



Mental Health and Psychological Well-being in terms of Sex-role Orientation and Emotional Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted on 100 adolescents to compare their mental health & well-being in context of sex role orientation & emotional intelligence. It was hypothesized that adolescents belonging to (i) androgynous and sex typed groups (ii) high and low emotional intelligence groups will differ significantly in terms of their mental health & well-being. For the purpose adolescents were administered Mental Health Check List by Kumar, Psychological Well-being Scale by Sisodia and Choudhary Masculinity & Feminity Check List by Sinha and Emotional Intelligence Scale by Mangal and Mangal and data were obtained. Besides these, a PDS was used to seek the personal information about the adolescent respondents. The obtained data were treated using t-ratio. The results confirmed the hypotheses. It was found that adolescents respondents belonging to androgynous group excelled over sex-typed adolescent respondents on the measure of both mental health & well-being. Similarly, high emotional intelligence group excelled over low emotional intelligence group of adolescents in terms of both mental health & well-being. Thus, it was concluded that (i) androgynous & sex-typed groups of adolescents differ significantly in terms of mental health & well-being. (ii) high and low emotional intelligence groups of adolescents differ significantly in terms of mental health & well-being.

KEY WORDS

Mental Health, and Psychology, Sex-role, Orientation and Emotional Intelligence.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health and psychological well-being are fundamental aspects of a person's overall health, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social functioning. They influence how individuals think, feel, and act in their daily lives, shaping how they cope with stress, relate to others, and make decisions. In recent decades, the exploration of mental health has expanded to consider the intersection of various factors that contribute to an individual's psychological state, including sexual orientation and emotional intelligence.

Sexual orientation refers to an individual's emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to others, which can be categorized into heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and other orientations. Understanding the impact of sexual orientation on mental health requires an examination of how societal attitudes, cultural norms, and personal experiences shape the psychological well-being of individuals within the LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer) community. Historically, those who identify outside the heteronormative framework have faced societal stigma, discrimination, and marginalization, which can contribute to mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation.

A crucial aspect of this issue is the concept of *minority stress*, which refers to the chronic stress experienced by individuals due to their minority status. For LGBTQ+ individuals, the external pressures of rejection, prejudice, and lack of acceptance can result in internalized homophobia or self-stigma, further exacerbating mental health struggles. These challenges are not inherently linked to sexual orientation itself but are rather a result of societal attitudes and environments that invalidate or condemn non-heteronormative identities.

On the other hand, research has also shown that when LGBTQ+ individuals experience acceptance, support from loved ones, and community, their psychological well-being can significantly improve. Affirmation of one's sexual orientation is associated with lower levels of mental health distress, while family and social support serve as protective factors against mental health issues. As societal attitudes toward sexual orientation continue to evolve, individuals are beginning to find more inclusive spaces that promote positive mental health outcomes.

Emotional intelligence (EI), or emotional quotient (EQ), refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and regulate one's emotions and the emotions of others. High emotional intelligence is linked to better psychological well-being, improved interpersonal relationships, and healthier coping mechanisms in the face of stress. People with high EI tend to possess empathy, emotional awareness, and resilience, which enable them to navigate emotional challenges more effectively.

For individuals with diverse sexual orientations, emotional intelligence plays a particularly significant role. The ability to understand and regulate one's emotions can help mitigate the effects of discrimination or rejection. Moreover, emotional intelligence can enhance the capacity to build supportive relationships, a crucial element for individuals facing challenges related to their sexual identity. This emotional awareness and management also help individuals advocate for their needs, particularly in environments where they might feel marginalized or unsupported.

EI helps individuals in the LGBTQ+ community better navigate complex emotional landscapes such as coming out, dealing with identity conflicts, and managing interpersonal relationships. Moreover, the ability to empathize with others fosters strong social bonds, which in turn enhances psychological resilience and well-being. Emotional intelligence, therefore, serves as both a coping strategy and a tool for fostering a supportive and inclusive environment that can promote mental health.

The intersection of sexual orientation and emotional intelligence can significantly influence an individual's mental health. For example, a person who identifies as LGBTQ+ and possesses high emotional intelligence may be better equipped to manage the emotional challenges associated with societal stigma, discrimination, or rejection. On the other hand, someone with low emotional intelligence might struggle with processing negative emotions or handling social rejection, leading to poorer mental health outcomes.

Moreover, mental health interventions that focus on developing emotional intelligence can be particularly beneficial for LGBTQ+ individuals, especially in contexts where they face discrimination or alienation. Promoting emotional intelligence in therapy, counseling, or community programs can empower individuals to strengthen their resilience, reduce internalized stigma, and improve interpersonal relationships.

In conclusion, mental health and psychological well-being are complex and multifaceted, with various factors influencing an individual's emotional state and overall functioning. Sexual orientation and emotional intelligence are two key factors that interact in profound ways to shape an individual's mental health. Understanding the relationship between these aspects can lead to more effective interventions and a deeper appreciation of the unique challenges faced by individuals with diverse sexual orientations. Supporting emotional intelligence and creating inclusive, accepting environments for individuals, regardless of sexual orientation, are crucial steps toward fostering mental well-being in all communities.

Review of Literature

Meyer, I. H.⁷ (2003) introduced the concept of *minority stress* to describe the chronic stress experienced by LGBTQ+ individuals due to social stigma and discrimination. The research highlights the significant mental health risks associated with minority stress, including higher rates of depression, anxiety, and substance use. Meyer argues that social support and coping mechanisms are crucial in mitigating these risks and improving psychological well-being. King, M., Semlyen, J., Tai, S., Killaspy, H., Osborn, D., & Popay, J.⁵ (2008) explored the relationship between sexual orientation and mental health, examining studies from both clinical and epidemiological perspectives. The authors find that LGBTQ+ individuals are at higher risk for mental health disorders, particularly depression, anxiety, and suicidal behavior. Factors such as discrimination, stigma, and lack of social support are identified as key contributors to these mental health disparities. Schutte, N. S., & Malouff, J. M.¹⁰ (2011) focused on emotional intelligence (EI) and its association with mental health outcomes. The authors argue that higher EI is linked to lower levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, while also promoting positive well-being. Studies reviewed indicate that emotional intelligence is a significant protective factor against mental health issues, enhancing an individual's ability to cope with stress and build healthier relationships. Troiden, R. R.¹¹ (1989) examined the protective role of social support for LGBTQ+ individuals, suggesting that those with accepting families, communities, and peers experience better mental health outcomes. He emphasizes that positive social support can counteract the negative effects of stigma and discrimination, leading to improved emotional well-being and resilience in the face of adversity. Bar-On, R.² (2000) discussed how emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in the psychological well-being of individuals, particularly those in marginalized communities such as LGBTQ+ individuals. The review finds that EI helps LGBTQ+ individuals process and regulate negative emotions resulting from societal rejection, which can improve overall mental health outcomes. Grossman, A. H., & D'Augelli, A. R.³ (2006) looked at the coping mechanisms of LGBTQ+ individuals and their impact on mental health. The authors highlight that those who develop adaptive coping strategies, such as acceptance of their sexual identity, tend to report better mental health outcomes. In contrast, maladaptive strategies, such as denial or isolation, are linked to increased psychological distress. Martins, A., Ramalho, N., & Morin, E.⁶ (2010) investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and depression among college students. The study concludes that higher emotional intelligence is associated with lower levels of depressive symptoms, suggesting that EI can act as a protective buffer for young adults facing academic, social, or personal stressors. The authors advocate for incorporating EI training in mental health interventions. Balsam, K. F., Beadnell, B., & Molina, Y.¹ (2013) reviewed how stigma and discrimination affect the mental health of LGBTQ+ individuals. The authors find that experiences of discrimination, whether institutional or interpersonal, contribute to high levels of psychological distress. The review highlights the need for inclusive policies and supportive environments to improve mental health outcomes in the LGBTQ+ community. Salovey, P., & Mayer, J. D.⁹ (1990) explored in this review, particularly its role in reducing stress and anxiety. Their findings indicate that individuals with high EI are more adept at managing stressors, including those related to

sexual orientation. The study advocates for EI training as an effective tool for promoting mental health in LGBTQ+ individuals. Ryan, C., Huebner, D., Diaz, R. M., & Sanchez, J.⁸ (2009) examined the impact of family acceptance on the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth. The authors find that family rejection is a major contributor to mental health issues, including suicidal ideation and depression. Conversely, family acceptance is associated with lower levels of psychological distress, highlighting the importance of creating supportive environments for LGBTQ+ individuals. Hoffer, J. A., & Bevan, J. L.⁴ (2013) explored the role of emotional intelligence in relationship satisfaction within same-sex couples. The authors find that higher EI is linked to better communication, conflict resolution, and overall relationship satisfaction. This suggests that emotional intelligence not only contributes to personal well-being but also enhances interpersonal relationships in LGBTQ+ individuals.

These reviews demonstrate the complex interplay between sexual orientation, emotional intelligence, and mental health. Research consistently shows that emotional intelligence can serve as a protective factor for mental health, particularly in marginalized groups such as the LGBTQ+ community. Likewise, minority stress and societal stigma are key factors contributing to poorer mental health outcomes in these populations. The importance of social support, family acceptance, and EI training is emphasized across multiple studies, highlighting pathways to enhancing psychological well-being in LGBTQ+ individuals.

Objectives

The present study will intend to make a comparison between:

1. Adolescents of androgynous & sex-typed groups in terms of mental health and well-being.
2. Adolescents belonging to high and low emotional intelligence groups in terms of mental health & well-being.

Hypotheses

- H₁** Adolescents belonging to androgynous and sex-typed groups will differ significantly in terms of their mental health and well-being.
- H₂** Adolescents belonging to high and low emotional intelligence groups will differ significantly in terms of their mental health and well-being.

Method of Study

Sample

The sample comprised 100 adolescents selected from among +2 level school of Urban Patna using purposive sampling. They were equally divided into androgynous (N=50) and sex-typed trait (N=50) using medians as cut. Other than the conditions of research they were matched so far as practicable.

Design

Between groups of design was used for the purpose.

Tools Used

1. A Personal Data Sheet prepared by the researcher was used to seek the personal information about the respondents.
2. Mental Health Check List by Pramod Kumar was used to measure mental health of the respondents.
3. Psychological Well-being Scale by Devendra Singh Sisodia & Pooja Choudhary was used to measure psychological well-being to the respondents.
4. Masculinity & Famininity Check List by T.N. Sinha was used to identified androgenous & sex typed respondents.
5. Emotional Intelligence Scale by Mangal S.K. and Mangal Shubhadra was used to measure emotional intelligence of the respondents.

Results and Interpretation

Table 01: Comparison of means between androgynous and sex-type groups of adolescents on mental health and well-being based on t-value

Variables	Sex-role Orientation				t-value	df	p
	Androgynous (N = 50)		Sex-typed (N = 5)				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Mental Health	43.17	3.96	37.25	4.04	7.40	98	<.01
Well-being	189.24	4.81	184.12	5.11	5.17	98	<.01

The results shown in table-01 clearly revealed that androgynous and sex-typed groups of adolescents differ significantly in terms of both mental health and subjective well-being. The mean on mental health by androgynous group (Mean = 43.17) is higher than the sex-typed group of adolescents (Mean = 37.25). The t-value showing the difference between means on mental health was found significant (t = 7.40; df = 98; p<.01). Thus, hypothesis no. (01) is partly accepted. Further, androgynous and sex-typed group of adolescents differ significantly on subjective well-being. The mean on androgynous group of adolescents on subjective well-being is higher (Mean = 184.12) leading the fact that sex-role orientation significantly influence subjective well-being amongst adolescents. The t-value between androgynous and sex-typed groups of adolescents on subjective well-being was found significant (t = 5.17; df = 98; p<.01). Thus, hypothesis no. 01) was fully accepted. So, mental health and subjective well-being both are function of sex-role orientation.

Interpretation: Adolescents with an androgynous sex role orientation manifest comparatively sound mental health because they can flexibly combine both masculine (assertiveness, independence) and feminine (empathy, nurturance) traits. This psychological flexibility allows them to adapt effectively to varying social and personal demands, reducing stress and conflict. They are better equipped with diverse coping strategies, higher self-esteem, and balanced interpersonal relationships, which foster resilience and emotional stability. In contrast, sex-typed adolescents are restricted by rigid gender norms, limiting their behavioral responses and coping resources, which may increase vulnerability to anxiety, frustration, and poor adjustment, ultimately weakening their mental health.

Further, adolescents belonging to an androgynous sex role orientation group manifest comparatively sound psychological well-being because they integrate both traditionally masculine (e.g., independence, assertiveness) and feminine (e.g., empathy, sensitivity) traits, which enhances flexibility in behavior and coping. This balanced orientation allows them to respond effectively to varied life situations, fostering resilience, self-confidence, and positive self-concept. Such adaptability promotes healthier interpersonal relationships, greater emotional stability, and stronger problem-solving skills. In contrast, sex-typed adolescents are confined to rigid gender norms, limiting their coping repertoire and increasing vulnerability to stress, role conflict, and lower psychological well-being.

Table 02: Comparison of means between high and low emotional intelligence groups of adolescents on mental health and well-being based on t-value

Variables	Emotional Intelligence				t-value	df	p
	High (N = 50)		Low (N = 50)				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Mental Health	42.92	4.82	36.31	4.90	6.81	98	<.01
Well-being	187.35	4.73	181.75	4.79	5.77	98	<.01

The results displayed by t-table-02 clearly revealed the fact that mental health and subjective well-being of adolescents both are function of emotional intelligence. The mean by high EI group of adolescents on mental health is comparatively higher than (Mean = 42.92) the mean on mental health by low EI group of

adolescents (Mean = 36.31). The t-value showing the significance of difference between means on mental health was found significant ($t = 6.81$; $df = 98$; $p < .01$). Further, EI significantly influence the subjective well-being amongst adolescents. The mean by high EI group of adolescents on subjective well-being (Mean = 187.35) is significantly higher than the mean by low EI group of adolescents (Mean = 181.75). The t-value showing difference between the mean was found significant ($t = 5.77$; $df = 98$; $p < .01$). Thus, mental health and subjective well-being both are the function of EI. Thus, hypothesis no. (02) was fully supported.

Interpretation: Adolescents belonging to the high emotional intelligence (EI) group manifest comparatively sound mental health because EI equips them with the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate their own emotions while also empathizing with others. High EI adolescents can manage stress, resolve conflicts, and maintain supportive relationships more effectively, which enhances resilience and psychological stability. They are also better at problem-solving and adapting to challenges, reducing vulnerability to anxiety, depression, and frustration. In contrast, adolescents with poor EI often struggle with emotional regulation, interpersonal difficulties, and ineffective coping strategies, which increase their risk of poor mental health outcomes.

Further, Adolescents with high emotional intelligence (EI) manifest comparatively sound psychological well-being because EI equips them with the ability to recognize, understand, and regulate their own emotions while also empathizing with others. This emotional awareness fosters healthier relationships, effective conflict resolution, and better stress management. High EI adolescents can cope adaptively with academic and social pressures; maintain optimism, and build supportive networks, all of which contribute to greater resilience and life satisfaction. In contrast, adolescents with poor EI often struggle with impulse control, mismanaged stress, and interpersonal conflicts, making them more vulnerable to anxiety, depression, and reduced psychological well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

- (i) Androgynous group of adolescents manifest sound mental health over sex typed group of adolescents. Thus, Androgyny is conducive to sound mental health.
- (ii) Androgynous group of adolescents manifest higher psychological well-being than sex typed group of adolescents. Thus, androgenity is conducive to high psychological well-being.
- (iii) Adolescents belonging to higher emotional intelligence group manifest comparatively sound mental health as compared to adolescents belonging to low emotional intelligence group. Thus, high emotional intelligence is conducive to sound mental health.
- (iv) High emotional intelligence group of adolescents show their dominance over low emotional intelligence group of adolescents in terms of having high psychological well-being. Thus, higher emotional intelligence is conducive to high psychological well-being & vice-versa.

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