gender and emotional competence; whereas statistically no significant relationship between type of stream and emotional competence of the higher secondary students.

## 10. Conclusion

Children and youth in our society today are faced with considerable challenges that can jeopardise their chances for success and positive development in their future endeavours. Emotional competence enable the individual to cope with stressful life circumstances and find positive meaning in life. An emotionally competent person can learn and apply skills to manage

stress, improve self-esteem, fruitful decision-making, comfort and commitment with life along with healthy and wealthy. The findings of the present study shows that the higher secondary students' level of emotional competence is moderate. Hence, the government teachers, and parents take appropriate strategy to increase the level of emotional competence of the students, particularly the higher secondary students.

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