



Level of Aspiration, Need for Achievement and Adjustment among Adolescents in Context of Emotional Maturity

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted on an incidental-cum-purposeful sample of 100 female adolescent respondents of Patna town. The purpose of the study was to compare them in terms of level of aspiration, achievement motivation and adjustment. It was hypothesized that (i) High and low emotional maturity groups of respondents will differ significantly in terms of level of aspiration. (ii) High and low emotional maturity groups of respondents will differ significantly in terms of need for achievement. (iii) High and low emotional maturity groups of respondents will differ significantly in terms of adjustment. For the purpose, Singh's and Bhargava's Emotional Maturity Scale, Singh's Level of Aspiration Scale, Mukherjee's Sentence Completion Test and Mohsin's Shamshad's Bell's Adjustment Inventory were administered to measure the emotional maturity, level of aspiration, need for achievement and adjustment of the respondents respectively. Besides these, a PDS was used to get the other necessary information relating to the respondents. The data were analysed using t-test. The obtained results confirmed the hypotheses. It was concluded that high emotional maturity is conducive to high level of aspiration, high achievement motivation and healthy adjustment.

KEY WORDS

Aspiration, Achievement, Adjustment, Maturity.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transitional stage of growth and development that bridges childhood and adulthood. It is characterized by rapid physical,

emotional, psychological, and social changes that often pose significant challenges for individuals navigating this critical period. As adolescents strive for independence and identity formation, their emotional responses become more complex, impacting how they perceive themselves, relate to others, and manage the demands of life. Among the most vital factors influencing adolescent development is emotional maturity, which refers to the capacity to understand, express, and regulate one's emotions in a socially acceptable and constructive manner. Emotional maturity plays a pivotal role in shaping adolescents' need for structure and their ability to adjust to new situations, expectations, and environments.

The term emotional maturity encompasses a wide array of competencies, including emotional regulation, impulse control, empathy, responsibility, self-awareness, and resilience. An emotionally mature adolescent is more likely to recognize and manage their emotions, empathize with peers, take responsibility for their actions, and adapt constructively to both successes and failures. In contrast, emotionally immature adolescents often exhibit impulsivity, emotional instability, and difficulty in handling criticism or stress, and a strong dependency on external validation. These characteristics can hinder their ability to thrive in structured environments such as schools and families, where expectations, rules, and routines are vital for development.

Adolescents inherently seek autonomy, yet they simultaneously require a consistent framework to support their growth. This creates a paradox where adolescents desire freedom but benefit immensely from structure, including clear rules, predictable routines, and stable environments. Structure helps adolescents understand boundaries, cultivate discipline, and develop a sense of responsibility. However, not all adolescents respond similarly to structure. The extent to which adolescents accept, benefit from, or rebel against structure is deeply influenced by their emotional maturity. Those with high emotional maturity often appreciate and internalize structure as a necessary component for personal growth, whereas those with lower emotional maturity may view structure as restrictive and respond with resistance or maladaptive behaviors.

In this context, emotional maturity becomes a significant determinant of how adolescents adjust to the various demands of life. Adjustment, broadly defined, is the process of achieving harmony between the self and the external environment. For adolescents, adjustment involves adapting to changing roles within the family, increased academic demands, peer influences, identity exploration, and the pressures of social conformity. Successful adjustment in adolescence is closely linked to mental health, academic achievement, and social well-being. Adolescents with higher emotional maturity demonstrate better adjustment in these areas because they are more capable of handling stress, resolving conflicts, setting realistic goals, and building meaningful relationships.

Research in developmental psychology underscores the dynamic interplay between emotional development and behavioral adaptation. Emotional maturity enhances cognitive flexibility, a trait that allows adolescents to respond to challenges and setbacks in constructive ways. This adaptability becomes essential in environments that require consistent performance, such as schools, extracurricular activities, and family responsibilities. Structured settings, when combined with supportive guidance, provide adolescents with opportunities to cultivate responsibility, time management, and decision-making skills. Emotionally mature adolescents tend to navigate such environments with greater ease, while emotionally immature adolescents may exhibit avoidance behaviors, defiance, or apathy, leading to maladjustment.

One of the critical influences on emotional maturity is the family environment. Parents and caregivers who provide consistent emotional support, appropriate discipline, and opportunities for open communication significantly contribute to their children's emotional growth. Parenting styles authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful have varying impacts on emotional development. Authoritative parenting, which balances high expectations with emotional warmth and responsiveness, is positively correlated with higher emotional maturity and better adjustment among adolescents. This parenting style also facilitates adolescents' acceptance of structure, as they perceive rules as fair and supportive rather than oppressive.

Peer relationships also play a significant role in shaping emotional maturity and adjustment. During adolescence, peers become central to emotional support, identity validation, and social learning. Emotionally mature adolescents tend to form healthier peer relationships characterized by trust, empathy, and cooperation. These relationships, in turn, act as buffers against stress and contribute to positive adjustment. Conversely, emotionally immature adolescents may experience peer rejection, engage in risky behaviors, or struggle with group dynamics, all of which negatively impact their adjustment capabilities.

The educational system is another structured environment where emotional maturity and adjustment intersect. Schools demand punctuality, discipline, academic performance, social cooperation, and future planning. Emotionally mature students are better equipped to manage academic stress, maintain motivation, and follow institutional guidelines. They are more likely to seek help when needed, set achievable goals, and bounce back from failure. Emotional maturity also correlates with problem-solving skills, enabling adolescents to address interpersonal conflicts and academic challenges more effectively. Therefore, emotional maturity significantly contributes to both the acceptance of educational structures and successful adaptation within the school context.

Furthermore, emotional maturity influences adolescents' coping mechanisms. Adolescents encounter a variety of stressors, including academic pressure, familial expectations, romantic relationships, body image concerns, and uncertainty about the future. Emotionally mature individuals typically utilize constructive coping strategies such as seeking social support, engaging in physical activity, or practicing mindfulness. On the other hand, emotionally immature adolescents may rely on avoidance, aggression, or substance use to cope with distress, which can lead to long-term maladjustment. The type of coping strategy employed affects how adolescents adjust to stress and influences their overall emotional well-being.

The cultural context also impacts emotional maturity and adjustment. In collectivistic societies, such as India, emotional restraint, respect for authority, and conformity to social expectations are often emphasized. Adolescents in such societies may experience conflicting pressures between traditional values and modern individualistic tendencies. Emotional maturity becomes a mediator in resolving these internal and external conflicts. Adolescents who are emotionally mature are better able to integrate cultural values while also developing a personal sense of identity and autonomy.

In conclusion, emotional maturity is not just a personal trait—it is a developmental necessity that significantly shapes how adolescents engage with and adapt to their environments. It influences their need for structure, their ability to thrive within structured settings, and their capacity to adjust to life's complexities. Educators, parents, psychologists, and policy-makers must recognize the centrality of emotional maturity in adolescent development and work collaboratively to create environments that nurture this quality. Programs that promote emotional intelligence, self-reflection, resilience, and social competence can foster emotional maturity and, consequently, better adjustment outcomes. As adolescents transition into adulthood, equipping them with emotional maturity becomes not just beneficial but essential for their holistic development and success in life.

Review of Literature

Singh, Y. & Bhargava, M.¹¹ (1990) in their research, Singh and Bhargava developed the Emotional Maturity Scale to assess adolescents' emotional competence. Their findings showed that emotionally mature adolescents demonstrated higher self-control and adaptability, helping them accept structured routines in schools and families more positively. Emotional instability was linked with poor adjustment and resistance to rules. Kaplan, H. B.⁶ (1996) Kaplan explored the psychological development of adolescents and emphasized that emotional maturity acts as a buffer against maladjustment. He found that emotionally immature adolescents struggled more with authority and structured expectations, often resulting in behavioral problems and academic underachievement. Mangal, S. K.⁷ (2006) Mangal identified emotional maturity as a key predictor of adolescent adjustment in academic and social settings. His study showed that those who displayed emotional maturity

were more likely to benefit from school structure, engage in cooperative behavior, and adjust better to social demands. Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. R.⁵ (2000) the trio's work on emotional intelligence highlighted the link between emotional awareness and successful adjustment. Their research suggested that adolescents with high emotional intelligence—a component of emotional maturity—could navigate structured environments like school systems with greater efficacy and emotional stability. Saraswat, R. K. & Gaur, J. S.⁹ (1981) Saraswat and Gaur's study on adolescent self-concept and emotional maturity concluded that adolescents with strong emotional maturity showed better role acceptance and adjustment within structured family and school roles. Their self-concept was also more stable, further supporting structured learning environments. Desai, M.⁴ (2002) Desai examined urban adolescents and found that those with greater emotional maturity had better coping mechanisms, responded more positively to school discipline, and exhibited lower levels of stress. Structured environments were seen as guiding rather than confining by emotionally balanced adolescents. Cole, P. M., Martin, S. E., & Dennis, T. A.³ (2004) their longitudinal research into emotion regulation during adolescence found that emotional maturity, through self-regulation, significantly predicted adolescents' adjustment across academic, peer, and family domains. Adolescents with stronger emotional regulation were more compliant with structure and had fewer conduct issues. Chauhan, S. S.² (2002) Chauhan emphasized the role of emotional maturity in adolescent discipline and behavioral adjustment. His research underlined that emotionally mature adolescents were more accepting of structured classroom environments, contributing to better academic performance and social behavior. Santrock, J. W.⁸ (2007) in his comprehensive text on adolescent development, Santrock highlighted emotional maturity as a critical trait for developmental success. He reported that emotionally mature adolescents showed higher resilience, better decision-making, and an increased ability to adjust to the challenges posed by structured institutional settings. Bar-On, R.¹ (1997) Bar-On's model of emotional-social intelligence included emotional maturity as a core component. His findings confirmed that emotionally mature adolescents had enhanced interpersonal skills, better adaptability, and a higher tolerance for structure and authority, facilitating more effective adjustment in social and academic settings. Sharma, R.¹¹ (2010) in a comparative study of school-going adolescents, Sharma found significant differences in adjustment levels based on emotional maturity. Adolescents with high emotional maturity were more likely to follow school rules, maintain regular study schedules, and experience fewer emotional outbursts, indicating smoother adaptation to structured systems.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to compare respondents of high and low emotional maturity groups on level of aspiration, need for achievement motivation and adjustment respectively.

Hypotheses

- (i) High and low emotional maturity groups of respondents will differ significantly in terms of level of aspiration.
- (ii) High and low emotional maturity groups of respondents will differ significantly in terms of need for achievement.
- (ii) High and low emotional maturity groups of respondents will differ significantly in terms of adjustment.

Method of Study

Sample

The study was conducted on 100 female adolescent respondents of Patna town using incidental-cum-purposive sample. The respondents were selected in such a way they must be equal (N = 50 each group) in respect of high and low emotional maturity groups. In other respect they were matched so far as practicable.

Tools Used

- (i) Emotional Maturity Scale by Singh and Bhargava was used to measure emotional maturity of the respondents.

- (ii) Singh's Level of Aspiration Scale was used to measure level of aspiration of the respondents.
- (iii) Mukherjee's Sentence Completion Test was used to measure the need for achievement of the respondents.
- (iv) Mohsin Shamshad Bell's Adjustment Inventory was used to measure the adjustment of the respondents.
- (v) A Personal Data Sheet was employed to get the necessary information about the respondents.

Results and Interpretations

Table 01: t-ratio showing the difference between high and low emotional maturity groups of respondents level of aspiration measure

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	df	P
Emotional Maturity	High	50	18.12	3.98	5.01	98	<.01
	Low	50	14.06	4.15			

It is clear from the table-01 that respondents belonging to high emotional maturity group is superior to the respondents of low emotional maturity group relating to level of aspiration ($t = 5.01$; $df = 98$; $P < .01$). Thus first hypothesis is retained. Adolescents with high emotional maturity excel in aspiration levels because they possess self-awareness, emotional control, and resilience, enabling them to set realistic goals and persist despite obstacles. Conversely, adolescents with low emotional maturity show impulsivity, poor stress tolerance, and low confidence, which hinder motivation and achievement-oriented aspirations.

Table 02: t-ratio showing the difference between high and low emotional maturity groups of respondents on need for achievement measure

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	df	P
Emotional Maturity	High	50	80.25	4.45	8.17	98	<.01
	Low	50	72.73	4.69			

It is clear from table-02 that high emotional maturity group of adolescents manifest high need for achievement significantly ($t = 8.17$; $df = 98$; $p < .01$). Thus hypothesis no. (2) is retained. The findings might be interpreted as under. Adolescents with high emotional maturity excel in need for achievement because they display self-confidence, perseverance, and emotional stability, which promote goal-directed behavior and effective coping with failure. In contrast, those with low emotional maturity often experience emotional instability and fear of failure, reducing their motivation to achieve and succeed.

Table 03: t-ratio showing the difference between high and low groups of emotional maturity on adjustment measure

Emotional Maturity	N	Mean	SD	t-ratio	df	P
High	50	62.24	4.69	8.77	98	<.01
Low	50	70.31	4.55			

The results displayed in table-02 clearly indicated the superiority of high emotional maturity group over low emotional maturity group in respect of adjustment ($t = 8.77$; $df = 98$; $P < .01$). Thus, the second hypothesis is also retained. Adolescents with high emotional maturity show sound adjustment because they possess self-control, empathy, and emotional balance, helping them handle stress and maintain healthy relationships. Conversely, adolescents with low emotional stability face mood swings, impulsivity, and poor coping skills, leading to difficulties in social, emotional, and personal adjustment.

CONCLUSIONS

1. High emotional maturity amongst female adolescents is conducive to high level of aspiration.

2. High emotional maturity amongst female adolescents is conducive to high need for achievement.
3. High emotional maturity amongst female adolescents is conducive to sound adjustment.

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