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Emotional Intelligence Influencing Motivational Components amongst Adolescents

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



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Abstract

The present study was conducted on 50 high emotionally intelligent and 50 low emotionally intelligent adolescents of Patna. For the purpose it was hypothesized that (i) High and low emotional intelligence groups of adolescents would differ significantly in terms of motivation components namely need for achievement, level of aspiration, risk taking and sense of security. (ii) There would be significant correlation among need structure dimensions under reference. Mangal's Emotional Intelligence Scale, Chaubey's Non-Risk Taking Scale, Mukherjee's SCT. Singh's Level of Aspiration Scale and Singh's Hindi version of Maslow's Security/Insecurity Scale were employed to measure emotional intelligence, risk-taking, need for achievement, level of aspiration and security/insecurity measures of the respondents. Besides these, a PDS was employed to get other necessary informations relating to the respondents. The data were obtained as per the directions of

the manuals concerned and analysed using t-test. The results confirmed the hypotheses. High emotionally intelligent respondents excelled over their low emotionally intelligent counterparts in respect of motivational components under study. Further, motivational components were found positively and significantly correlated.

Key Words

Emotional Intelligence, Motivational Components, Adolescents.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence (EI), often defined as the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and influence one's emotions and the emotions of others, plays a pivotal role in the emotional, social, and psychological development of adolescents. Adolescence, a critical developmental stage, is characterized by significant physical, cognitive, and emotional changes, making this period particularly sensitive to emotional and psychological influences. At this age, adolescents not only seek to establish their identity and autonomy but also navigate complex social relationships, both of which require sophisticated emotional processing.

The concept of needs structure refers to the hierarchical organization of an individual's psychological and emotional needs. These needs can include basic physiological needs, safety, social belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, following Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In adolescence, the needs structure is influenced by both internal and external factors, including family dynamics, peer interactions, cultural expectations, and personal emotional experiences. As adolescents mature, their needs become more intricate, with emotional needs often taking precedence over basic physiological ones.

Emotional intelligence shapes how adolescents perceive, process, and respond to their emotional needs and the emotional needs of those around them. High EI allows adolescents to better manage their emotional responses to stress, navigate peer relationships, and make more adaptive decisions in the face of challenges. Conversely, low EI can lead to emotional dysregulation, poor interpersonal relationships, and maladaptive coping mechanisms. Therefore, emotional intelligence can significantly impact the way adolescents prioritize and fulfill their emotional and social needs.

The relationship between EI and needs structure is particularly evident in the ways adolescents handle issues of identity, belonging, and self-worth. For example, adolescents with higher emotional intelligence may experience greater resilience in the face of social rejection, enabling them to maintain a stable sense of self-esteem and social belonging. In contrast, those with lower EI may struggle with feelings of insecurity and isolation, which may lead to the prioritization of external validation over internal emotional growth.

The development of emotional intelligence during adolescence is influenced by various factors, including genetic predispositions, family dynamics, school environments, and peer interactions. Research suggests that emotional intelligence can be nurtured through specific interventions, such as emotional coaching, mindfulness training, and social-emotional learning (SEL) programs. These interventions can not only enhance adolescents' emotional awareness and regulation skills but also foster more adaptive coping strategies for addressing their evolving needs.

Furthermore, the role of emotional intelligence in shaping adolescents' needs structure is not limited to individual development. It also has implications for broader social structures, including the school environment, peer groups, and family systems. For instance, schools that prioritize social-emotional learning (SEL) programs contribute to the emotional growth of adolescents, which in turn affects their ability to navigate academic challenges, build positive relationships, and manage stress. Similarly, family dynamics that encourage emotional openness and understanding can reinforce emotional intelligence, enabling adolescents to develop a secure and adaptive needs structure.

In sum, emotional intelligence is a crucial factor in the development of adolescents' needs structure. By influencing how adolescents recognize and respond to their emotional and social needs, EI can enhance their overall well-being, social functioning, and emotional resilience. Understanding the role of emotional intelligence in this context is essential for educators, parents, and mental health professionals who seek to support adolescents in their journey toward emotional maturity and psychological health. This understanding can guide the development of targeted interventions that help adolescents build the emotional competencies necessary for navigating the complexities of adolescence and beyond.

Review of Literature

One of the foundational studies by Salovey and Mayer⁹ (1990) introduced the concept of emotional intelligence as a distinct form of intelligence, which involves the ability to perceive, use, understand, and manage emotions. Subsequent research has shown that emotional intelligence plays a critical role in adolescent development, influencing self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. Adolescents with higher EI tend to exhibit more effective coping strategies in stressful situations, which may lead to a more stable and adaptive needs structure. These individuals are also better equipped to navigate the complexities of identity formation and

peer relationships. Schutte et al.¹⁰ (2002) explored the relationship between EI and mental health outcomes among adolescents. The findings indicated that adolescents with high EI tend to experience lower levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. This has significant implications for their needs structure, as emotional regulation and awareness contribute to better emotional well-being and a more secure foundation for social and psychological needs. These adolescents are also more likely to engage in prosocial behavior, fostering stronger social bonds and a more resilient needs hierarchy. Research by Goleman³ (1995) emphasizes the importance of emotional intelligence in fostering healthy peer relationships during adolescence. Adolescents with high EI are more skilled at interpreting social cues, resolving conflicts, and empathizing with others. These emotional competencies help in fulfilling their need for social belonging, a crucial component of their needs structure. Peer acceptance is a fundamental need during this stage of development, and emotional intelligence plays a key role in how adolescents form and maintain these relationships. A study by Parker et al.⁸ (2004) examined the impact of EI on academic performance among adolescents. They found that students with higher EI exhibited better time management, higher motivation, and more effective problem-solving skills, which positively influenced their academic success. This suggests that emotional intelligence may affect adolescents' self-esteem and achievement-related needs, ultimately shaping their overall needs structure. Academic success can enhance self-worth, fulfilling adolescents' esteem needs and contributing to a sense of accomplishment. Adolescents face significant pressures from their peers, and emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in how they respond to these pressures. Research by Gross and John⁴ (2003) showed that adolescents with higher EI are better equipped to manage peer pressure, as they can regulate their emotions and make independent decisions. The ability to resist peer pressure is related to the adolescent's need for autonomy and self-esteem, suggesting that EI is an important factor in balancing these needs in the context of peer relationships. Emotional intelligence is also closely linked to family dynamics, which are fundamental to the development of adolescents' needs structure. A study by Ciarrochi et al.¹ (2001) found that emotionally intelligent adolescents often have better communication and problem-solving skills within their family systems. These skills help to fulfill their emotional need for security and support, which are essential in building a stable needs hierarchy. Positive family interactions can enhance the adolescent's emotional regulation, helping to meet their physiological and emotional needs more effectively. A study by Matthews⁷ et al. (2006) investigated the relationship between EI and self-esteem in adolescents, finding that EI was positively correlated with higher self-esteem. Adolescents who are better at recognizing and managing their emotions tend to have a more stable sense of self-worth, which is crucial during this period of identity exploration. The fulfillment of esteem needs, which is often linked to social recognition and personal accomplishment, is facilitated by the emotional competencies that EI promotes. Adolescence is a period marked by increased engagement in risk-taking behaviors, often driven by the desire for peer acceptance, autonomy, and sensation-seeking. Emotional intelligence has been found to mitigate the tendency for risky behaviors in adolescents. A study by Derryberry and Tharp² (1997) highlighted that adolescents with higher EI are less likely to engage in behaviors such as substance abuse or unsafe sexual practices. EI helps adolescents regulate their emotional impulses, allowing them to make more thoughtful decisions in alignment with their long-term needs and values. The process of identity development is central to adolescence, and emotional intelligence plays a significant role in this process. A study by Harter⁵ (1999) showed that emotionally intelligent adolescents are better at integrating diverse aspects of their identity, such as their personal values, social roles, and emotional experiences. This ability to reflect on and manage their emotions enhances their sense of self and helps them navigate challenges related to self-concept and belonging, both critical components of their needs structure during this developmental stage. Stress management is a key area where emotional intelligence impacts adolescent well-being. A study by Lopes et al.⁶ (2003) demonstrated that adolescents with higher EI are more adept at managing stress, as they are able to regulate their emotional responses to challenging situations. This emotional regulation reduces the negative effects of stress on adolescents' physical and mental health, helping to protect their basic physiological and emotional needs. Adolescents with better stress management skills are also more likely to be resilient in the face of adversity,

contributing to a more secure and adaptive needs structure. Numerous studies have explored the potential of EI training programs in schools and communities to enhance adolescents' emotional competencies. Programs such as those developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) have been shown to improve adolescents' emotional regulation, interpersonal skills, and academic performance (Zins¹¹ et al., 2004). These programs not only promote emotional awareness and empathy but also help adolescents fulfill their social and esteem needs by enhancing their relationships and self-confidence. The evidence suggests that EI training can be a powerful tool for helping adolescents navigate the complex demands of adolescence and build a healthy, balanced needs structure.

These reviews demonstrate the multifaceted ways in which emotional intelligence influences the development of needs structure among adolescents. EI contributes to better emotional regulation, healthier relationships, greater self-esteem, and more adaptive coping strategies, all of which play a crucial role in meeting the diverse and evolving needs of adolescents during this critical period of life. There is shortage of studies relating to adolescents motivational components in context with their emotional intelligence especially in Patna (Bihar). This reason behind conducting the study.

Objective

The objectives of the present study were:

- (i) To compare respondents of high and low emotional intelligence groups in terms of need for achievement, level of aspiration, risk-taking and security/insecurity respectively.
- (ii) To examine the correlation among need structure dimensions.

Hypotheses

- (i) High and low emotional intelligence groups of adolescents will differ significantly in terms of motivation components namely need for achievement, level of aspiration, risk taking and sense of security.
- (ii) There will be significant correlation among need structure dimensions under reference.

Method of Study

Sample: The study was conducted on incidental-cum purposive sample. The sample consisted of 50 high and 50 low emotional intelligence groups of respondents selected from among Patna town. Other than the condition of research the sample was matched so far as practicable.

Research Tools Used

- (1) A PDS was employed on the respondents to get the necessary informations.
- (2) Achievement Motive Scale by Mukherjee was used for measuring need for achievement of the respondents.
- (3) Non-Risk Taking Scale by Chaubey was used for measuring the risk-taking trait of the entrepreneurs.
- (4) Security/Insecurity Scale by Shanti Singh was used for assessing the sense of Security/Insecurity of the respondents.
- (5) Emotional Intelligence Scale by Mangal and Mangal was used to measure emotional intelligence of the respondents.

Procedure: The Emotional Intelligence Scale was employed on the respondent and they were divided into high and low emotional intelligence groups using median value. Then remaining scales were employed on the two groups and data were recorded as per the direction of the manuals concerned. The obtained data were treated using t-test.

Results and Interpretations

Table 01: t-ratio showing the effect of emotional intelligence on need structure dimensions amongst rural respondents

Dimensions	Low EI (N = 50)		High EI (N = 50)		t-value	df	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Need for Achievement	29.30	3.81	38.35	9.79	12.40	98	<.01
Level of Aspiration	23.35	3.52	32.68	3.69	12.96	98	<.01
Risk-taking	29.20	3.49	37.45	30.66	11.62	98	<.01
Security/Insecurity	39.67	3.92	48.87	3.85	11.79	98	<.01

The results displayed in table clearly showed the significant effect of emotional intelligence on need structure of the respondent (Need for achievement : $t = 12.40$, $df = 98$, $p < .01$); Level of aspiration : $t = 12.96$, $df = 98$, $p < .01$; Risk-taking : $t = 11.62$, $df = 98$, $p < .01$; security/insecurity : $t = 11.79$, $df = 98$, $p < .01$). Adolescents with high emotional intelligence manifest a high need for achievement because they can regulate emotions, stay motivated, and persist through challenges. Their self-awareness and empathy help them set realistic goals and maintain strong interpersonal relationships, which supports academic and personal success. They are also better at handling failure constructively, using it as motivation rather than discouragement, which reinforces their drive to achieve.

Further, adolescents with high emotional intelligence manifest a high level of aspiration because they possess strong self-awareness, motivation, and confidence in their abilities. They can set realistic goals, manage setbacks effectively, and remain focused despite challenges. Their ability to understand and regulate emotions fosters resilience and optimism, which drives them to aim higher and pursue meaningful achievements with determination.

Further, adolescents with high emotional intelligence often manifest higher risk-taking because they are better at understanding and regulating emotions, which reduces fear and anxiety associated with uncertainty. Their confidence, emotional control, and social awareness enable them to evaluate risks more thoughtfully and pursue challenging or novel experiences. Unlike impulsive risk-taking, theirs is often calculated and purposeful, driven by curiosity, growth, or achievement.

Finally, adolescents with high emotional intelligence manifest a high sense of security because they can understand and manage their emotions effectively, leading to greater self-confidence and emotional stability. Their strong interpersonal skills foster supportive relationships, reducing feelings of isolation or rejection. This emotional awareness and social competence provide them with a reliable internal and external support system, enhancing their overall sense of safety and psychological well-being.

Table 02: Co-efficient of correlation among need structure dimensions

Variables	N	r	df	p
NA Vs LA	100	0.812	98	<.01
NA Vs RT	100	0.841	98	<.01
NA Vs SS	100	0.797	98	<.01
LA Vs RT	100	0.856	98	<.01
LA Vs SS	100	0.849	98	<.01
RT Vs SS	100	0.884	98	<.01

NA — Need for Achievement

LA — Level of Aspiration

RT — Risk Taking

SS — Sense of Security

The table presents the correlation coefficients (r) among four psychological need structure dimensions—Need for Achievement (NA), Level of Aspiration (LA), Risk Taking (RT), and Sense of Security (SS)—for a sample of 100 respondents. All correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating a high degree of interrelationship among these variables.

The correlation between Need for Achievement and Level of Aspiration ($r = 0.812$) suggests that individuals with higher achievement motivation also tend to have elevated aspirations and goal-setting tendencies. Similarly, Need for Achievement shows strong positive correlations with Risk Taking ($r = 0.841$) and Sense of Security ($r = 0.797$), implying that those who strive for success are more willing to take calculated risks and maintain a psychological sense of security in their pursuits.

A very high correlation is observed between Level of Aspiration and Risk Taking ($r = 0.856$) as well as Level of Aspiration and Sense of Security ($r = 0.849$). This indicates that individuals with high aspirations not only set challenging goals but also feel secure and confident while engaging in risk-oriented behaviors to achieve them. Moreover, the strongest correlation among all pairs is found between Risk Taking and Sense of Security ($r = 0.884$), reflecting that individuals who possess a strong sense of security are more likely to take risks confidently.

Overall, the results reveal that all four dimensions of need structure are highly and positively interrelated, suggesting a coherent psychological pattern in which achievement motivation, aspiration level, risk-taking tendency, and sense of security reinforce one another. This pattern reflects an integrated and growth-oriented personality disposition among the respondents.

Conclusions

- (1) High emotional intelligence is conducive to high need for achievement.
- (2) High emotional intelligence is conducive to high level of aspiration.
- (3) High emotional intelligence is conducive to high risk taking trait.
- (4) High emotional intelligence is conducive to high sense of security.
- (5) Need structure dimensions are significantly and positively correlated.

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