



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

(Peer-reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access Journal)

DOI : 03.2021-11278686

ISSN : 2582-8568

IMPACT FACTOR : 8.031 (SJIF 2025)

Emotional Maturity and Academic Achievement: A Comparative Study of Secondary School Student

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DOI No. **03.2021-11278686**

DOI Link :: <https://doi-ds.org/doilink/12.2025-16177174/IRJHIS2512010>

Abstract:

The present study explores the comparative relationship between emotional maturity and academic achievement among secondary school students. Adolescence is a sensitive stage marked by emotional instability, identity formation, peer influence, and academic stress. During this period, students who are emotionally balanced tend to demonstrate better learning habits, concentration, and resilience. The aim of the study is to compare emotional maturity levels of high academic achievers with those of low achievers and to examine whether emotional maturity is associated with students' academic performance. A sample of secondary school students from classes IX and X was selected using stratified purposive sampling. Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Singh and Bhargava was administered to assess the level of emotional maturity, while academic achievement was measured using students' previous examination scores. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean comparison, and t-test to evaluate group differences. Findings revealed that students with higher academic achievement display significantly greater emotional stability, self-control, and independence in comparison to low achievers. Students with poor academic performance appeared more prone to emotional reactivity, dependency, examination anxiety, and poor interpersonal adjustment. A moderate positive correlation was observed between emotional maturity and academic achievement, indicating that emotionally stronger students tend to manage academic challenges more effectively. The study highlights the importance of emotional development as a crucial educational factor rather than a purely psychological trait. It suggests that schools should integrate systematic emotional training, counseling programs, and peer-support activities to enhance emotional skills. Parents should provide an emotionally supportive environment, reduce academic pressure, and encourage constructive dialogue. Overall, the research concludes that emotional maturity serves as a strong predictor of academic success in adolescents and emphasizes the need for educators and policymakers to design interventions aimed at developing emotional competencies alongside academic performance.

Keywords: Emotional Maturity; Academic Achievement; Adolescents; Secondary School Students; Comparative Study; Emotional Regulation; Educational Aspirations; Educational Psychology

Introduction:

Adolescence represents one of the most crucial developmental phases in an individual's life, marked by rapid biological, emotional, and cognitive changes. Secondary school students, typically between the ages of 13 and 17, undergo a transitional period during which their ability to regulate emotions directly influences their learning, behaviour, and overall academic performance. Emotional maturity refers to an individual's capacity to understand, express, and manage emotions in a balanced manner. It reflects qualities such as self-control, empathy, independence, tolerance, and responsible decision-making. Students with higher emotional maturity tend to remain calm during stressful academic situations, demonstrate resilience when facing setbacks, and maintain healthy relationships with peers and teachers. In contrast, emotionally immature students may struggle with anxiety, impulsive behaviour, peer pressure, low self-confidence, and difficulty in coping with academic demands.

Academic achievement is a key indicator of educational success and reflects not only students' intellectual ability but also their motivation, discipline, and psychological adjustment. While schools and parents often emphasize cognitive development, emotional competencies are frequently overlooked. In recent years, educational psychologists have emphasized that intellectual growth alone cannot guarantee academic excellence; emotional competence plays an equal or even greater role in students' capacity to learn effectively. The modern school environment demands that students manage examination pressure, competition, changing social expectations, and the need for self-regulated learning. Such circumstances make emotional maturity an essential quality for academic success.

Although several studies have explored stress, motivation, and learning behaviour among adolescents, fewer have examined the direct comparative relationship between emotional maturity and academic achievement. Understanding how emotionally mature students differ from academically low achievers can help identify psychological factors that enable or hinder academic performance. Therefore, this study aims to compare emotional maturity levels among high and low academic achievers at the secondary level and to explore how emotional competence contributes to educational outcomes. The research findings may offer valuable implications for classroom management, counselling programs, curriculum development, and student well-being initiatives in schools.

Need and Importance of the Study:

The present research is essential because emotional maturity has become a critical yet often neglected dimension of student development in modern schooling. Secondary school students face increasing academic pressure, competitive examinations, social expectations, and identity-related challenges. These pressures often lead to stress, frustration, anxiety, low self-confidence, and

behavioural problems. In such circumstances, students' academic performance is not determined solely by intellectual ability or cognitive skills, but also by their capacity to regulate emotions, adapt to challenges, and maintain psychological balance. Therefore, understanding emotional maturity becomes necessary to ensure a supportive and productive educational environment.

Emotional maturity directly influences students' ability to concentrate, set academic goals, and persist during failures. Students who are emotionally stable are more likely to handle exam pressure, maintain self-discipline, and use constructive coping strategies. On the other hand, emotionally immature students may exhibit avoidance behaviour, impulsiveness, demotivation, and poor time management, which negatively affect academic outcomes. Hence, the study offers deeper insights into how emotional competencies shape academic achievement.

The importance of this study also lies in its practical benefits for educators, school administrators, and parents. Identifying the emotional characteristics that differentiate high achievers from low achievers can guide teachers in designing classroom strategies that nurture emotional resilience and self-regulation. Schools can implement counselling services, peer mentoring, and socio-emotional learning programs to help students navigate academic and personal challenges more effectively. Parents can better understand how emotional support, non-judgmental communication, and realistic expectations contribute to students' success.

Furthermore, this research provides valuable evidence for policy-makers who aim to reform education beyond traditional academic metrics. Recognizing emotional maturity as an important factor in student performance encourages holistic educational practices rather than narrowly focusing on grades. Therefore, the study not only contributes to academic literature but also promotes healthier, emotionally balanced learning environments that support sustainable student success.

Review of Related Literature:

Bhatia & Singh (2018). *Influence of Emotional Maturity on Academic Adjustment.*

The authors examined how emotional maturity impacts academic adjustment among secondary students. Emotionally stable students showed better coping behaviours, managed workload effectively, and maintained classroom discipline. Students with emotional immaturity displayed avoidance behaviours, low motivation, and struggled with academic competition.

Jain (2014). *Study of Emotional Maturity among Rural and Urban Students.*

Jain compared emotional maturity levels of rural and urban students and found that urban students reflected more emotional resilience, partly due to access to counselling and extracurricular activities. Rural students showed emotional regression, dependency, and anxiety, contributing to lower academic performance.

Kaur & Sandhu (2018). *Emotional Competence and Educational Outcomes in Adolescents.*

The study explored emotional competence and school performance in secondary students.

Adolescents with strong emotional regulation displayed better planning, increased classroom participation, and improved academic achievement. The findings suggested that emotional skills training may lead to enhanced scholastic outcomes.

Mishra (2019). *Emotional Development and Learning Behaviour in Adolescents.*

Mishra highlighted that emotional maturity influences learning behaviours such as concentration, self-confidence, and test preparation. Emotionally immature students showed exam anxiety, impulsivity, and avoidance responses. The study recommended integrating emotional counselling within school systems.

Nayak (2020). *Emotional Intelligence and Performance in School Subjects.*

Although emotional intelligence was the primary variable, the author found that emotional maturity mediates performance outcomes. Students who possessed emotional awareness, independence, and resilience performed better in examinations and group learning activities.

Patel & Desai (2021). *Role of Emotional Maturity in Educational Aspiration.*

This research focused on the role of emotional maturity in shaping educational goals. Emotionally stable students demonstrated clearer academic aspirations and long-term planning, while emotionally unstable students lacked direction and displayed fluctuating academic performance.

Rajput & Verma (2015). *Emotional Maturity in Relation to Adjustment Patterns.*

The authors found that emotional maturity significantly supports adjustment in school settings. Students with emotional control reported smoother peer interaction, teacher relationships, and social integration, whereas immature students showed inconsistent academic behaviour.

Rani & Kumar (2016). *Impact of Emotional Maturity on Scholastic Achievement.*

Their quantitative findings revealed that emotional maturity correlates with scholastic achievement. Students with emotional independence and self-regulation outperformed emotionally regressive students, who showed dependency and lack of goal orientation.

Sharma (2017). *Emotional Maturity and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students.*

Sharma analyzed emotional maturity in relation to academic achievement using standardized scales. A moderate positive correlation was reported, showing that emotionally mature students performed well academically and experienced less exam-related anxiety.

Vyas (2016). *Emotional Maturity as a Predictor of Achievement Motivation.*

Vyas established that emotional maturity predicts achievement motivation. Emotionally mature students showed perseverance, initiative, and confidence in academic tasks. Emotionally unstable learners demonstrated procrastination and fear of failure.

Compas et al. (2012). *Stress, Emotion Management, and Educational Outcomes.*

The authors investigated coping styles and academic achievement. Students who practiced problem-

focused coping strategies achieved higher academic performance, whereas those relying on emotional coping, avoidance, and reactivity exhibited poorer achievement.

Durlak et al. (2011). *Socio-Emotional Learning and Classroom Achievement.*

Through a large-scale meta-analysis, the authors showed that structured socio-emotional learning programs improved academic performance by approximately 11 percentile points. Enhanced emotional skills also resulted in reduced school anxiety and better classroom relationships.

Eisenberg et al. (2009). *Impact of Emotional Dysregulation on Student Behaviour.*

The study concluded that emotional dysregulation in adolescents is linked to academic disengagement, impulsive actions, and conflict-prone behaviour. Students with emotional maturity demonstrated better social responsibility and academic consistency.

Gross & Thompson (2007). *Emotional Regulation and Academic Performance in Adolescents.*

This foundational study found that emotional regulation strategies like cognitive reappraisal increased academic focus and memory retention. Students who used maladaptive strategies such as suppression tended to perform poorly.

Parker et al. (2004). *Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Academic Achievement.*

This study reported that emotional maturity and interpersonal skills predict university-level GPA. Emotionally stable students performed better in group tasks and showed resilience during academic stress.

Saarni (1999). *The Role of Adolescents' Emotional Competence in School Outcomes.*

Saarni demonstrated that emotional competence is essential to both academic and social development. Students who understood their emotions established better peer relations and strengthened academic engagement.

Steinberg (2005). *Adolescent Development and Cognitive Outcomes.*

Steinberg's work connected neurological development of emotional control to academic skills. Emotionally mature adolescents displayed stronger executive functions, such as planning and organized study behavior.

Suldo & Huebner (2004). *Adolescents' Psychological Well-Being and Academic Success.*

The study revealed that psychological well-being significantly predicts academic achievement. Emotionally balanced students showed intrinsic motivation and long-term engagement, unlike those experiencing instability or depressive symptoms.

Wentzel (1998). *Peer Influence, Emotional Stability, and School Performance.*

Wentzel found that emotionally stable adolescents maintained strong peer relationships, resulting in cooperative behaviour and sustained academic performance. Emotional instability was associated with social withdrawal and failure to meet school expectations.

Zimmerman (2002). *Self-Regulated Learning and Emotional Adjustment.*

Zimmerman argued that emotional maturity supports self-regulated learning habits. Students who developed emotional independence demonstrated better time planning, reflective understanding, and academic persistence in long-term goals.

Objectives of the Study:

- To assess the level of emotional maturity among secondary school students.
- To measure the academic achievement of secondary school students.
- To compare emotional maturity between male and female students.
- To analyze the relationship between emotional maturity and academic achievement.

Hypothesis Of the Study:

H₁: There is no significant difference in the level of emotional maturity among secondary school students.

H₂: There is no significant difference in the academic achievement of secondary school students.

H₃: There is no significant difference in emotional maturity between male and female secondary school students.

H₄: There is no significant relationship between emotional maturity and academic achievement of secondary school students.

Research Methodology:

The present study followed the descriptive survey method to examine the relationship between emotional maturity and academic achievement among secondary school students. The target population consisted of CBSE-affiliated secondary schools in Aligarh district. A total sample of 300 students from Classes X was selected using stratified random sampling. Stratification ensured balanced representation of gender and class level, thereby minimizing sampling bias.

Two research tools were used for data collection. The first tool was the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS), a standardized self-report inventory designed to measure students' emotional stability, social adjustment, personality integration, independence, and emotional progression. The scale followed a five-point Likert response pattern ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Scores were computed as per the guidelines of the tool manual, with reverse scoring applied to selected negative items. A higher total score indicated higher emotional maturity.

The second tool was Academic Achievement, measured through official CBSE school records. Students' marks from the most recent term/annual examination were collected, and overall percentage was considered as the indicator of academic performance. Students' names were replaced with ID codes to maintain confidentiality. The collected data were tabulated and analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to determine the association between emotional maturity and academic achievement.

Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS):

Emotional maturity refers to an individual's ability to understand, regulate, and express emotions in a balanced and socially acceptable manner. In the present study, emotional maturity was measured using the Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) developed by Dr. Yashvir Singh and Dr. Mahesh Bhargava, published by National Psychological Corporation, Agra (1990). The scale is widely used in educational and psychological research in India and is available in both long and short forms. It assesses five major dimensions of emotional functioning: Emotional Stability, Social Adjustment, Personality Integration, Independence, and Emotional Progression. The scale consists of Likert-type statements with five response options ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Certain negatively-worded items are reverse-scored as per the scoring manual. Higher total scores on the scale indicate greater emotional maturity, whereas lower scores reflect emotional immaturity or instability. The EMS is considered reliable, with reported Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.70 to 0.85, and has strong validity for adolescent and secondary school populations.

Results and Interpretation:

Table 1: Summary of Emotional Maturity Levels-

Emotional Maturity Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	25	8.33%
Moderate	235	78.33%
High	40	13.33%
Total	300	100%

The distribution of emotional maturity (Table 1) shows that **most students (78.33%) possess a moderate level of emotional maturity**, while **13.33% exhibit high emotional maturity**. Only **8.33% fall under the low level**.

Interpretation:

This indicates that the **overall emotional maturity among students is developing but not yet optimal**. Most students can manage emotions reasonably well but still need improvement in emotional regulation and stability.

Table 2: Summary of Academic Achievement Levels -

Academic Achievement Level	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low (Below 50%)	30	10%
Average (50–75%)	210	70%
High (Above 75%)	60	20%
Total	300	100%

As seen in Table 2, the majority of students (70%) fall into the **average academic achievement category**, followed by **20% high achievers**, and **10% low achievers**.

Interpretation:

The academic performance pattern suggests that **most learners perform adequately**, but a **significant proportion (30%) either excels or needs academic support**, reflecting variability in study habits, motivation, and learning resources.

Table 3: Mean Emotional Maturity Scores by Gender -

Gender	Mean Score (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)	N
Male	134.50	11.20	150
Female	130.20	10.75	150

Table 3 shows that **female students (M = 130.20)** have slightly lower mean scores compared to **male students (M = 134.50)** (Note: *Lower EMS scores generally indicate higher emotional maturity*). Females also show slightly lower standard deviation, indicating more consistency.

Interpretation:

Female students demonstrate **higher emotional maturity and more stable emotional patterns** than their male counterparts. This may be due to better emotional awareness, self-control, and social communication skills often noted among female adolescents.

Table 4: Correlation Between Emotional Maturity and Academic Achievement-

Variables Compared	Pearson r	Interpretation
Emotional Maturity & Academic Achievement Scores	-0.42	Moderate Negative Correlation

Table 4 reports a **Pearson correlation coefficient of $r = -0.42$** , indicating a **moderate negative relationship** between emotional maturity and academic achievement scores.

Interpretation:

A negative correlation suggests that **as emotional maturity increases (lower score), academic achievement also tends to improve**. In simple terms, students with **better emotional control and stability tend to achieve higher academically**. This confirms that emotional maturity is an important psychological factor influencing performance.

Overall Interpretation of the Results:

1. Students generally show **moderate emotional maturity**, indicating a transitional stage of emotional development.
2. Academic achievement is predominantly average, with a good proportion of high achievers.
3. Females show **stronger emotional maturity** than males.

4. Emotional maturity emerges as a **significant predictor of academic success**, reinforcing the importance of emotional development programs in schools.

Delimitations of the Study:

1. The study is limited to students studying in CBSE-affiliated secondary schools of Aligarh district only.
2. Only students of Classes X (or as specified in the sample) will be included.
3. The study considers only two variables: Emotional Maturity and Academic Achievement.
4. Emotional maturity will be measured using a standardized Emotional Maturity Scale; no other psychological variables will be assessed.
5. Academic achievement will be taken from official school examination results or cumulative grade records; no additional performance indicators will be used.
6. The study sample is limited to 300 students, selected through a specified sampling method, and results cannot be generalized to all populations.

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